



# **Beyond Cold Monsters. A Cognitive-Affective Theory of International Leadership**

**Thèse**

**Philippe Beauregard**

**Doctorat en science politique**  
Philosophiæ doctor (Ph. D.)

Québec, Canada

## Résumé

Le leadership est un processus d'influence sociale à travers lequel un acteur qui préconise une position sur un enjeu international entraîne d'autres acteurs à converger vers cette même position. Cette conception du leadership comme un processus de coopération a été négligée dans l'étude de la politique internationale. De plus en plus de faits empiriques révèlent que les États-Unis ne sont pas le seul État qui puisse produire des leaders internationaux, et que les décideurs d'autres États peuvent aussi s'ériger en meneurs. Pourquoi est-ce qu'une personne est motivée à devenir leader? Pourquoi est-ce que les autres acceptent de suivre ce leader, et non quelqu'un d'autre, ou encore choisissent de refuser la position du meneur?

Pour expliquer comment le processus de leadership fonctionne, je développe une théorie cognitive-affective du leadership international. Mon argument est que les meneurs ont la volonté de prendre les devants à cause de leurs fortes convictions, et cherchent à persuader les autres acteurs que leur position est représentative de la communauté dont ils font partie. Ceux et celles qui suivent le meneur se rallient à sa position lorsque leurs croyances émotionnelles sont alignées avec celles du leader, lorsque la position et le comportement du leader sont représentatifs de la communauté, et lorsque des mécanismes de persuasion et de résonance émotionnelle les amènent plus près de la position du meneur.

Pour vérifier cette théorie, je me concentre sur le processus de leadership entre les puissances transatlantiques : les États-Unis, l'Allemagne, la France, et le Royaume-Uni. J'étudie la coopération entre les décideurs transatlantiques sur des enjeux cruciaux lors de quatre cas de conflits intraétatiques internationalisés: la reconnaissance de la Slovénie, la Croatie et la Bosnie comme États souverains, la médiation pour la paix lors de la guerre entre la Russie et la Géorgie, les sanctions économiques contre la Russie pendant le conflit en Ukraine, et la construction d'une coalition pour réaliser des frappes aériennes contre l'État islamique en Irak et en Syrie.

## Abstract

Leadership is a process of social influence through which an actor advocating for a position on an international issue induces followers to converge on the same position. Leadership in this sense, as a process of cooperation, has been neglected in the study of international politics. An accumulating body of evidence reveals that the United States is not the only state that can produce international leaders, and that policymakers from other states can also take the lead. Why is someone willing to take the lead? Why are other actors willing to follow this leader and not someone else, or just refuse to agree with the leader's stance?

To explain how the leadership process works, I develop a Cognitive-Affective Theory of international leadership. My argument is that leaders are willing to take the lead because of their strong convictions, and seek to persuade their followers that their position is representative of the wider community of which they are part. Followers rally behind the leader when their emotional beliefs align with the leader, when the leader's position and behavior are representative of the community, and when mechanisms of persuasion and emotional resonance bring them closer to the leader's position.

In order to test this theory, I concentrate on the leadership process among transatlantic powers: the United States, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. I study the cooperation between transatlantic policymakers on crucial issues that emerged during four cases of internationalized intrastate conflicts: recognition of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia as new sovereign states, peace mediation in the war between Russia and Georgia, economic sanctions against Russia during the Ukraine conflict, and construction of a broader coalition conducting air strikes against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

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## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

<b>AAR</b>	Alfa Access Renova Group
<b>BDI</b>	Federation of German Industries (Bundesverbands der Deutschen Industrie)
<b>BP</b>	British Petroleum
<b>BTC</b>	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline
<b>CAQDAS</b>	Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software
<b>CAT</b>	Cognitive-affective theory of international leadership
<b>CCCA</b>	Chronological comparative content analysis
<b>CDU</b>	Christian Democratic Party of Germany (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands)
<b>CEE</b>	Central and East European countries
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>COREPER</b>	Committee of Permanent Representatives in the European Union
<b>CSCE</b>	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>CSFP</b>	European Common Foreign and Security Policy
<b>CSU</b>	Christian Social Union in Bavaria (Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern)
<b>EC</b>	European Community
<b>EEAS</b>	European External Action Service
<b>ESDP</b>	European Security and Defense Policy
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUMM</b>	European Union Monitoring Mission
<b>EUSR-SC</b>	European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus
<b>FARC</b>	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (Fuerza Armadas Revolucionarias de Columbia)
<b>FCO</b>	British Foreign and Commonwealth Office
<b>FDP</b>	Free Democratic Party of Germany (Freie Demokratische Partei)

<b>FPA</b>	Foreign Policy Analysis
<b>GATT</b>	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
<b>IIFMCG</b>	Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia
<b>IR</b>	International Relations
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
<b>ISIS</b>	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
<b>JNA</b>	Yugoslav People’s Army (Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija)
<b>KRP</b>	Kurdish Regional Government
<b>MAP</b>	Membership Action Plan (NATO)
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NSA</b>	National Security Agency (United States)
<b>OMV</b>	Austrian Mineral Oil Administration (Österreichische Mineralölverwaltung)
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe
<b>PKK</b>	Kurdistan Workers’ Party (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan)
<b>SCP</b>	South Caucasus Pipeline
<b>SDS</b>	Serb Democratic Party (Srpska Demokratska Stranka)
<b>SPD</b>	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
<b>TEU</b>	Treaty on European Union
<b>TFEU</b>	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNMIK</b>	United Nations Interim Administration Mission for Kosovo
<b>UNOMIG</b>	United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
<b>UNPROFOR</b>	United Nations Protection Force

<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USSR</b>	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<b>WEU</b>	West European Union
<b>WIFO</b>	Austria Institute for Economic Research (Österreichisches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung)

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## Introduction

*O Captain! My Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle thrills,  
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;  
Here Captain! dear father!  
This arm beneath your head!  
It is some dream that on the deck,  
You've fallen cold and dead.*

– Walt Whitman, excerpt from the poem *O Captain! My Captain!*<sup>1</sup>

In July 2017, standing in the busy streets of Paris, a reporter with a thick Australian accent is reporting for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation on the G20 summit that just took place in Hamburg. “What we already knew, Barrie” he begins, “is that the President of the United States has a particular skill set, that he’s identified an illness in Western democracies, but he has no cure for it and seems intent on exploiting it.” Looking directly at the camera, he continues his assessment of the United States’ (US) President Donald Trump: “And we’ve also learned that he has no desire and no capacity to lead the world.” Due to gear problems and publication deadlines, Chris Uhlmann had to condense his political analysis in a two-minutes clip.<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that criticism of President Trump was common since his election, this short clip resonated widely and went viral. It was seen millions of times, has been widely shared on social networks, and reposted in the following days on several other media, including *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*.<sup>3</sup>

Uhlmann argued that Trump lacked both the willingness and the capacity to lead. According to him, the disconnect between the President and other world leaders was even starker at the G20, where he was “an uneasy, awkward figure (...) and you got the strong sense some other leaders were trying their best way to work around him.”<sup>4</sup> The Australian journalist depicted Trump as a threat to the West, a man who “has pressed fast forward on

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<sup>1</sup> W. Whitman 1921, 379–80

<sup>2</sup> Uhlmann 2017b

<sup>3</sup> Zhou 2017; Salam 2017

<sup>4</sup> A summary is available at Uhlmann 2017a. Although the full video has been taken off ABC’s website, it can still easily be found online.



the decline of the US as a global leader. He managed to diminish his nation and to confuse and alienate his allies.”

According to this commentary, leadership is so crucial that it can diminish a nation on the world stage. Leadership is both a desire and capacity, it depends both on Trump’s lack of will and his lack of skills. But can we criticize the leadership of a man who does not even want to lead? This commentary also makes one wonder whether allies could simply “work their way around” this lack of leadership. It begs the question of whether an American global leader is necessary in the first place. Is the current world order going to collapse because of an absence of American leadership? Speaking of leadership thus implies many assumptions, and a confusing variety of meanings.

Likewise, in the study of international politics, leadership has been a contested and polysemic concept. Most of the time, internationalist simply employed the term leadership to refer to the person who is in the *official position of authority* in a state or institution. Leadership has also been studied as a *style*, a number of personality traits and management strategies that state policymakers use to organize their staff, gather information, and make their decisions. Sometimes, leadership was instead characterized as a *role*, a set of behaviors that an actor seeks to play in its relations with other actors on the international scene. Other authors have focused on leadership as a *set of skills* that policymakers may or may not have in their conduct of foreign policy. Going further, James McGregor Burns argued that leadership is more than a number of abilities, but the charismatic and transformational power of leaders, their *capacity to bring actual change* to the political world. At the state level, international scholars have also associated leadership with the capacity of a powerful state to gain *legitimacy* from other states for its actions and preferred institutions.

The commentary opening this chapter, however, suggests another conception of leadership that has been understudied. Leadership is also a *cooperation process* where the leader turns other actors into followers who will rally to his or her policies. This is the perspective that I adopt in this study.

### **The Puzzle of Leadership**

The core objective of this research is to build a theory to explain international leadership: the process through which an actor advocating for a position on an international issue induces

followers to converge on the same position. The idea that leadership exists, and that it can bolster cooperation is uncontroversial. Furthermore, it is intuitive that for a group of people to converge on a position, someone must first suggest this position, and argue for it becoming the common stance. Therefore, I will not study moments of leadership as opposed to instances when leadership is absent or fails. Instead, I am interested in how the leadership process itself works. The first central question in this regard pertains to leader selection and who emerges as the leader. Why did someone take the lead or attempt to do so? Formulated differently, assuming there is a leader-follower process underway, why did one actor rather than another become the leader? The second essential question completes the first: why do followers agree to come along and align their positions with the leader? Again, in contrastive fashion, supposing that there is a leader advocating for a position, why follow the leader rather than oppose him or her, or simply remain silent? By combining these two questions, we have a complete explanation of how leadership works: someone is willing to take the initiative and others are willing to follow this lead.

I develop a Cognitive-Affective Theory of international leadership, and I argue that it explains the mechanisms driving leadership on a variety of issues. Leaders are willing to take the lead because of their strong convictions – their core beliefs and the intense emotions associated with them – and will seek to persuade followers by convincing them that, as leaders, they are representative of the shared beliefs and emotions that a specific group should project. Social identity and common emotional beliefs are therefore crucial to the leadership process. Followers are willing to rally behind the leader when their own emotional beliefs align with the leader, when the leader's position and behavior are seen as representative of the community, and when mechanisms of persuasion and emotional resonance bring followers closer to the leader's position. I contrast this argument with a rival approach, the Liberal Theory of international leadership. Notwithstanding the fact that the Liberal approach is better known and often implicitly employed by analysts, I show that it often fails to accurately explain leader-follower dynamics.

In order to test these theories, I focus more specifically on policymakers at the top of core states within the transatlantic community. This community is the most interconnected in the world when it comes to coordinating their policies. Furthermore, the power of its top members, the United States, the United Kingdom (UK), France, and Germany, make the

course taken by this community, and the cooperation within it, of prime importance for global politics. I assess the cooperation of policymakers from these four states on crucial security issue which arose in the course of four cases of internationalized intrastate conflicts.

Before I develop these theoretical approaches further, which I will do in the next chapter, I first want in this chapter to explain why international leadership is not self-evident, why it has been neglected in the study of international politics, and how studying this phenomenon will make a significant contribution to our understanding of international cooperation. In the following section, I show that the United States are not always and necessarily the leader on the world scene and that when they attempt to lead, their closest allies do not automatically follow them. I then explain the neglect of leadership, and what we can learn from the few studies that considered leadership as a cooperation process.

### **Round Up the Usual Suspects: The United States of America**

*The mission of the United States is to provide global leadership grounded in the understanding that the world shares a common security and common humanity.*

– Candidate for the US Presidency, Barack Obama<sup>5</sup>

Global leadership naturally brings to mind the President of the United States. Political analysts often assume that the US needs to lead because of their superior military, economic, or normative power. Daniel Morey and his colleagues – who have studied President Obama’s leadership – write that the “importance of understanding if Obama is a leader in world politics is rooted in the necessity of American Leadership.”<sup>6</sup> Because he is at the apex of the world’s hierarchy, the American President is often invoked as a shaman who can magically conjure cooperation and solve problems in front of helpless followers. Richard Cohen writes in the *Washington Post* that “[w]ithout U.S. leadership, nothing happens. Our allies are incapable of leading because (1) they do not have the military wherewithal and (2) they have forgotten how.”<sup>7</sup> So apparently, military capabilities and poor memory make the United States the only

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<sup>5</sup> Obama 2007, 4

<sup>6</sup> Morey et al. 2012, 1187

<sup>7</sup> Richard Cohen 2012

savior in sight. In the words of Robert Lieber, this American leadership role remains “indispensable.”<sup>8</sup> This accepted assumption that the world is looking for US leadership has been ubiquitous both among media commentators and in the scholarly literature. Patrick Cottrell writes in an article in *Foreign Policy Analysis* that “[s]ince the end of the Cold War, the supply of US leadership has not met the global demand for it.”<sup>9</sup> American leadership is a rare luxury product that the world is pleading for. This belief is often justified through the concept of hegemony. If it is true that “[l]eadership is necessarily based on hegemony, while hegemony can only be sustained through leadership,”<sup>10</sup> then the only candidate suitable for leadership is in the White House. Even authors in favor of American retrenchment from international involvement argue that “retrenchment could also allow the United States to restore some luster to its leadership.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, US policymakers will lead better, even in retreat.

This notion is suspicious not just because it is self-evidently accepted and almost never tested, but also because it is pervasive in the rhetoric of political actors. Necessity of US leadership is closely aligned with the core tenets of American exceptionalism. “We must stand for American leadership,” declared US Secretary of State James Baker when testifying before the US Congress in the build-up to the first Gulf War, “not because we seek it but simply because no one else can do the job.”<sup>12</sup> The same argument was used during the Vietnam War, when US Under Secretary of State George Ball declared that the US had to “act with the consciousness that if it fails to discharge its role of leadership there is no other free world power capable of taking its place.”<sup>13</sup> As shown in the opening citation of this section, in 2007 Barack Obama also used the same argument to promote his candidacy. Exceptionalism is grounded in the ideas of material superiority and primacy of American values of freedom and liberty.<sup>14</sup> It provides a rationale for the argument that the superhero that the world wants and needs is dressed in stars and stripes.

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<sup>8</sup> R. J. Lieber 2012, 95

<sup>9</sup> Cottrell 2011, 338

<sup>10</sup> Nabers 2010, 52

<sup>11</sup> Parent and Macdonald 2011, 41

<sup>12</sup> J. A. Baker 1995, 340

<sup>13</sup> Cited in Khong 1992, 160–61

<sup>14</sup> Löfflman 2015

I want to directly challenge this belief in the necessity of American leadership. A review of recent research reveals that the US can follow, that it can fail to lead even if it is willing to do so, and even that other members of the transatlantic community can follow another leader. It does not mean that others have the level of military power and capabilities that the US has, no one does. However, observers talk about more than the mere use or threat of the use of military power when they speak of leadership. If leadership is about bringing followers on board, then evidence from recent research suggests that the structure of power does not determine who leads and why.

### The US as a Follower

*And let me recognize the leadership of President Hollande. I think we all respond to President Hollande's sense of urgency and passion, and therefore, it is imperative that we leave this special high-level meeting resolved to immediately get to work.*

– US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, at the UN General Meeting on the Sahel<sup>15</sup>

There is an accumulating body of evidence that the United States' decision makers have accepted to be followers when another power convincingly takes the lead. Thomas Risse-Kappen has studied several cases of European influence on US policies during tense moments of the Cold War. Despite the constraints of the bipolar structure, US allies, especially British foreign policymakers, exerted influence during the Korean War, the negotiations over the Limited Test Ban Treaty, and the Cuban missile crisis.<sup>16</sup> This influence did not wane after the end of the American-Soviet rivalry. In several cases, Europeans did more than influence US policies, they took the lead in setting the community policies themselves.

As Yugoslavia was torn apart by ethnic conflicts, Germany was the first member of the transatlantic community to recognize Slovenia and Croatia as independent countries. German foreign policymakers went from defectors to leaders when their bold move, breaking with the consensus at the time, was eventually followed by the other countries of the

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<sup>15</sup> Clinton 2012

<sup>16</sup> Risse-Kappen 1995

European community,<sup>17</sup> and later by the United States.<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Paquin has demonstrated that, at the beginning of the break-up of Yugoslavia, the American Administration “was pleased to follow the leadership of the European Community (EC).”<sup>19</sup> As the conflict spread to Bosnia, France and Britain became increasingly active in addressing the crisis, for instance with French President Mitterrand visiting Sarajevo on June 28, 1992. The French President convinced the two sides to let humanitarian relief reach those in need.<sup>20</sup>

Even though the United States exerted substantial leadership in the 1998-1999 operation in response to the Kosovo crisis,<sup>21</sup> as well as an important role in recognizing the country in 2008,<sup>22</sup> some accounts indicate that the push for NATO to intervene in Kosovo was made by British Prime Minister Tony Blair and that the Clinton Administration was initially reluctant to step in.<sup>23</sup> Blair acted as the “leading hawk” of the community.<sup>24</sup> The same year as the US recognition of Kosovo, a secessionist conflict in Georgia spilled into an interstate war involving Russia, a crisis in which French President Sarkozy led the transatlantic community in brokering a cease-fire.<sup>25</sup>

Following the 2011 NATO intervention in the Libyan civil war, some authors found that French leaders showed the way in imposing a no-fly zone over Libya in 2011.<sup>26</sup> Conversely, other scholars argued that the United Kingdom was a key leader during the same crisis,<sup>27</sup> while some described the events as French-British shared leadership.<sup>28</sup> The disagreements on who led is not surprising considering the various definitions of leadership that international researchers are working with. Notwithstanding these disagreements, however, everyone who has studied this case agree that leadership did not originate from the White House.

In my previous research with Jonathan Paquin and Justin Massie, we found similar evidence of US followership. Despite the 2013 crisis in Mali involving the control of territory

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<sup>17</sup> Bearce 2002; B. Crawford 1996; Jakobsen 1995

<sup>18</sup> Paquin 2010, 64

<sup>19</sup> Paquin 2010, 55

<sup>20</sup> Wintz 2010, 51–52

<sup>21</sup> Bislimi 2012

<sup>22</sup> Paquin 2010, 119–21

<sup>23</sup> Art 2004

<sup>24</sup> Wintz 2010, 111

<sup>25</sup> Beauregard 2016; Baldwin 2008

<sup>26</sup> Paquin and Beauregard 2015; Utley 2013, 71

<sup>27</sup> Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014, 898–902

<sup>28</sup> Chivvis 2014, 3–5; Bucher et al. 2013; Davidson 2013; Parent and Macdonald 2011, 33

by radical islamists, US policymakers explicitly recognized French leadership and aligned their international positions to the transatlantic leader.<sup>29</sup> We found that the French operation would not have been possible without American logistical, financial, and intelligence contribution, but Americans were content with empowering their ally's lead.<sup>30</sup>

To sum up, in many cases Washington aligned its positions on the advocated stances of decision makers in Berlin, Paris, or London. American policymakers have therefore accepted to follow rather than to lead themselves or block their allies' initiatives.

### Disagreeing with the Superpower

*Not a man, not a gun must be sent in any way to encourage the anti-Communist crusade in Asia, whether it is under the leadership of the Americans or anyone else.*

– Harold Wilson, before he became British Prime Minister<sup>31</sup>

When the United States' presidents have attempted to lead, they have often failed to persuade allies to come along. Even when rigid blocs divided the world each with its own worldview, transatlantic allies were sometimes reticent to contribute and to fully endorse some American policies, as was the case during the escalation of the war in Vietnam. US President Lyndon Johnson was particularly offended by the refusal of British Prime Minister Wilson to contribute British troops to the US intervention.<sup>32</sup> Even a state as small as Canada became a troublemaker to its powerful neighbor rather than a follower, as Prime Minister Pearson did when he asked for a bombing pause in Vietnam in a speech in Philadelphia, in President Johnson's own country.<sup>33</sup> The next day, when the President and the Prime Minister met, Johnson angrily reproached Pearson, allegedly seizing him by the lapel of his coat and shouting profanities at him.<sup>34</sup>

Several years later, when war flared in the Middle East in the October of 1973, France and the UK made a joint declaration criticizing US policy. President Nixon was not able to

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<sup>29</sup> Paquin, Massie, and Beauregard 2017, 193–94

<sup>30</sup> Paquin, Massie, and Beauregard 2017, 199–200

<sup>31</sup> Ellis 2004, Ch. 1

<sup>32</sup> Ellis 2004, Ch. 2

<sup>33</sup> Kelly 2017

<sup>34</sup> Kelly 2017, 372–73

bring his core partners on board, and several European allies “denied base access rights to U.S. transport aircraft on their way to resupply the Israelis, forcing them to fly an extra 1000 to 2000 miles.”<sup>35</sup>

In the militarily unipolar post-Cold War world, the most spectacular failure of leadership occurred under Georges W. Bush as the President and his Administration failed to convince important allies to support their invasion of Iraq. In 2003, core allies such as French and German policymakers even argued and lobbied against American positions.<sup>36</sup> For some scholars, the alliance thus faced a severe crisis during the Iraq war of 2003,<sup>37</sup> while for others these dramatic calls are exaggerated.<sup>38</sup> Following these disagreements across the Atlantic, realist scholars have debated around the notion of soft-balancing, which suggests that European powers facing unipolarity are increasingly seeking to constrain US power and are likely to refuse to follow US leaders.<sup>39</sup> Philip Gordon and Jeremy Shapiro, in their book *Allies at War*, argue that Iraq was a major transatlantic crisis, due to several factors, one of which is “poor leadership” from the Bush Administration and “a desire to reestablish Franco-German leadership of the EU” on the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>40</sup> This analysis preserves the confusion around leadership: both the lack of skills and the desires of allies are combined in the same concept.

Despite its dominating position in terms of military and economic relative power, United States’ leadership is not always easy nor is it automatically guaranteed from allies. Or in the words of Gordon and Shapiro, “even a superpower needs allies, and therefore needs to take allies’ legitimate concerns into account.”<sup>41</sup> The criticized concept of soft-balancing itself is an attempt to make realist structural expectations fit the empirical data when it clearly does not: the distribution of power did not allow the superpower to assert its leadership. Nor did it lead to full-blown balancing against the US. Even scholars who recognize US global structural leadership have argued that the contemporary context makes this leadership more difficult. In order to avoid appearing too dominant, the United States “will have to focus their

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<sup>35</sup> P. H. Gordon and Shapiro 2004, 29–30

<sup>36</sup> Hitchcock 2008; Lansford and Tashev 2005

<sup>37</sup> Cox 2005; Allin 2004

<sup>38</sup> Cavatorta and Durac 2009; W. J. Thies 2009; Jones 2004; Peterson 2004

<sup>39</sup> Art et al. 2005; Kelley 2005; K. A. Lieber and Alexander 2005; Pape 2005; Paul 2004

<sup>40</sup> P. H. Gordon and Shapiro 2004, 8, 11

<sup>41</sup> P. H. Gordon and Shapiro 2004, 12



efforts in foreign activities on creating a global community of shared interest in which others have good reasons (other than fear and misery) to follow the leader.”<sup>42</sup>

### When Transatlantic Policymakers Follow Others

The literatures on middle power leadership and European Union (EU) leadership suggest that on several international issues, policymakers from states with less material power, or institutions that represent several states, do attempt to lead and sometimes succeed in persuading others to rally behind them, especially inside the transatlantic community. In some of these instances, the United States was completely absent.

On matters of human security like the International Criminal Court or the Treaty to ban landmines, Western allies have coordinated their positions on Canadian or Danish leadership even when the United States refused to jump on the train.<sup>43</sup> During the Uruguay round of negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), small and middle powers cooperated to exert leadership when the United States was unable to do so.<sup>44</sup> On environmental issues, EU institutions played an important leadership role in the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol and then, in 2001, EU actors managed to convince enough followers for the Protocol to enter into force despite “US hostility and opposition.”<sup>45</sup>

Despite the fact that the international structure remained mostly the same during these events – either bipolar with the US as the most powerful pole, or unipolar with the US as the only superpower – there was substantial variation in who led, and whether followers agreed to follow the leader or not, even when that leader was the American President. The Americans are not always willing and able to lead, and their partners in the community do not always follow this lead. They may even decide to take the lead themselves when the US is reticent to do so. For a highly salient security issue like a military intervention, the US may shoulder the lion’s share of the military burden, but the initial idea and impulse, the diplomatic and political lead may not necessarily come from American policymakers. The NATO intervention in Libya is a clear example of this.

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<sup>42</sup> Helms 2014, 268

<sup>43</sup> Behringer 2005

<sup>44</sup> Sjöstedt 1994, 55; Higgott and Cooper 1990

<sup>45</sup> Parker and Karlsson 2010, 929

If US leadership is neither necessary nor guaranteed, and followership is not automatic and determined by the structure of power, then who leads and why, and who follows and why, still remains to be explained.

### **A Story of Neglect**

After I decided to make leadership the cornerstone of my doctoral dissertation, I was surprised when I discovered that my university's library has entire rows of books on leadership in the business management and psychology sections, but few in the political science section, and barely any on international politics. I also discovered that an entire journal is dedicated to leadership, the *Leadership Quarterly*. For 2017, this journal had a 5-year impact factor of 5.3, yet, articles from this journal are almost never cited in political science. Most contributions to the journal come from management researchers and psychologists. Reviewing the theoretical approaches to leadership in psychology, Avolio, Walumbra and Weber identify several approaches: authentic leadership, social identity leadership, new-genre leadership research, complexity leadership (complex adaptive system), shared leadership, leader-member exchange theories, leader-follower approaches (social constructionism), servant leadership, and others.<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile, it is difficult to identify one such well-developed approach in International Relations (IR) or Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). Even the notable exceptions, such as functional-systemic leadership and the application of role theory to leadership, are not as developed, have not been extensively discussed, and are rather marginal in the discipline. The mere mention of leadership is frequent in international political studies, but a better indicator might be how often the concept is considered important enough to figure in the title. A quick search reveals that "Leadership" appears 74 times in the article titles of *The Academy of Management Journal* (1963-2012), and 35 times in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (1965-November 2018). By contrast, leadership appeared only sixteen times in the titles of the *American Journal of Political Science* (1973-2016), and a mere seven times in the titles of the journal *International Organization* (1947-2014). The *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, unknown by most scholars of international politics, suspended its publication in 2015 after 10 years in relative obscurity.

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<sup>46</sup> Avolio, Walumbra, and Weber 2009

This state of affairs is surprising considering that even Max Weber defined politics as the study of “the leadership, or the influencing of the leadership, of a political association, hence today, of a state.”<sup>47</sup> Why do political scientists dismiss the concept of leadership, especially with regard to questions of international politics? In this section, I elaborate on three main reasons why I believe leadership has been neglected. I must note two things about this section. First, I am going to speak here at a very general level and in broad strokes about the discipline, with no intention of covering everything. I believe that the portrait that I draw here is accurate as far as the broad tendencies in international scholarship goes. And second, yes there are exceptions, that is, researchers who have addressed the issue of international leadership as a cooperation process. I come back to these exceptions later.

### All in the Structure

Leadership is a process where a human agent induces other agents to rally behind his or her international positions. While all agents operate within a wider social structure, studying leader-follower dynamics requires a look at how interactions unfold in time *within* a given structure. The original impulse in IR to study the wider international structure rather than agents and their interactions stems from Kenneth Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics*, first published in 1979. Ever since, IR approaches that focus on the state and wider international structures have dominated the discipline. Agents, whether conceived as policymakers or states, and their interactions, have been undertheorized.

Recent scholarly work in IR has been dominated by constructivism. Constructivist scholars have opened the way to consider agent-level variables by arguing that agents and their interactions shape the structure. Constructivists take agency seriously and consider how agents’ practices transform the structure. For example, Alexander Wendt discusses role theory and argues that “[r]oles are not played in mechanical fashion,” and that “[e]ven in the most constrained situation, role performance involves a choice by the actor.”<sup>48</sup> While some constructivist research focused on how structure constrains and constitutes agents,<sup>49</sup> others have addressed the question of how agents build and transform normative structures. The

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<sup>47</sup> Weber 1958, 77

<sup>48</sup> Wendt 1992, 419

<sup>49</sup> Gheciu 2005; J. Lewis 2005; Checkel 2005; Checkel 1999; Hopf 1998, 177; Katzenstein 1996; Price and Tannenwald 1996

latter study how activists or norm entrepreneurs mobilize on an issue and persuade state leaders to adopt new norms.<sup>50</sup> Constructivists have also studied how normative structures unravel and lose their legitimacy.<sup>51</sup> NATO and EU researchers found that actors attempt to “upload” their views in order to change international or supranational institutions.<sup>52</sup>

This research has been focused on norm change at the detriment of how human agents actually behave within a given structure. How do agents navigate these structures, strategically employ them, and interact in complex processes to cooperate on specific issues? Some constructivists seem to believe that once norms are well established, they rigidly constrain agents. This is the reason why they have neglected the other side of the story. For instance, Wendt declares conscious choice an “exceptional” occurrence and he later specifies that roles are in fact “attributes of structure, not agents.”<sup>53</sup> Although constructivists theoretically consider the possibility of agency, they often “in practice remove agency and focus on reified social structures as objective determinants of agent choice.”<sup>54</sup> Conversely, several constructivist authors recognize the limits of normative structures.

The framework developed by Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink provides a good example of this. They show how norm entrepreneurs advocate for a new norm by persuading other actors, especially states, to adopt and institutionalize this norm. The norm then reaches a tipping point after which it cascades and becomes widely accepted. Finally, norms are internalized and acquire a taken-for-granted quality. Finnemore and Sikkink, however, also speak of norm leaders and they seem to equate these leaders with states that actually implement norms. For instance, they write that institutionalization contributes to the possibility of a norm cascade because it spells out “the procedures by which norm leaders coordinate disapproval and sanctions for norm breaking.”<sup>55</sup> This suggests that in specific context and on actual issues, applying a norm is thus not automatic or self-evident. States must coordinate their response in how they apply what norms to what cases, and what policies will result. This process seems at least as important as wider norm change: if norms do not directly produce cooperation on specific international policies, as some constructivist authors

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<sup>50</sup> e.g., Klotz 1995

<sup>51</sup> Koschut 2016

<sup>52</sup> Koschut 2014a; James 2010; Börzel 2002

<sup>53</sup> Wendt 1999, 257

<sup>54</sup> Shannon 2000, 311

<sup>55</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 900

assume, then the cooperation process under a given normative structure is not fully explained by specifying normative change. As Audie Klotz recognizes,

International norms, for a constructivist, do not, strictly speaking, determine behavior since they constitute identities and interests and define a range of legitimate policy options. The legitimation of certain goals and means, therefore, constrains choices even though it cannot predict more than a range of possible choices.<sup>56</sup>

Finnemore and Sikkink recognize this as well, they write,

Actors may face varied and conflicting rules and norms all making claims for different courses of action. Indeed, most significant political choices are significant and difficult precisely because they involve two or more conflicting claims for action on a decision maker.<sup>57</sup>

So constructivists recognize that several norms compete in concrete cases, and that decision makers face difficult choices. However, since they want to explain norm change and claim that decision makers can choose to adopt new norms, then they must also agree that actors might disregard or violate existing norms and chart a new path. Norms and their parameters are often ambiguous and open to interpretation, as are the situations to which they apply.<sup>58</sup> If the structure is very loose and open to a wide range of possibilities and interpretations, then there is still a long way to go in explaining actual cooperation. Actors may be restricted in what norms they can challenge at a given time, and how far they may go in disregarding some powerful social norms, but the possibility that they can escape, redefine, or replace norms mean that the structure not only does not determine their behavior, but its effects depend on a more specific within-structure process that has been neglected. The usual shortcut from norm change to policy change has been challenged by some constructivists. For instance, Ole Elgström showed how agreeing on a norm is just the beginning and not the end: agents will then have to negotiate over the precise text and formulation of these norms, and when it comes to policies, how they should be implemented and by whom.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Klotz 1995, 461–62

<sup>57</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 914

<sup>58</sup> Shannon 2000, 304–5

<sup>59</sup> Elgström 2000

The empirical record shows that leaders and followers did vary within similar normative structures. This is not surprising since policymakers and states have to respond to different issues, and can draw from multiple identities and norms to ground their action. Colin Wight has discussed the issue that understanding the rules of chess is not the same as understanding the specific move that a player makes in the game. Wight contends that knowing the meaning of an act

will not tell us why that particular act was chosen out of the totality of possible acts on offer in the social field at any given time, and we will need to broaden the horizon of our analysis in order to ascertain the motives and reasons (the causes) underlying the behaviour.<sup>60</sup>

Ole Jabob Sending has discussed this issue at length. He criticizes constructivist scholars focused on the logic of appropriateness and holism for overwhelmingly emphasizing structure at the detriment of agency. Norms and identities then directly become the explanation of action.<sup>61</sup> Taking the choices of agents seriously requires what he calls a motivational externalist position, one in which action is related to norms by the rule “to know that x ought to be done does not give sufficient motive to do x but only indirectly, *and coupled with other reasons*, motivates x.”<sup>62</sup> Craig Parsons has similarly discussed how constructivists tend to downplay agency, political conflict, and power in studying cooperation and how new ideas are institutionalized.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, although I agree with constructivists that the establishment of certain structures of identities, norms, and beliefs can be conducive to cooperation, this tells us little about how cooperation actually unfolds within these structures. In the end, international norms are what state leaders make of them.<sup>64</sup> How are identities selected, some norms emphasized above others, and beliefs applied to specific issues? What makes cooperation work in a normative structure and what impedes it? The leadership process occurs within an existing structure, so that the goal is not to explain wider social change but specific

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<sup>60</sup> Wight 2006, 276

<sup>61</sup> Sending 2002, 462

<sup>62</sup> Sending 2002, 454

<sup>63</sup> Parsons 2003, 238

<sup>64</sup> Shannon 2000, 294

cooperation on issues within this structure. Leaders and followers willingly adopt positions, they make decisions in the course of the cooperation process.

Relevant to this discussion are the concepts of willingness and opportunities developed by Most and Starr. Opportunity represents the possibilities available within the environment and the capabilities of an actor, while willingness includes motivation, choices and perceptions attributed to the agent. According to Most and Starr, the opportunity-to-willingness relationship is the most common, where ample opportunity creates new willingness because “opportunities create incentive structures of costs and benefits, or risk and opportunity; of more and less probable behavior.”<sup>65</sup> In IR, this idea that the possession of power in a structure leads to a change in willingness has been expressed by Kenneth Waltz. According to Waltz, “[s]tates having a surplus of power are tempted to use it” as unchecked powers follow their internal impulses.<sup>66</sup> Opportunities may also act as constraints, for instance some structural feature may remove opportunities, as when peaceful communities – an ideational structure – remove the possibility of interstate conflict between members.<sup>67</sup>

The opportunity-to-willingness conduit is usually assumed to be the most salient in international political studies, where the structure of opportunities determines the willingness of agents and their possible courses of action. It is easy to understand why this leaves leadership in the shadows: who leads and why they are willing to do so does not matter if abstract structures determine what actors want, what they can do and what they will do in the end. This idea that actors will respond to shifts in the structure in a very similar way according to some “basic impulses” is not just an enormous simplification, but a dangerous distortion of international politics. Agency and the extraordinary diversity of actors’ goals and behaviors are crushed under the weight of the structure. Human agents can frequently both be stuck in their routines and forego structural opportunities, or deploy outstanding creative solutions, thus charting a path that did not seem part of the repertoire of options. Substantial variation within a similar power structure, as found in the empirical inquiries discussed in the previous section, gives good empirical ground to be skeptical of main theoretical approaches in IR.

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<sup>65</sup> Most and Starr 1989, 43

<sup>66</sup> Waltz 2000, 13, 24

<sup>67</sup> Most and Starr 1989, 37–38

### Cast Away: The Isolated Decision Maker

It might be unsurprising that general IR approaches that consider the system as a whole might handle elements of the broad structure better than characteristics of agents and their purposeful actions. What may be more surprising is that Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), the branch of the study of international politics focused on unpacking the states' processes and understanding these processes from the perspective of decision makers, has also neglected leadership as cooperation.

In FPA, research programs considered leadership styles in decision making as well as the leadership of public opinion. The former is concerned with how leaders organize their relations with their advisers, decide how they want to receive information, what process they favor to make decisions, their preferred strategies, and what are their core beliefs.<sup>68</sup> The latter emphasizes how political leaders succeed or fail to influence their national audience in supporting their decisions.<sup>69</sup> These literatures therefore answer the questions of how national decision makers think and organize their close environment in order to make decisions, and how policy executives convince their domestic constituency to support their policies. The subject of how, in this policymaking process, decision makers influence each other on the international scene, and succeed or fail to reach common positions has been sidestepped.

FPA scholars prefer in-depth studies of a given polity's foreign policymaking process. The consequence of this choice is that they tend to study states as isolated silos, as black boxes that need to be opened. Even when foreign policy analyses are compared, the comparison of the process in different states does not account for the interactions and influence dynamics *between* states. FPA is often based on the assumption that dissecting the process in one state can inform as to how policy is made in other states, and that international politics is an aggregate of these foreign policies. Even without the usual criticism of the "second image" that the system is more than the sum of its parts, this approach leaves in the dark how decision makers from other nations can influence the policy process from the beginning. International issues and crises are often the consequences of the behavior of other actors, and it is strange to say the least to consider that to study internal bureaucratic politics, organizational routines or cognitive aspects of individual decision makers *as if independent*

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<sup>68</sup> Shannon and Keller 2007; Dyson 2006; Keller 2005; Kaarbo and Hermann 1998; Kaarbo 1997; M. G. Hermann and Preston 1994; Goldgeier 1994; A. L. George 1988

<sup>69</sup> J. Cohen 2015; Eshbaugh-Soha and Linebarger 2014; Rottinghaus 2008; D. P. Schmitt and Winter 1998



of their foreign counterparts could provide a satisfactory explanation for foreign policy positioning. Alexander Wendt writes of such unit-level approaches that “[b]y explaining outcomes in an inside-out fashion such theories assume tacitly that states are autistic.”<sup>70</sup> This is a difficult assumption to defend. For instance, recent research on diplomatic ties and recognition found that instead of resulting from an internal decision process, “states condition their ties on the ties of others” inside networks of influence.<sup>71</sup>

As an illustration of the neglect of leadership as a cooperation process, and the focus on the isolated individual, consider the chapter written by Michael C. Horowitz, a leading foreign policy scholar in studying leaders, in the 2018 *Oxford Handbook of International Security*. In a chapter titled “Leaders, leadership, and international security,” Horowitz never gives a definition of what leadership is, nor does he discuss the competing definitions in the field. As is often the case in FPA, he mostly reviews individual-level approaches as synonymous with “leadership.” This suggests that studying individual policymakers’ personalities, beliefs, background experience and knowledge, as well as their bureaucratic framework and change in office, is sufficient to understand international leadership.<sup>72</sup>

International leadership as cooperation is therefore also a blind spot of FPA’s main research programs on leadership. This neglect is becoming increasingly anachronistic in a world in which technological developments now permit decision makers of one state to easily communicate with the policymakers of another, or even meet them in person to discuss the issue face-to-face. The proliferation of international organizations has also created a number of institutional fora in which state representatives constantly exchange information and debate in real time.

### Theoretical Dynamite: A Normatively Loaded Concept

Leadership almost always carries a strong normative charge. Leadership is perceived as a positive quality, and so it is used by several commentators to support a decision maker they agree with while lack of leadership is used as a bludgeon to castigate adversaries. Leadership

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<sup>70</sup> Wendt 1999, 148

<sup>71</sup> Kinne 2014

<sup>72</sup> Horowitz 2018

has been used in this way to condemn,<sup>73</sup> or praise<sup>74</sup> President Obama's foreign policy, while the President himself has used the concept to promote his candidacy and policies.<sup>75</sup> Political scientists and commentators often refer to leadership in order to give advice on what they think top decision makers should do.<sup>76</sup> This positive bias may not be surprising because, as Gary Yukl observes, the concept of leadership "connotes images of powerful, dynamic individual who commands victorious armies, direct corporate empires atop gleaming skyscrapers, or shape the course of nations."<sup>77</sup> This optimism might also be due to the fact that business management, the domain where the concept has been the most utilized, is focused on effectiveness,<sup>78</sup> and usually perceives leadership as a set of positive features for leaders to learn.<sup>79</sup>

Several definitions of leadership in political science suggest that the concept is good in itself by closely tying the concept to the capacity to achieve goals or solve problems.<sup>80</sup> There is often a confusion between leadership and the successful achievement of outcomes. The most often cited definition, for instance, is James McGregor Burns' idea that leadership is "leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations – *of both leaders and followers.*"<sup>81</sup> While this definition is excellent, Burns writes in the same book that "the test of the extent and quality of power and leadership is the degree of *actual accomplishment* of the promised change."<sup>82</sup> Indeed, Burns is focused on what he calls transformational leadership, which is the kind of leadership that raises both leaders and followers to "higher levels of motivation and morality" and produces "concrete changes in people's lives."<sup>83</sup> This suggests, somehow in contradiction with the definition, that real, complete or "quality" leaders do not only induce followers to act purposively, but actually accomplish change. Moreover, this change is inevitably positive and moral.

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<sup>73</sup> Richard Cohen 2012; Morey et al. 2012; Krauthammer 2011

<sup>74</sup> S. M. Walt 2013; Quinn 2011

<sup>75</sup> Obama 2011; Obama 2007

<sup>76</sup> M. E. Brown 2007, 49; Jervis 1994; Harriman 1954

<sup>77</sup> Yukl 1998, 1

<sup>78</sup> Yukl 1998, 1–6

<sup>79</sup> Kellerman 2004

<sup>80</sup> Nye 2013; Nye 2008; O. Young 1991; Kellerman 1991; Rosenau and Holsti 1983; Laitin and Lustick 1974

<sup>81</sup> Italics in original, Burns 1978, 19

<sup>82</sup> Emphasis in original, Burns 1978, 22

<sup>83</sup> Burns 1978, 20, 414

Commentators and scholars often present a negative evaluation of leadership after something has failed, or praise good leadership when it succeeded. Gordon and Shapiro write, among other factors, of poor leadership as a factor in explaining the allies' disagreements over the 2003 invasion of Iraq. They do not feel the need to define what they mean, as surely the failure of bringing allies on board was due to bad leadership. Bruce MacLaury, in his foreword to Susan Woodward's book *Balkan Tragedy* writes, "[a]lthough major powers considered the conflict of little strategic consequence, their inability to prevent the violence, reverse its course, or resolve the crisis was widely judged a failure of Western leadership."<sup>84</sup> It seems that leadership is that magic wand that would solve all problems, including ethnic conflict. And that it should do so even when policymakers are not willing to lead and do not consider it important themselves. When the Obama Administration announced that a team of US Navy Seals had successfully killed Osama Ben Laden, Andrew Kohut, then director of the PEW research center, declared that "[w]hat happened here may improve impressions that he is a strong and forceful leader, and that's the enduring potential benefit."<sup>85</sup> There is nothing that makes leadership like success.

In this study, I will take great care to avoid this pitfall of many leadership approaches, that is, the idea that leadership *in itself* is a normatively good thing. This normative bias changes the question to *what policies should leaders promote* rather than inquiry about the actual cooperation process of following a leader. Leadership is important for international cooperation, but it is not inherently good. An evil leader may convince followers to come along, just like failed leadership might be a good thing if the ideas advocated by the leader were wrong. Leadership may influence how an international crisis unfolds, but we should not expect the leadership cooperation process to completely determine outcomes. Even the best-led coalition may not be able to solve ethnic conflicts or civil wars.

### **Leadership in the Era of Globalization**

Since leadership has been associated with so many different meanings and theories, it might seem a better idea to discard the concept altogether. However, I argue that leadership still has much to contribute. First, the leader-follower relationship clearly differs from one

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<sup>84</sup> Woodward 1995, vii

<sup>85</sup> Dharapak 2011

international crisis to the next, and there are no theories right now to explain why this is happening. The leader can set the direction for a community and influence the other members' position, whether he is successful or not, so that who emerges as a leader and why matters. Followers also have the power to enhance the leader's position or to contest and weaken it. It appears intuitive that coalitions led on the international scene will influence international cooperation dynamics, which makes the neglect of this process even more surprising.

Another reason to continue talking about leadership is that the concept allows international scholars to tap in a rich literature in management and social psychology that has developed several theories about how leadership works. Of course, we need to do more than just copy and paste these theories, but if adapted correctly, they can provide many interesting ideas for how international leadership works. Psychological research conducted in a more controlled environment provides insight about several basic mechanisms, uncovering the ways humans think and act which are useful basic ingredients for a theory of international leadership.

Leadership is also highly relevant to the current era of international politics. Globalization has changed the landscape where world politics takes place. The rapid decline of the cost of storing and transmitting information, the shrinking of distances from faster modes of transportation, and the multiplication of exchanges across national borders have reshaped political processes. These technological advances combined with the opening of markets, both the economic and technical aspects of globalization, have brought to the fore new issues and threats for the security of states.<sup>86</sup> The result of these new dynamics is a highly uncertain and complex world to manage for foreign policymakers. The NATO 2010 Strategic Concept is illustrative of the current era. It mentions the alliance as an "essential source of stability in an uncertain and unpredictable world."<sup>87</sup> The document mentions a plethora of potential dangers in the security environment, including terrorism, violent extremism, nuclear proliferation, piracy, environmental degradation, energy supply, cyber-attacks, traffic of illegal drugs, degradation of NATO-Russia relations, ethnic, national and religious rivalries, illegal immigration, pandemic disease, and poverty.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Booth 2005

<sup>87</sup> NATO 2010, 5

<sup>88</sup> NATO 2010, 13

These threats are often intertwined in complex ways and their evolution is difficult to predict. For instance, as Steinbruner has noted, terrorists seek to engender self-destructive overreactions from their targets, but the skillful handling of this provocation process is unlikely to be sufficient without addressing the underlying grievances and equity problems associated with globalization that may plausibly have a role in the appeal of terrorist organizations.<sup>89</sup> In this context, adaptability becomes a crucial feature for communities, they will require “accuracy, clarity, and consensus in sufficient time” to deal with these issues.<sup>90</sup> Leadership can make a powerful contribution not just in proposing creative solutions for these problems and persuading a wide range of actors to accept them, but also in creating more problems or worsening the situation by refusing to change, proposing solutions without thinking through their negative effects, or engaging in a contested bid for leadership that leaves the community divided. Leadership becomes more important at the same time as international cooperation is increasingly complex. NATO officials recognize this when they write that the “increasing complexity of the global political environment has the potential to gnaw away at Alliance cohesion...”<sup>91</sup> Who leads and who follows, and how, is increasingly crucial to ensure cohesion and consistency in addressing contemporary international problems.

### State Policymakers and Leadership

Many authors contend that the processes of contemporary world politics result in the fact that leadership may not emerge from state policymakers anymore, and that these state leaders matter less and less in a globalized world. The development of international and domestic institutions, especially in advanced democracies, appears to increasingly constrain decision makers. The multiplication of veto players, political actors whose support is necessary for a policy decision,<sup>92</sup> means that more actors are able to block a leader willing to advocate a strong position on an issue. Research has shown that veto players constrain the executive branch on issues like the respect for human rights,<sup>93</sup> trade policy,<sup>94</sup> and even participation in

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<sup>89</sup> Steinbruner 2002, xviii

<sup>90</sup> Steinbruner 2002, xv

<sup>91</sup> NATO 2010, 6

<sup>92</sup> Tsebelis, 293

<sup>93</sup> Lupu 2015

<sup>94</sup> O'Reilly 2005

military intervention.<sup>95</sup> For instance, Jacques Hymans argued that the advocacy of environmental groups, demands for transparency and risk reduction, as well as neoliberal ideas have transformed nuclear policy in several democratic countries by increasing the number of veto players.<sup>96</sup> Policymakers are thus increasingly constrained and less likely to be able to decide on their own to acquire the bomb. At the international level, this means that policymakers have less flexibility in adopting their international positions and must consult a wide range of actors before taking a stance. Decisive and strong leadership is traded for consultation, compromise, and complex negotiations.

A second concern is that the emergent epoch of globalization leads to the disaggregation of the power of national decision makers. James Rosenau, for instance, argues that, “[d]isaggregated authority and the proliferation of actors has led to the emergence of the multi-centric world as a sometimes partner, sometimes rival, and sometimes co-equal of the long-standing state-centric world...”<sup>97</sup> The argument rests on the increasingly porous character of borders, the complexity of policy networks of influence, and the multi-level character of governance to illustrate how state authority or sovereignty, while it remains an important fact of world politics, has been substantially eroded. This erosion is the consequence of integration-disintegration dynamics.<sup>98</sup> In these dynamics, some political processes have moved to the supranational or international level, while counterbalancing tendencies have refocused other issues at the regional or local level, with state leaders torn apart in the middle. As a result of these dynamics, it would seem that formal state decision makers and their attempt to lead the world would not be an appropriate or interesting object of study. In light of the above arguments, this choice appears misguided or anachronistic.

These emerging dynamics are very complex and sometimes surprising in their effects. Contrary to what some researchers suggest, I argue that four factors actually push in the direction of more importance for leadership, and especially for state leaders. First, multiple channels and institutions mean that there are alternate pathways for decision makers to reach their goal. If one way is blocked by an actor, it is possible to chart another path and still reach the same or a similar outcome. The literature on the European Union provides interesting

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<sup>95</sup> Mello 2012

<sup>96</sup> J. E. C. Hymans 2011, 159

<sup>97</sup> Rosenau 2006, 14

<sup>98</sup> Also called fragementation, see Rosenau 2006, 28

examples to illustrate this. The EU is currently the most advanced supranational construction and most integrated bloc in the world, so that the processes of globalization are particularly salient in EU research. Schreurs and Tiberghien – who studied the European infrastructure of multi-level governance – contend that this structure “has created multiple and mutually-reinforcing opportunities for leadership.”<sup>99</sup> A skilled leader, no matter at what level, may stand out from the various actors advocating for usual positions, and use this structure to his or her advantage. Leadership opportunities may multiply faster than veto players.

Second, paradoxically, a multiplicity of new actors may enhance state decision makers’ opportunities for leadership. Instead of merely competing with states in an interstate game, if states are now competing with a wide range of different and heterogenous actors, they may be in an even better position to exert social influence. Only a few regional states and international institutions have the levels of resources, capabilities, and access to information comparable with states. None have the level of capability of great powers. States may therefore encourage this multiplication in a way that reinforces rather than weakens them. Interest groups may be played against one another. National interest or democratic legitimacy may be invoked by elected leaders against special interests or unelected officials at the head of international organizations. New institutions and actors in this complex game can be instrumentalized by decision makers to reduce their responsibility by putting the blame on others. A variety of such complex dynamics means that skilled foreign policymakers may actually gain leverage on several issues instead of being undermined by these developments.

Again, the unintended effects of multi-level governance in the EU provide interesting examples. Frédéric Mérand and his colleagues showed that the EU governance of foreign policy can be understood as a social structure with multiple actors where access to policy networks and the structure of complex multi-level interactions shape policymaking. However, they also find that state actors remain central to those networks: their power has not been diluted, but reconstituted at the European level.<sup>100</sup> Other research concludes that the multi-level structure of the EU may trigger dynamics leading to centralization of powers around the prime ministers,<sup>101</sup> and that decision makers may now evade responsibility by

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<sup>99</sup> Schreurs and Tiberghien 2007, 24

<sup>100</sup> Mérand, Hofmann, and Irondelle 2011

<sup>101</sup> James 2010, 824

scapegoating Brussels.<sup>102</sup> The state executives remain at the very least central gatekeepers, and may even have more leverage for influence.

Singh has addressed the question of how information technologies undermine the authority of the state: he argues that we have moved from a world of technological order to pluralism, from legitimacy to advocacy, where “competing and multiple technologies often have distinct, competing, and intersecting bases of support.”<sup>103</sup> Surprisingly, the undermining of state sovereignty and authority could provide greater opportunity for international leadership. The head of state or minister who can persuade others to rally behind his or her positions can gain more clout in a world where merely being at the top of a state apparatus is not sufficient anymore to be legitimate. The ultimate formal decision makers for politically important decisions remains the policy executives at the top of the state hierarchy. These top decision makers adopt positions, justify them in the eyes of multiple audiences (the media, their domestic society, other decision makers) and they embody and socially construct leadership. An international leader may provide positions, ideas and justifications that will legitimize the foreign policy of another state’s policymaker, a follower, or do so for the follower’s domestic audience. Following a powerful international leader or doing what is right in the context of an international community are powerful arguments to strengthen state legitimacy. Leadership provides a new base of support for state policies.

National foreign policymakers are very well positioned to lead in this multi-centric and interconnected world: they remain central in networks and relatively resourceful. As an example, Peter Evans has argued that greater reliance on trade and financial markets have actually increased the role of the state.<sup>104</sup> Access to both advanced technology and markets overwhelmingly depends on the regulation and policies of states, and in return, technological and financial assets bolster states’ influence. In studying leadership during international trade negotiations, Arild Underdal argued that the more complex the negotiation setting in terms of the number of issues and their intricacy, the number of actors and the short length of decision time, the more the demand for leadership is enhanced.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Börzel 2002, 208

<sup>103</sup> Singh 2002, 25

<sup>104</sup> Evans 1997, 68–72

<sup>105</sup> Underdal 1994, 179–80, 183



A third reason why leadership is salient in the contemporary world is that the multiplicity of political actors may also create an environment beneficial to creativity and the emergence of new ideas. Jonathan Aronson has argued that “the emergence of global networks and their ability to manage vast amounts of data makes it possible for governments, firms, groups, organizations, and individuals to dream of projects and consider alternative policies in new ways.”<sup>106</sup> New and creative courses of action may convince others to try new paths. This means that a rigid view of the structure that constrains the agents and only provides for a limited number of options is increasingly harder to sustain. State decision makers are very well positioned to have access to other actors, information, and the most advanced technology, and are thus privileged actors to show the way in charting new paths.

Finally, the move from “order to plurality,”<sup>107</sup> a world where “uncertainty is the norm”<sup>108</sup> psychologically enhances the need for leadership. Decision makers work in a high-speed context loaded with uncertainty, and leadership may serve as a useful cue for them to reduce this uncertainty. Psychological and political studies have argued that the need for leadership is enhanced by uncertainty.<sup>109</sup> A leader’s position may guide fellow members of a community and provide a path to follow in times of crisis or turmoil when they are not sure where to go or how to manage uncertainty. Our contemporary world brings to the fore the core paradox that everyone wants their voice to be heard, often rightfully so, but at the same time people are looking for direction and meaning realized in the person of a charismatic and powerful leader.

Perhaps counter-intuitively, the multiplicity of channels and actors, the rich flow of information, and the rising uncertainty may all enhance the international leadership of states’ key decision makers. However, it should be clear that although I focus on these policymakers, I do not argue that they are the only ones who can lead. World leadership may sometimes arise from a figure outside of state representatives and not predisposed to lead by its position in the international structure. As I show in the next section, some researchers have begun to

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<sup>106</sup> Aronson 2002, 58

<sup>107</sup> Singh 2002, 23

<sup>108</sup> Rosenau 2006, 108

<sup>109</sup> Hogg 2001, 194; Searing 1995, 680; Seligman 1950, 906

address questions of leadership and tap into the potential of this process in the era of globalization, but most of these approaches are still embryonic.

### **Current Research on International Leadership**

Three research programs that have begun addressing these questions have important lessons to teach us about international leadership and how we might want to understand it. I label these programs functional-systemic leadership, role theory, and the practice turn.

The first approach studies leadership as a problem-solving device for collective action problems. Oran Young provides a definition in line with this functional-systemic approach, leadership is “the actions of individuals who endeavor to solve or circumvent the collective action problems that plague the efforts of parties seeking to reap joint gains in processes of institutional bargaining.”<sup>110</sup> Leaders may fulfill several functions to enhance cooperation: setting the agenda, brokering to overcome deadlocks, proposing new ideas, providing incentives to gain leverage in bargaining, or setting a positive example for others to follow.<sup>111</sup>

I agree with this approach that leadership is important for collective action. These scholars have also shown how leadership is issue-specific and depends on precise issue-areas. Researchers should not make wide general claims about how one leader will always lead in many domains of activity, as a leader on one issue may become a follower in others.

However, I have some qualms with this approach to leadership. First, there is no agreement on what functions leadership can or should fulfill. Functional-systemic theories require understanding the entire cooperation system in view of the needs of its parts. These theories have a teleological aspect where the most relevant goals to attain must be identified from the onset, which is difficult in international politics where there is often no agreement on the goals to reach.<sup>112</sup> Secondly, the normative bias of leadership also rears its head in this conception, as leadership becomes a solution to a problem. This inevitably shows leadership in a positive light where the explanation is the solution. It seems clear that leadership can have adverse or unforeseen dysfunctional consequences, especially in the realm of security.

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<sup>110</sup> O. Young 1991, 285

<sup>111</sup> Bäckstrand and Elgström 2013; Parker and Karlsson 2010; Tallberg 2006; Underdal 1994; O. Young 1991

<sup>112</sup> Little 1991, 93; Tilly 2001, 23–24

It can be a solution as much as a problem. Finally, we need to move beyond leadership in situations of institutional bargaining to consider how leadership influences cooperation within existing institutional structures.

Another approach has its roots in symbolic interactionism.<sup>113</sup> Role theory considers how policymakers perform roles in social interactions. A role is a coherent set of behaviors that an actor performs depending on the social situation. Policymakers' conception of their national roles prescribes specific behaviors, and this conception is influenced by the others' reaction to this role performance. Aggestam and Johansson conceptualize leadership as "a process in which an actor purposely seeks to influence and guide activities in group towards collective goals, decisions and desired outcomes."<sup>114</sup> Leadership is a co-constitutive relationship between followers' expectations and leaders' role conception which produces legitimacy.

I commend role theory in their effort to bridge the gap between FPA and IR by considering how agents select their own roles, but are always part of an international structure of social interactions.<sup>115</sup> A broader contribution of symbolic interactionism is paying attention to framing, how agents attempt to influence the definition of the situation to locate their role performance as acceptable and moral behavior.<sup>116</sup> This is clearly an important aspect of leadership that should not be neglected.

Despite these strengths, this approach has its shortcomings too. The concept of role itself, the sources and the mechanisms by which it arises lack clarity.<sup>117</sup> Roles can be influenced by all levels of analysis (individual, interactional, structural) and be the result of a variety of mechanisms. They are sometimes seen as the result of functions to fulfill,<sup>118</sup> domestic politics,<sup>119</sup> idiosyncratic individual beliefs or emotions,<sup>120</sup> or international socialization.<sup>121</sup> The concept of role is not helpful to build a theory of international leadership if everything can be a role. Both systemic-functional and role theory share another common

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<sup>113</sup> Mead 1972; Goffman 1959; Goffman 1961

<sup>114</sup> Aggestam and Johansson 2017, 1204

<sup>115</sup> C. G. Thies and Breuning 2012

<sup>116</sup> Goffman 1959, 3–4

<sup>117</sup> Wehner and Thies 2014, 412

<sup>118</sup> K. J. Holsti 1970, 245

<sup>119</sup> Brummer and Thies 2015

<sup>120</sup> Rosenau 1987, 48–50

<sup>121</sup> C. G. Thies 2012

weakness: they have little to say about who emerges as a leader and why. Many policymakers are likely to want to fulfill cooperative functions or adopt a leadership role, but not everyone attempts to lead, and only a single or a few policymakers usually succeed. Why is that so?

Finally, recent research on practices offer a new way to consider international leadership. Practice are “competent performances” enacted in the social world based on background knowledge and discourse.<sup>122</sup> Practical knowledge is a “stock of inarticulate know-how learned in and through practice,” a tacit understanding that agents draw from to perform social activities.<sup>123</sup> Studying the patterns of social actions known as practices serves as a “conceptual focal point” orienting this research program without being a fully developed and specific theoretical perspective. Practice scholars have argued that the practice framework can be adapted to contribute to different IR theories, and encourage cross-fertilization between current approaches.<sup>124</sup>

Practices therefore come with their own theoretical apparatus, but this theoretical charge remains flexible. Concerning cooperation, the practice view highlights a “community of practice,” a group of like-minded people who develop, share, and maintain common practices.<sup>125</sup> It is in this context that practices of leadership emerge. For example, Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Vincent Pouliot have studied how the practices of diplomats in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), NATO, and the EU shaped the intervention in Libya in 2011. They identify a struggle where “[p]layers seek to establish their mastery of the game by framing particular issues and positioning themselves as leaders.”<sup>126</sup> In these negotiations, processes of competence contestation depend on the skillfulness of players who try to wield influence over the intervention. British diplomats were thus recognized as a lead country when other members in the Security Council supported their competence claims.<sup>127</sup>

This perspective has a lot of insights to offer for a theory of international leadership. It reveals how actors’ unconscious practices and feel for a social field can shape the leadership process. Authors from this approach also consider the issue of emergence, that is, how a new pattern emerges from the actors’ interactions. They take seriously both the power

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<sup>122</sup> Adler and Pouliot 2011, 5

<sup>123</sup> Pouliot 2010, 5, 12–21, 28–31

<sup>124</sup> Adler and Pouliot 2011, 5, 11–12

<sup>125</sup> Adler and Pouliot 2011, 17

<sup>126</sup> Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014, 895

<sup>127</sup> Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014, 895–98

struggle in the attempts made by individual agents, their dispositions and resources, and the wider process where agents' location and interactions shape the outcome. This focus on process is particularly fruitful: much like most practices, leadership is a pattern which "exhibits certain regularities over time and space."<sup>128</sup>

Although Adler-Nissen and Pouliot clearly study the leadership process, they never define leadership nor what being the leader entails. This is a problem as I have shown that leadership has multiple definitions and meanings. Furthermore, the mechanism through which competence claims gain recognition by other diplomats remains unclear. They argue that British policymakers were not actually more competent than their counterparts, but that their influence in the diplomatic process stems "from the success they obtained in getting their competence claims recognized by counterparts."<sup>129</sup> The logic is circular: influence depends on the recognition of competence claims, and competence claims depend on a struggle of competence contestation where agents vie for influence. Even if we accept that this logic is not tautological because practices and influence are constitutive of each other, this leaves us with no possibility for explanation, but only a redescription of the behavior that is observed. Adler-Nissen and Pouliot discuss a number of tactics that could be the working mechanism here, like skillfull framing, press harrasment, crafting compromises, time pressure, and the "ability to display the moral high ground."<sup>130</sup> Do these tactics work because of their psychological impact? Their acceptability or appropriateness as an established practice? Are they the result of more competent actors, actors who embody a higher morality, or rather the legitimacy gained by actors willing to engage with their counterparts in crafting compromises?

This example is representative of a number of recurring problems in the studies of scholars who emphasize international practices. The notion of practice is defined in a very broad way, and practice scholars present their research as though they directly accessed the raw data of the social world, when identifying a given practice as a fact depends on an implicit theory and research questions.<sup>131</sup> Saying that a social behavior or process is a set of practices does not provide mechanisms to explain a phenomenon, nor does it clarify what factors

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<sup>128</sup> Adler and Pouliot 2011, 7

<sup>129</sup> Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014, 895

<sup>130</sup> Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014, 902

<sup>131</sup> Ringmar 2014, 6

should be emphasized in the analysis. Practice scholars claim that studying practices can integrate both material and ideational elements, agents and structures, as well as stability and change in their concept.<sup>132</sup> They sometimes refer in their explanations to the functions of practices, their political power and efficacy, the skills of the actors performing them, or their legitimacy and acceptance in a given community. By potentially including so many different causal mechanisms, this theoretical approach does not provide a guide to explain international politics. “All of the above” is an answer that does not help clarifying explanations. As Marcus Holmes argues, “[h]ow practices become practices (...) remain mystifying without an identifiable mechanism.”<sup>133</sup>

This lack of clarity and specification of mechanisms has been the main argument from critics of the practice turn. Even authors like Friedrich Kratochwil who are sympathetic to the practice turn worry about this lack of clarity.<sup>134</sup> Raymond Duvall and Arjun Chowdhury argue that it is not clear whether competence depends on a specific goal or the identity of the subject, and how practice scholars would consider a case where someone is willingly incompetent, transgressing recognized practices to signal his or her refusal to play by the established rules.<sup>135</sup> This ambiguity arises from the fact that there is no theory of why an actor adopts a given practice, and what meaning the actor gives to them. Even if practices are unconsciously enacted, there is a wide range of mechanisms that could explain their adoption, social pressures, imitation, learning, habits, various social structures, etc. In the words of Erik Ringmar, “[b]y meaning everything, practices come to mean nothing.”<sup>136</sup>

I draw insights from all these approaches in my study. Leadership should be studied as an issue-specific process of cooperation. Agents and their interactions should both be considered, and how the issues are framed influences the process. Actors may have unconscious and tacit understanding of the issues under consideration, and the question of leadership emergence should be addressed. I seek to go beyond these approaches by bringing to light the mechanisms that underpin the leadership process. I avoid concepts like functions, roles, and practice or competence, which are fuzzy, normatively loaded, and have multiple

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<sup>132</sup> Adler and Pouliot 2011, 13–16

<sup>133</sup> Holmes 2018, 246

<sup>134</sup> Kratochwil 2011, 36

<sup>135</sup> Duvall and Chowdhury 2011, 340–42

<sup>136</sup> Ringmar 2014, 6

meanings. It does not really matter to me how the behavior of a social actor within a wider social structure is called, but merely calling it a role or a competence struggle does not reveal what drives this behavior and how this power or influence works. Additionally, none of these approaches have a full-fledged theory of who leads and why? Why does a particular actor emerge as a leader in a given situation and not the others? If leading has advantages and if leaders yield more influence, every player in the game should rush to assume the functions necessary for the group, to claim the mantle of a leading role, or to claim superior competence in diplomatic practices. Why do some actors are content with letting others take the lead, and how do they decide to follow the leader or not? A lot of details are left unclear and a lot of questions remain. This is mostly because these approaches have employed the concept of leadership as cooperation without building a complete theory of international leadership.

### **Toward Theories of International Leadership**

Theories of international leadership as a process of cooperation can make significant contributions to our understanding of international politics. I have argued in this chapter that who leads and why varies within the same international material or normative structure, depending on the different issues and cases that are considered. This means that international scholars need a theory focused on the actors and their interactions inside these structures.

Such a theory may explain why one actor rather than another emerges as the leader, and how this leadership yields more influence over the process. So far there is no complete theory of how this happens. Furthermore, an international leadership theory could specify the mechanisms that motivate the leader and bring followers on board. Constructivists should wonder how norms are actually used and applied in concrete cases, and how, inside a normative structure, leaders build followership around powerful ideas. Functional-systemic and role theorists can also gain from a theory of international leadership that specifies the mechanisms through which functions or roles are selected, and why cooperation works. Scholars of the practice turn could use a more specific definition of leadership and leadership theories in order to explain what drives certain international diplomatic practices. Theories of international leadership can contribute to all these research programs, but also to other emerging research. For instance, we can consider the recent surge of psychological approaches focused on how cognition and emotion influence policymakers on the world

scene. Studying international leadership is both an opportunity to draw from these approaches to better understand international politics, and a chance to contribute to this developing literature. Moreover, in addressing an unwarranted gap in the study of international politics, a new research program built around the concept of international leadership as a cooperation process can also chart its own path and contribute to our knowledge on its own terms.

In the next chapter, I argue that leadership should be studied as a wider social configuration. I then develop two leadership theories, a Liberal approach and a Cognitive-Affective Theory of international leadership. The goal of these theories is to provide mechanisms that would explain how the leadership process works. I draw from social psychology, sociology, and international relations' recent research on cognition and emotions to build the Cognitive-Affective Theory.

In Chapter 2, I explain my framework to test theories of international leadership. I show why the transatlantic community is a good candidate for such a test, and how crises surrounding intrastate conflicts provide moments where I can observe the empirical implications of the theories developed in chapter two. This chapter is also concerned with issues of method, of how to proceed in order to study the leadership process.

Chapters 3 to 6 provide the results of an in-depth study of four cases of international leadership. I analyze transatlantic cooperation on the issue of recognizing Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia during the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the negotiation for a peace plan during the Russo-Georgian War, the adoption of economic sanctions against Russia related to the Ukraine crisis, and finally the air strikes against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. These cases vary on the issues under consideration and a number of key features, but they all concern transatlantic policymakers' responses to intrastate conflicts that rose to become international crises. These salient and difficult cases concerning international security demonstrate the importance of international leadership, and provide a first test for leadership theories.



## Chapter 1 – Theories of International Leadership

*While the advisers of a great leader should be as cold as ice, the leader himself should have fire, a spark of divine madness.*

– Confucius<sup>1</sup>

As Confucius understood, nothing strikes the imagination and makes a lasting impression like an allegory. I tell a tale by coming back to captains and their ships, more specifically spaceships. Imagine a group of ships exploring space. The ships have different sizes and capabilities, and they can follow a flagship to lead the way in deciding what to do when they encounter unexpected events. If you imagined these ships as mechanical structures built and operated by human beings, then it should be easy for you to understand how the Liberal Armada works. Each captain defends the interest of their crew and their preferences, and they contact one another to bargain on what to do.

One day, the Liberal Armada encounters an alien race with their own spaceships, but it is unclear whether this new life form is hostile or not. Unsure of what to do, they argue over the right course of action. One captain with offensive preferences offers a deal to the captain of another ship. “We will give you our powerful cannon laser if you join us in immediately attacking the aliens.” This is a tempting offer. But another captain has already offered the same ship a hundred thousand space credits which would make the ship’s crew much richer if they just remain peaceful with the aliens. Difficult choice!

After much deliberation and bargaining, each captain trying to obtain what is best for their crew, it appears that one ship demarcated itself as the leader of the Liberal Armada. Due to the gravitational attraction of a nearby sun, this ship was locked in a specific position near the alien’s fleet, and its crew had an allergic reaction to some kind of space gas released by the aliens. Panicking, the members of this crew demanded quick action from their captain. The captain therefore contacted many ships and provided incentives to them in order to widen the number of ships willing to follow her lead. She argued that the Armada should jump to hyperspace and out of this system as fast as possible. She was able to rally others behind her

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Gardner 1996, 302

lead only when she offered compensation for the other most powerful ships, paying for their hyperspace fuel and offering them other benefits. This leader emerged because of what she was ready to do after her and her crew were the most affected by the encounter, and thus having *intense preferences* due to their physical vulnerability. Her sick crew would likely have kicked their captain in outer space without a spacesuit if she had not defended this position.

To see how things could work differently, however, we must turn to the alien race. I shall call them the Zerg, a race of insectoid creatures who together form the Cognitive-Affective Swarm. The Zerg ships are not mechanical, but giant organic structures in which the Zerg people travel. It is like exploring space in giant whales, or since I wrote that they look like insects, in enormous bumblebees. The signals transmitted between these ships have the power of altering their structure in ways sometimes unpredictable. For example, when a while ago one Zerg captain sent the message to many ships that there was the threat of weird mechanical objects flying in their directions, some ships reacted intensely. One grew a number of venomous spikes on its tail, while another increased the number of eyes that it had to peek into the universe from 3 to 16. Zerg individuals are also quite emotional creatures, they constantly transform and evolve their bodies as a result of their interaction with each other and with their environment.

A Zerg captain called the Queen of Blades believes that these small organic creatures flying big metal things are inferior and should be destroyed. She met similar beings near her home planet years ago, small hairy creatures similar to what we know as mammals (they were actually space cats), and they caused a lot of trouble. Scratching the sides of walls with their claws and the like. The Queen of Blades has a very bad and emotional memory about her encounter with hairy creatures. As soon as the Cognitive-Affective Swarm encountered the humans, the Queen of Blades began communicating intensely with other ships to persuade them, talking about her experience, and emphasizing the differences between these creatures and the almighty Zerg. She argues that by piloting these metallic machines, these organisms are an insult to the very essence of the Cognitive-Affective Swarm. Several Captains who share the Queen's beliefs are easily persuaded by her argument and see her as the one who should represent the swarm.

However, some less war-prone Zergs remain skeptical. Unfortunately for humans, Zergs interpret opening one's mouth as a sign of aggression. So when they scanned human ships with their protruding bionic eyes and saw them bargain and speak to one another, many Zerg Captains concluded that the Queen was right. Aggression was coming. This new information, although wrongly interpreted, resonated widely, changing one Zerg after another, reshaping one ship after the next. It created and amplified waves of emotions that altered what many Zerg believed, and how they thought they should behave. The identity of their own specie as opposed to this foreign group was brought to the fore, and shaped their preparations for a hostile response. The Queen of Blades emerged as the righteous leader, and many ships began to identify as "Bladers," as the first ones who smartly followed her lead. They morphed to acquire dorsal fins with blades, a signature aspect of her ship, and have created special appendages that connect them directly and make them feel like a special community, a swarm within the swarm.

Suddenly, even before the swarm could begin its assault, all human ships disappeared. Unaware of the hyperspace jump technology, the Zerg Captains decided that this was the result of the swarm's threat, and they adopted the conviction that being aggressive is the best way to deal with smaller and inferior life forms. This enhanced the standing of the Queen of Blades in the swarm who loudly claims that obviously, her leadership was necessary. No doubt, if humans or space cats are unlucky and meet the Zergs again, this new experience and their new convictions is likely to push the swarm to war with their more or less hairy foes.

In this chapter, I will detail two theories of international leadership that generally work like the two ship formations discussed above. For the Liberal Armada, captains represented the preferences of their crew, rationally bargained to reach a common position, and leadership depended on the intensity of the preferences of a single ship. This intensity was the result of being affected by the events and of having no adequate alternative. Similarly, the Liberal approach argues that policymakers decide their preferences based on their domestic constituencies, and bargain rationally to reach common ground. The leader arises from the state with the most intense preferences, and has to provide incentives that alter the costs and benefits for others to follow his or her position. Conversely, Cognitive-Affective Theory contends that leaders are policymakers who believe and feel intensely about

a given option, often because of their life experience and some elements of the situation that is primed for them, as hair did for the Queen of Blades in my story. Leaders attempt to persuade other policymakers, and they emphasize the difference between their own group and a group of outsiders. Identity, beliefs and emotions are therefore crucial to explain leadership. New information from the situation might resonate emotionally with policymakers and their societies, which will in turn influence their reaction. This reaction might then bolster the leadership claims of one actor. I emphasized the plasticity of aliens and their ship to show how emotional beliefs deeply affect and change societies, their members, and their leaders. Their very interests and goals can shift when an external event provokes an emotional reaction. Moreover, novel beliefs and powerful emotions can reshape their perception, what they see and how they interpret events. It can reshape their identities: who they think they are and who is the best to represent them in a leadership position. These changes sometimes ripple and become out of the control of any one member of the community, as it further intensifies emotions and drive actors to decide.

In this chapter, I define the leadership configuration and discuss the Liberal and Cognitive-Affective Theories. But first, I begin by discussing the philosophical grounds which support theories of international leadership: critical realism and processual relationalism.

### **Building Foundations: Critical Realism**

*Much as I like parsimonious models, international politics – and indeed much of life – resembles the story and movie Rashomon in that each participant in the interaction sees it and the other actors in his or her own way.*

– Robert Jervis<sup>2</sup>

Critical realism first asserts that there is a reality which exists independently of human subjectivity.<sup>3</sup> The task of science is to discover the causal powers of entities in the world, the *unobservable* but *real* causal mechanisms. Critical realists seek to forge causal explanations that are appropriate for their objects of interests, and recognize that because we cannot

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<sup>2</sup> Balzacq and Jervis 2004, 569

<sup>3</sup> Bhaskar 1975, 56

directly access this reality, science is always socially constructed and historically contingent. This leads them to remain open to the plurality of epistemologies and methodologies that can be employed to study various phenomena.<sup>4</sup> In social science, researchers face the difficulty of studying causal mechanisms in an open system, and must take into consideration the fact that the intentions and meanings that actors give to their actions are crucial for explanation. Notwithstanding this pluralism and these difficulties, however, critical realists argue that it is possible to compare theories and assess their validity. These core ideas of a critical realist philosophy of science can be labeled as ontological realism, transfactualism, epistemological relativism, and judgmental rationalism.<sup>5</sup>

The existence of a physical or material reality is a necessary condition for social and political reality, for social construction “there has to be something for the construction to be constructed out of.”<sup>6</sup> Even languages, as they are inherently social and cultural, are also grounded in the experience of a physical reality.<sup>7</sup> This is the reason why Inuit people in Canada have a great number of words for snow, some say 53 different words,<sup>8</sup> while nomadic tribes of the Sahara desert have none.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, the particularity of scientific claims and explanations in the social realm is that they also require understanding, that is, a consideration for the ideas, identities, interpretations, and discourses that build the actors’ social world. Social and material realities are so entangled in political phenomena that actors often take social reality as a material fact or, conversely, they may ignore elements and opportunities of the material world altogether because they are in the shadow of powerful ideas or ways of thinking. In the words of Roy Bhaskar, “meaning cannot be measured, only understood.”<sup>10</sup> There is thus a fundamental role in social science for the qualitative study of the meaning that actors give for their decisions. And yet, discourses and interpretation do not exhaust the real: discourses are often wrong about their object and they influence reality in complex ways.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bhaskar 1998, 57

<sup>5</sup> Jackson 2011, 74–75; Wight 2006, 29, 37, 45; Patomäki 2002, 8–9; Patomäki and Wight 2000, 223–24

<sup>6</sup> Searle 1995, 190

<sup>7</sup> Lakeoff and Johnson 1980, 59, 117

<sup>8</sup> Robson 2013

<sup>9</sup> Wight 2006, 162

<sup>10</sup> Bhaskar 1998, 46

<sup>11</sup> Patomäki and Wight 2000, 218

The social world should be conceptualized as an open system, a system in which constant conjunction of events do not occur. An event *A* may not invariably lead to an event *B* for a number of reasons: the multiplicity of contingent factors disturbing the causal relation, the complex ways in which factors interact, and the qualitative transformation of entities in the world.<sup>12</sup> Robert Jervis has studied how non-additive and non-linear dynamics often occur in social systems like international politics. Factor *A* and Factor *B* may both influence *C*, but we may not simply add the effects of both factors. More complex interactions could change the influence of either factor when the other is present.<sup>13</sup> Relations are also frequently non-linear, so that an important increase in a factor *A* may barely affect *C*, but in other circumstances, a tiny increase of *A* can lead to enormous changes that alter the very quality of *C*.<sup>14</sup> It takes only a small temperature change to freeze water, or make it boil. Such relations are frequent in international politics, a small event or anomaly can have disproportionate historical consequences, like war.

Because of this openness, researchers should recognize that the cases that they study are unique, anchored in a precise moment in history, and that social reality is extraordinarily diverse.<sup>15</sup> Quoting Daniel Little, “[s]ocial phenomena are inherently diverse, reflecting both patterned regularities and creative innovations. And even the regularities that are found among social phenomena come from radically diverse sorts of causes.”<sup>16</sup> This means that wide covering laws and large-scale generalizations would not be appropriate to understand the social world.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, an open system is a necessary condition to take agency seriously. Agency is usually defined as various capacities possessed by actors in their social environment, such as learning, anticipating and projecting themselves in the future, developing creative solutions to their problems, reflecting on their situation, communicating, building narratives and hypotheses, acquiring a practical sense and skills, and making decisions.<sup>18</sup> Human individuals exert various degrees of agency, and the causal weight that

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<sup>12</sup> Patomäki 2002, 76; Bhaskar 1998, 9

<sup>13</sup> Balzacq and Jervis 2004, 575

<sup>14</sup> Jervis 1997, 35–37

<sup>15</sup> Wight 2006, 39; Bhaskar 1998, 11

<sup>16</sup> Little 1991, 15

<sup>17</sup> Tilly 2001, 25

<sup>18</sup> On agentic capacities, see Coole 2005, 129; Emirbayer and Mische 1998

agents are given relative to the wider structural factors is an empirical question.<sup>19</sup> The intentions or reasons of agents can and should be part of a causal explanation. Moreover, scholars have strategies that often allow them to differentiate reasons that are rationalizations or excuses from genuine intentions and beliefs.<sup>20</sup> If agents can truly have an effect on the world, then universal constant conjunctions are impossible.

Critical realism argues that social phenomena should be explained in terms of causal mechanisms as part of greater wholes called causal complexes.<sup>21</sup> A causal mechanism is a statement about some unobservable power or structure of the world which explains why an entity produces a phenomenon of interest.<sup>22</sup> Mechanisms usually involve discovering the structure of entities, some transfer (of energy or information), or the activation of a trigger that has consequences for the phenomenon under study.<sup>23</sup> Mechanisms in this sense are not automatic, mechanistic, or deterministic, they reveal the potential power of entities in the world, which may or may not be realized in the course of actual historical events. Causal mechanisms go beyond facts to grasp the deeper processes that generate and link facts, hence the label “transfactualism.”<sup>24</sup> For example, a mechanism of persuasion would explain the potential of an actor to change another’s belief or attitude on an issue. Persuasion itself may be unobservable but it is no less *real*, in the sense that it has effects over actors which may or may not be realized depending on the situation. Studying causality as potentiality is essential: if causality determined the world, then there would be no room for agency, and if causality was mere association, then it would still beg the question *through what causal power or force was this effect produced?* Causal mechanisms account for why things have effects on other things in the world. The consequence of this approach is that predictions are impossible: theories can never pretend to predict dynamics in an open system.<sup>25</sup>

In their search for these mechanisms, critical realists remain open to a variety of epistemological and methodological points of view, as long as they help us learn more about the object under study.<sup>26</sup> Critical realists do not believe that theories are incommensurably

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<sup>19</sup> Wight 2006, 101

<sup>20</sup> Bhaskar 1998, 93

<sup>21</sup> Bhaskar 1998, 11–12

<sup>22</sup> Hedström and Ylikoski 2010, 50–54; Mahoney 2001, 578–81; Bhaskar 1975, 12, 51

<sup>23</sup> Bunge 1997, 419–20

<sup>24</sup> Jackson 2011, 74–75

<sup>25</sup> Manicas 2006, 52; Bhaskar 1998, 21

<sup>26</sup> Patomäki and Wight 2000, 227

different and impossible to compare.<sup>27</sup> If theories address the same questions and their causal mechanisms can be made explicit, then scholars can draw empirical implications from these theories and evaluate the validity of their claims in comparing them to empirical observations. Basic concepts and claims about causal mechanisms and complexes that explain social events are thus always contestable.

These philosophical bases are relevant to the study of leadership. Leadership is a phenomenon about collective intentionality in which actors not only “engage in cooperative behavior” but also “share intentional states such as beliefs, desires, and intentions.”<sup>28</sup> The goal of my research is to build a middle-range theory of international leadership. A middle-range theory is a theory that “seeks to highlight the heart of the story by isolating a few explanatory factors that explain important but delimited aspects” of the process or outcomes to be explained.<sup>29</sup> A critical realist explanation of leadership makes it possible to compare the validity of middle-range leadership theories. These theoretical foundations allow researchers to consider the material basis and socially constructed character of leadership, to study it as a process with specific mechanisms involved, and to compare how well different leadership theories explain actual historical events. Relations of leadership and followership situate agents as part of a wider social process.

### Processual Relationalism

A process is a causally “linked set of occurrences or events” which produces change and unfolds through time.<sup>30</sup> A basic causal mechanism explains the transformation occurring in such a process. Several processes can aggregate in a configuration, “a particular pattern of ties and/or processes.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, the goal of explanation in science is understanding how mechanisms work, when they activate, and how they are combined. For both the natural and social sciences, explanation is “process all the way down.”<sup>32</sup> Even materials which appear concrete to us, like water or gold, are actually not a substance or essence, but formed from lower processes of interactions between protons and electrons.

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<sup>27</sup> Wight 2006, 43

<sup>28</sup> Searle 1995, 23

<sup>29</sup> Hedström and Ylikoski 2010, 50, 61

<sup>30</sup> Jackson and Nexon 1999, 302

<sup>31</sup> Jackson and Nexon 1999, 304

<sup>32</sup> Kurki 2018



This general approach is called “processual relationalism,” it focuses on ongoing and interconnected processes rather than static “things” and avoids variables with effects in themselves rather than in relation to a process.<sup>33</sup> I study the wider leadership configuration, which is itself a combination of several processes like leader-follower interactions, and interactions of both leaders and followers with the environment. These lower level processes can then be broken down further in more specific mechanisms.

This focus on processes eliminates the meaning of any *ceteris paribus* clause as is often the case in analyzing the link between discrete independent and dependent variables.<sup>34</sup> Nothing is independent from the process. Notwithstanding the fact that all the elements interact with one another, so that it makes no sense to say *everything else being equal*, it is possible to compare similar processes and the mechanisms which support them, and to assess the validity of different theoretical models. Theoretical claims about how mechanisms work suggest empirical implications, empirical data can then be assessed to see if it better matches the expectations of one theory over another.

There is not one leadership configuration that is identical to another because leadership is a complex process that is highly dependent on the time and circumstances which give rise to it. The goal is thus not to find necessary or sufficient causes of an invariant outcome, but to explain the variability of a diverse, but coherent phenomenon constituted by basic causal mechanisms and combinations of processes, that is, a configuration.<sup>35</sup> The components of the causal complex may be understood as insufficient but non-redundant parts of a wider complex that is itself unnecessary but sufficient for producing the leadership configuration (INUS condition).<sup>36</sup>

The concept of INUS condition appears complicated, but it actually represents quite well how we intuitively employ the word cause. Mackie gives an example:

Suppose that a fire has broken out in a certain house, but has been extinguished before the house has been completely destroyed. Experts investigate the cause of the fire, and they conclude that it was caused by an electrical short-circuit at a certain place. [...] Clearly, the experts are not saying that the short-circuit was a necessary condition for this house’s catching fire at this time; they know perfectly well that a short-circuit

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<sup>33</sup> Jackson and Nexon 1999, 292–95

<sup>34</sup> Jackson and Nexon 1999, 306

<sup>35</sup> On studying configurations, see Tilly 1995

<sup>36</sup> J. L. Mackie 1980, 62

somewhere else, or the overturning of a lighted oil stove, or any one of a number of other things might, if it had occurred, have set the house on fire. Equally they are not saying that the short-circuit was a sufficient condition for this house's catching fire; for if the short circuit had occurred, but there had been no inflammable material nearby, the fire would not have broken out, and even given both the short-circuit and inflammable material, the fire would not have occurred if, say, there had been an efficient automatic sprinkler at just the right spot.<sup>37</sup>

The short-circuit is a cause in this example because we assume that background conditions, the causal field, are not relevant (for instance, we assume that a house contains flammable material and oxygen). The selected cause is therefore neither necessary nor sufficient in itself, but combined with other conditions, the causal complex involving the short-circuit was sufficient to produce the outcome. We often speak of causes in this way, by selecting the most salient element of a causal complex to explain a result.

In summary, I study causality in its historical context, as the potential activation and combination of mechanisms which together are responsible for social change.

### **The Leadership Configuration**

*While the sea of history remains calm, the ruler-administrator in his frail bark, holding on with a boat-hook to the ship of the people, and himself moving, naturally imagines that his efforts move the ship he is holding on to. But as soon as a storm arises and the sea begins to heave and the ship to move, such a delusion is no longer possible. The ship moves independently with his own enormous motion, the boat-hook no longer reaches the moving vessel, and suddenly the administrator, instead of appearing a ruler and a source of power, becomes an insignificant, useless, feeble man.*

– Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*<sup>38</sup>

I define leadership as a configuration of social influence whereby an actor adopts a position, and subsequently induces other actors to converge on this position. Leadership is a process of social influence, it concerns international positioning on specific issues. I elaborate in this

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<sup>37</sup> J. L. Mackie 1976, 308

<sup>38</sup> Tolstoy 2010, 952

section on each of these elements in turn, and I then proceed to detail the lower level processes forming the leadership configuration.

I emphasize influence dynamics with the word “induces” in the definition: this aspect of the definition is left intentionally vague. The goal is to be open to the wide variety of causal mechanisms postulated by different theories to explain leader-follower dynamics. For instance, leaders may directly pressure or persuade followers to rally behind their position, or they may indirectly make their position popular or see their position emerge as the best option after some external event.

Influence is understood as a form of power exerted in a social process that does not involve coercion or structural domination. Social influence involves “changing the way another person behaves, feels, or thinks about a stimulus,”<sup>39</sup> or in this case, about policy positions. It appears useful to distinguish leadership from other international power dynamics. Domination and legitimate domination (or authority) are forms of hierarchy. They give less autonomy and influence to subordinates than leadership. Subordinates are forced, through coercion or appropriate rules, to defer to the superior power. This is also the case for broader conceptions of hierarchy, when the hierarchy produces agents themselves and constitute their interests in line with the perspective of the dominant. Subordinate actors may resist the order, rule, or perspective of the superior power, but it will entail significant costs and difficulties.<sup>40</sup> Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall, who have conceptualized the different forms of hierarchical powers, including productive power, exclude from their definition of power “social relations of joint action through mutual agreement and interactions in which one actor is able to convince another actor to alter voluntarily and freely its beliefs, interests, or action.”<sup>41</sup> Leader-follower relationship, which involve voluntarily convincing followers to come along, are thus excluded from their concept of power.

At the other end of the spectrum, some power dynamics are more symmetrical than leadership, like when actors communicate in order to reach consensus or delegate their power to an agent who has some autonomy and discretion in yielding this power. I call such arrangements negotiation. They are processes where “we cannot achieve our objectives

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<sup>39</sup> Zimbardo and Leippe 1991, 3

<sup>40</sup> On the different conceptions of hierarchical relations, see Bially Mattern and Zarakol 2016; Zarakol 2017

<sup>41</sup> Barnett and Duvall 2005, 42

single-handedly.”<sup>42</sup> The assumption here is that participants are tied together from the beginning. Partners may discuss until an agreement is reached, and delegated agents have a mandate from a principal, but they interpret and realize this mandate on their own while attempting to understand what it is that the principal wants. Power is thus less direct and not usually occurring under some superordinate principle or entity. This form of influence is more likely to be exerted through communicative action, implicit norms orienting behavior, or shared understanding between actors.

In leader-follower relations, leaders have the initiative, they show the way and adopt positions to orient a group in a given direction. However, leaders do not employ threats of coercion or entirely control a structure of institutional rules and discourses that will determine the responses of subordinates. They need to convince others that their way is the right way, they gain followers by inducing them to follow the course of action that they set. In doing so, they may not seek extended negotiations for compromise until unanimity is reached or yield their decision making power to another entity or actor. There is no assumption or guarantee of cooperation, leadership needs to make coordination on common positions work. Leadership is therefore at an intermediate degree of influence for followers: followers have their say in the direction to follow and need to be influenced in deciding for themselves that it is the right one, but the leader sets the direction and specifies what goals and frames are appropriate. Leaders have momentum or the advantage of first move going their way, which means that this relationship is not symmetrical: it may be costly for a follower to reject the leader’s positions and try to establish his or her own leadership. However, it will certainly not be as costly as defying a coercive or legitimate authority that can retaliate or enforce recognized rules.

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<sup>42</sup> Thompson, Wang, and Gunia 2010, 493

**Table 1. International power dynamics**

Power dynamic	Typical mechanisms	Social relation
Hierarchy	Coercion Threat of coercion Legitimate authority Productive power	Super- and subordination
Leadership	Initiative Incentive Persuasion Guidance	Social influence
Negotiation	Communicative action Consensus-seeking Delegation Coordination	Joint decision making

Barnett and Duval exclude social relations where an actor willingly alters his or her beliefs from their concept of power relations for two reasons. They contend that power concerns how relations work to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others, and also that power suggests that actors' capacities have differential effects in social relations. It is unclear why relations of mutual agreement or joint action could not work to the advantage of some actors, and have differential effects in social relations. If we take the example of leadership, this relationship clearly involves power even if followers agree and accept the leader's position. This is a relation of mutual agreement that is asymmetrical, where the leader gains some advantage, most importantly to see an entire group adopt his or her chosen policy, but also symbolic advantages like the ability to claim the mantle of leadership. Leadership dynamics occur "in and through social relations" and they "shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances."<sup>43</sup> There is therefore no good reason to exclude them from a concept of power.

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<sup>43</sup> Barnett and Duvall 2005, 39

Leaders advocate for international positions. A position is a stance on an issue of concern to the actor who takes this position, and unlike ideas or policies which may be adopted and implemented in the domestic domain, an international position implies that the actors will position him or herself, privately or publicly, so that this position is known by other international actors. A position is thus advocated by an actor and this positioning can be assessed by other actors. This is why positions are always supported by justifications, precise reasons to adopt this given stance.

In his seminal study of New Haven, Robert Dahl argued that leaders and subleaders of a community were marked by a high degree of specialization in their own specific domain of policy.<sup>44</sup> These domains can be called issue-areas, while an issue is “temporary and situational,” issue-areas are “persistent and general.”<sup>45</sup> In each issue-area, international actors “engage in distinctive behavior designed to mobilize support for the attainment of their particular values.”<sup>46</sup> Leadership configurations may vary from one issue-area to another, so that issue-areas can be considered separately in the analysis, although researchers should remain open to the possible mechanisms of policymakers attempting to link one issue to a different one.

The boundaries of issue-areas partly result from features of the problems and partly from construction by actors facing them. Despite their relative stability, they change over time as new issues emerge, or as some issues are understood in a different way. Since issues are not natural and found but constructed, it is necessary to pay attention to how the actors define and redefine these issues, and how these frames are contested. Issue-areas themselves are born out of the leadership process and its various interactions.

Let me provide an illustration from my own research on how European powers converge on common positions during international crises.<sup>47</sup> In this study, one such position advocated by policymakers who attempted to lead was *sanctions against Gaddafi*, a position during the 2011 crisis in Libya which argued for the imposition of sanctions, such as travel bans and assets freeze, against the Libyan dictator Gaddafi and his entourage. Policymakers involved in the crisis supported this stance with various justifications: they contended that it

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<sup>44</sup> Dahl 2005

<sup>45</sup> Rosenau 2006, 190

<sup>46</sup> Italics in original, Rosenau 2006, 192

<sup>47</sup> Beauregard 2016

would influence Gaddafi's behavior if he was directly affected (incentives argument), that it would send a message to other dictators that they should not adopt Gaddafi's behavior (deterrence argument), or that if nothing is done, more people would die (saving lives, need to do something). This position is placed under the issue of *sanctions* more generally, which is part of the *coercive diplomacy* issue-area. Coercive diplomacy includes various means short of direct military intervention that aim to pressure an actor to change its course, like condemnations or various types of sanctions. This issue-area has evolved in time with the various means available to states, and it is now possible for states to target only specific bank accounts and assets in order to punish carefully selected people.

A leadership configuration can therefore be recognized when a policymaker adopts a position, which later in time becomes the position of other policymakers. The policymaker making the first move then becomes the leader, and the other the followers. This assumes that a new issue has arisen requiring partners to coordinate their position on it, or that disagreement between policymakers was the situation before leadership aligned everyone on the same position. Although followers may themselves become "champions" for the position advocated by the leader and attempt to convert other followers, shared leadership would require input in elaborating the initial position.

This conception implies that successful leadership is not about achieving specific foreign policy goals or yielding a positive outcome in the world. Leadership is successful when followers adopt the leader's position, whether this results in good or bad consequences. Tolstoy's skepticism when objecting to the presentation of *Great Men* as the key drivers of history has been challenged by several authors who argued and demonstrated that "the beliefs and actions of individual leaders can make a significant difference."<sup>48</sup> However, while contradicting Tolstoy's general vision, a major insight behind his conception remains plausible: both leaders and followers interact in a wider context of material and ideational structure. While they may adjust their sails to a given destination, they never entirely control the currents of history. This is why the act of leading and historical outcomes are partly independent.

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<sup>48</sup> Jervis 1994, 776; See also Fuhrmann and Horowitz 2015, 72; Nye 2013, 70–73; Dyson 2006; McDermott 2004, 216; M. G. Hermann et al. 2001; Goldgeier 1994, 113–14; Tucker 1981, 27–30

This separation prevents two common pitfalls of leadership conceptions. The first is leader attribution error, where, because the leader is more visible and easy to identify with, we make him or her the explanation for everything.<sup>49</sup> The second is the common normativity of leadership assessments, when leadership is employed to praise a policymaker with the right policy while lack of leadership is used to criticize the policy or character of a policymaker. With the leadership conception that I develop in this thesis, a successful leader may lead his or her followers to hell, just like a failed leader may have had a position that, if successful, would have ushered peace on earth. The goal of this study is to explain leadership configurations, not to judge policies and their outcomes.

Of course, I believe that successful leadership often makes a positive difference in the world, both for improving cooperation between states, and also to solve or improve substantive issues. However, it is rarely the only factor influencing the development of a given issue, which means that a situation can worsen despite the leaders' success in bringing others to converge on a shared position. Leadership matters, but it cannot, by itself, instantaneously solve problems, and it can create new, unforeseen problems as well.

### The Sub-Processes of Leadership

Although at this point different theories of leadership may emphasize various processes which they deem the most important within the wider leader-follower configuration, it is useful to consider the different possible processes which can move leadership forward. All the processes presented below are reciprocal, which means that they have the potential to go in both directions.

#### *Leader-followers Interactions*

Leaders can directly engage with followers and deploy various strategies to gain their support. They may also indirectly announce their position and support it with strong justifications, so that their arguments influence followers even without direct interaction. More subtle influence dynamics may also go in the opposite direction: leaders who know their potential followers well may try to shape their position in a way that is acceptable to

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<sup>49</sup> Hackman 2005



their partners, they may test the water by floating a position, or be open to a suggestion to alter their position from other policymakers.

#### *Follower-follower Interactions*

Once the leader has begun to gain followers, top followers may champion the leader's position and influence others to also follow his or her lead. Conversely, policymakers refusing to follow may limit the influence of a leader or even convince current followers to change their mind and remove their followership.

#### *Leader, Followers, and their Environment*

Leader-follower relations and follower-follower interactions are dynamic and as they unfold through time, they are affected by the wider environment. By environment, I mean the incoming information from events related to the issue under consideration that are not completely, but partly independent from leader and followers' positions and behavior. Unexpected developments in the environment may weaken the influence of a leader, or even provoke the emergence of a new leader deemed better suited for the new situation. Such developments may also bring new followers in line, or weaken the followers' support for the leader. The leadership process does not occur in a vacuum, policymakers constantly adjust to the information that they get from their environment. Interestingly, the positions advocated and the policies implemented by leaders and followers may also influence – but never completely determine – how these events unfold, thus potentially creating a loop with positions influencing the situation, and the situation developing in ways that reinforce the position.

International organizations are another important dimension of the international environment. Institutions in which policymakers and diplomats participate, and policy networks which connect them, may contribute in shaping the interaction processes.

#### *Domestic Actors, Leader, and Followers*

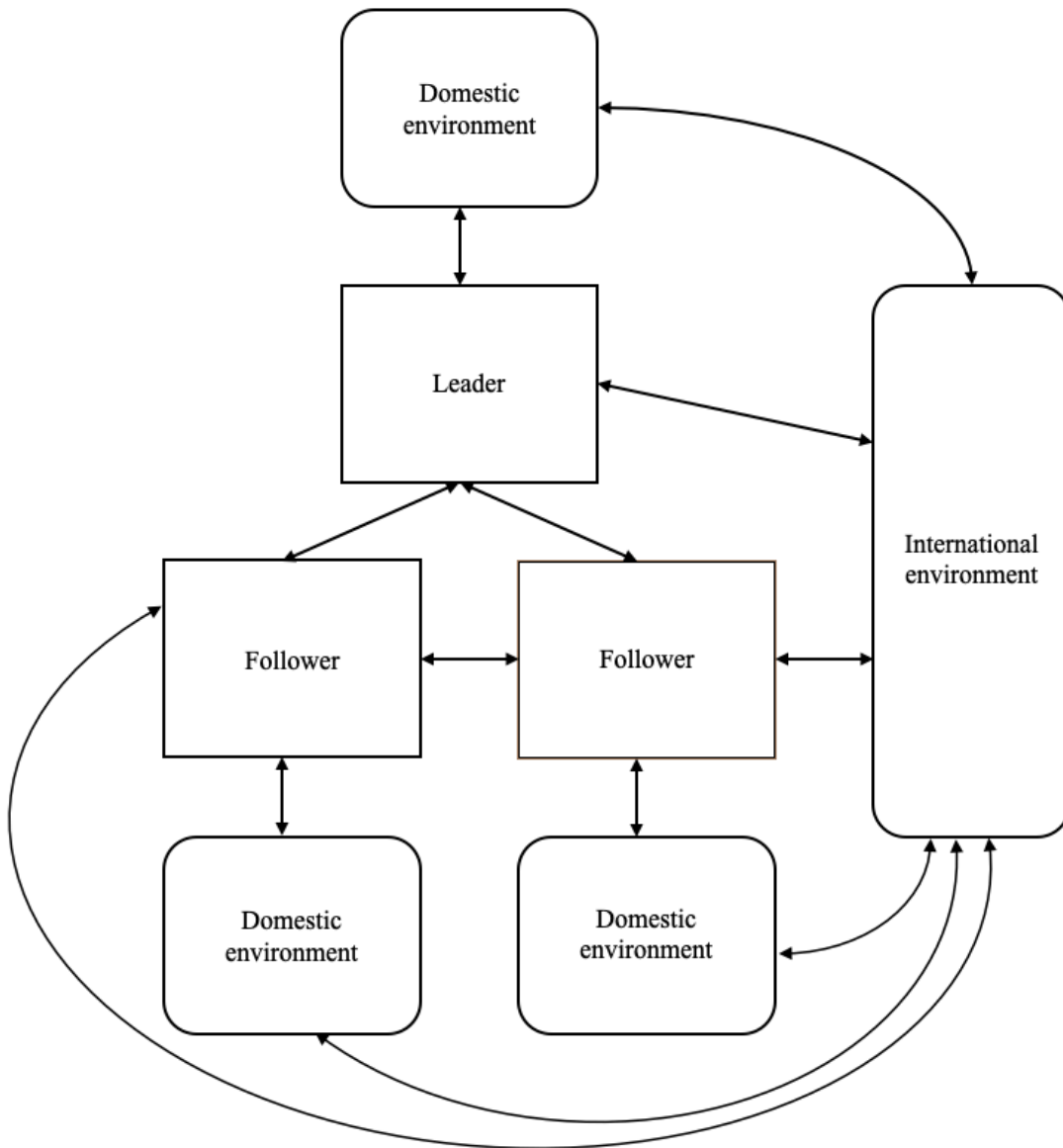
The leader and followers also each interact with their own domestic environment. For instance, domestic actors like interest or ethnic groups who seek to influence decision makers may succeed in making some positions difficult to adopt for them. Of course, this is also a

reciprocal process: policymakers may attempt to influence domestic groups and public opinion more generally in favor of the positions that they adopt or want to adopt. If the wider international environment and the domestic environment are kept as separate for analytical purposes, then both environments may also influence each other, especially if international developments are reported in the domestic sphere and influence the public in their opinion. I consider this distinction useful, especially since some theories of international politics rely on it,<sup>50</sup> although I recognize that it is somewhat artificial, with the boundaries of domestic and international/global often blurry. For instance, transnational advocacy groups operate both at the domestic level and in ways that are closely connected to other activists beyond the state borders.

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<sup>50</sup> For example, Moravcsik 1997; Putnam 1988

**Figure 1. Subprocesses of the leadership configuration**



Legend: Squares are actors, rounded squares are environments, and arrows denote reciprocal relationships of social influence. Although actors are technically inside their domestic and international environment, the environments are separated to show the relations. Despite the fact that this figure shows two followers, the same dynamics would apply to additional followers.

## Theories of International Leadership

Theories of international leadership detail the processes and causal mechanisms to explain how the leadership configuration works. In the next two sections of this chapter, I detail two theories of international leadership: a Liberal and a Cognitive-Affective Theory. I begin with the Liberal Theory because I consider it to be the most common and intuitive theory employed by analysts when discussing international leadership. By fleshing out this theory, mostly by drawing from Liberal theories of international relations, I seek to bring to light these assumptions about international politics. I then deduce the empirical implications of liberal mechanisms in order to make it possible to test their validity. In the next part, I draw from work in international relations, social psychology and sociology to forge a second theory: a Cognitive-Affective Theory of international leadership (CAT). My central argument is that this challenger theory performs better in explaining the leadership configuration.

Although the opposition between these two competing theories appear to reproduce a familiar clash between rational materialist and psychological constructivist explanations, this is not my purpose here and this would be an oversimplification. Liberal theories not only consider that institutions matters, but by placing the source of foreign policy in domestic politics, they also consider how domestic groups motivated by their own ideas influence decision makers. Psychological explanations recognize that there is a material world and that our emotions and cognitions partly stem from it. Emotions contribute to our reason, and a completely unemotional decision maker would be quite irrational. There is thus no such clear-cut divide between these theories, and although they often offer competing accounts, they are not always and necessarily mutually exclusive.

### **Liberal International Leadership Theory**

In this section, I take inspiration from the approach articulated by Andrew Moravcsik. Moravcsik's approach is laudable for its clarity and useful because he specifies the causal mechanisms responsible for his theoretical explanations. Moreover, as I realized when presenting my project, reading the newspapers, or talking with political actors, professors, politicians, and commentators, most people usually begin with a liberal analysis of the situation, at least implicitly. They attribute state behavior and cooperation to the influence of

domestic groups, they discuss how various policy preferences extend into the international realm, and try to understand how state representatives bargain with one another to reach common positions. I therefore have the opportunity to bring to light and detail common implicit assumptions about how international leadership works.

### Grounding the Liberal Theory

The basic assumption of Liberal approaches is that actors are rational and seek to realize their preferences. Rational actors can order the various outcomes likely to happen in the world from the one they prefer the most to the one they like the least. Once their preferences are established, they employ various strategies and deploy resources in the political world to get the best alternative possible, the one closest to their preference. On average, liberal theories expect actors to pursue their preferences in a risk-averse manner, that is, in strongly preferring to keep their existing investments and be more cautious in seeking new opportunities for gain. Liberal theories are bottom-up theories. The most fundamental actors for international politics, in the liberal view, are influential individuals and groups, or *societal actors*.

#### *Societal actors*

The main drivers of international politics are societal actors who together constitute a domestic and transnational civil society.<sup>51</sup> The preferences orienting these actors' political action have their sources in various social facts. First, the ideas, culture, and social identity of actors is often an important determinant of their preferences. Social identity is understood here as "the set of preferences shared by individuals concerning the proper scope and nature of public goods provision, which in turn specified the nature of legitimate domestic order by stipulating which social actors belong to the polity and is what owed to them."<sup>52</sup> For instance, different national groups pursue various preferences depending on their notion of what the boundaries of the nation should be and who should be part of this nation.

Another source of preferences more closely associated with material interests are the commercial interests. Different political arrangements imply different patterns of economic

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<sup>51</sup> Moravcsik 1997, 517

<sup>52</sup> Moravcsik 1997, 525

gains and losses for societal actors. Government policy and the structure of the global economy therefore greatly concern many societal actors. Liberal scholars expect that the greater the potential incentive for societal actors, the greater their willingness to press government to obtain their preferred outcome.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, the greater the potential costs imposed on them by a political proposition, the more they are likely to strongly fight it. This is especially the case since there is no natural harmony of preferences between groups in a given polity: groups are often in competition with each other for resources and influence, and will seek to defend their interests.

Some liberal researchers have also argued for another source of preferences: ethnic ties. According to Stephen Saideman, individuals and groups with strong ethnic ties will mobilize for their interests and the interests of their kin abroad, willing and able to pressure governments into taking their preferences into account.<sup>54</sup>

#### *State as a Transmission Belt*

Policymakers and other officials of the state have the task of representing the influential societal actors' interests on the international scene. They select state preferences and act purposively in world politics in a rational manner similar to societal actors, but their action is grounded on the willingness to represent key individuals and groups. States pursue their preferences, a "set of fundamental interests defined across 'states of the world'."<sup>55</sup> States as representative institutions thus act as a "crucial transmission belt" for translating domestic preferences into foreign policy.<sup>56</sup>

Moravcsik defines preferences so that they are "independent of any particular international negotiation."<sup>57</sup> The idea is that national preferences are the main causes driving states' behavior in international politics, but that the reverse is not true: preferences come from societal actors and their own particular situation, not from international interactions. Preferences are thus "causally independent of and analytically prior to specific interstate

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<sup>53</sup> Moravcsik 1997, 528

<sup>54</sup> Saideman 2001, 22–23; See also Carment and James 1997

<sup>55</sup> Moravcsik 1997, 519

<sup>56</sup> Moravcsik 1997, 518

<sup>57</sup> Moravcsik 1998, 20

political interactions...”<sup>58</sup> Liberal Theory presents preferences as relatively stable in the short-term, bound to specific actors, and concerning specific issue-areas.

States will not represent all the interests in their society equally: usually a coalition will form that includes the most important interests. In then end, a government “represents some individuals and groups more fully than others.”<sup>59</sup> Policymakers thus act in a rational manner similar to societal actors, but their preferences originate in the preferences of their domestic and transnational constituencies.

### *International Bargaining*

After preferences are formed and translated to the state, the final stage of a Liberal theory argues that the configuration of state preferences will determine state behavior. Because policies are interdependent, meaning that the policy of a state has consequences for foreign societies, states’ pursuit of their preferences will be confronted to other states doing the same thing. When preferences are compatible and harmonious, there is likely to be peaceful coexistence and cooperation. In contrast, a situation where the realization of a state’s preferences implies costs and negative consequences for another, conflict is more likely.

Very often, liberal scholars study cases where preferences are mixed, that is, where an exchange of concessions can lead to a better outcome than either state pursuing their preferences alone. This leads to international bargaining where states, in a situation analogical to competing societal groups, compete and coordinate their action with a view to realizing their preferences. In this bargaining phase, liberal theories argue that political power depends on the symmetry and relative intensity of state preferences. Bargaining “takes the form of making offers, promising rewards, or threatening sanctions.”<sup>60</sup> Or to put it in other words, unlike persuasion, bargaining “necessarily engages the interests of at least one of the parties.”<sup>61</sup>

Liberal theory is thus both a foreign policy theory, it explains how a given foreign policy arises from societal actors, and an international relations systemic theory, a theory

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<sup>58</sup> Moravcsik 2010a, 116

<sup>59</sup> Moravcsik 1997, 518

<sup>60</sup> Burnell and Reeve 1984, 400

<sup>61</sup> Burnell and Reeve 1984, 491

where the entire configuration of preferences determines the shape of international politics. In the next section, I discuss the specific mechanisms at the core of a liberal explanation.

### Liberal Mechanisms

The central mechanisms of the liberal perspective are preference transmission, preference intensity, and various bargaining tactics.

#### *Preference Transmission*

The first mechanism, preference transmission, describes how states form their preferences based on domestic and transnational individuals and groups. These groups will often advocate publicly, speaking in the media, launching petitions or protests, and privately, lobbying state policymakers and officials, so that their voice is heard. The most concerned, interested and intense interest groups will acquire resources and deploy them, mobilize their members, initiate new policy ideas, and attempt to influence domestic coalitions and political parties. In democratic countries, the preferences of many groups are likely to be important in the minds of policymakers who depend on keeping their support for their reelection.

Liberal scholars recognize that some actors have more influence than others. Influence is especially great for societal actors that are concentrated, intense, and have clearly preexisting interests. Conversely, actors that are diffuse and whose preferences are uncertain, like taxpayers in general, or that are unrepresented, like noncitizens, are less likely to influence state preferences.<sup>62</sup> Liberal theorists also recognize that some actors have interests beyond the national state boundaries, like multinational corporations or international non-governmental organizations. In that sense, societal actors are not strictly and only domestic.

Preferences can also be transmitted when state policymakers actively seek the advice and opinion of powerful societal actors, rather than only through the actions of these actors. Sometimes audiences or commissions in a legislative assembly serve this purpose. Some policymakers may have more affinity and close ties to various segments of society, which might influence how state preferences are informed by societal preferences.

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<sup>62</sup> Moravcsik 1998, 39



### *Preference Intensity*

Andrew Moravcsik has argued that what states want, not their capabilities, is the most important determinant of their power. This means that willingness-to-opportunity is the main direction of liberal theory. The nature of preferences is therefore the first thing to consider, what outcome do policymakers want, and how do these outcomes converge, diverge, or partially complement one another. While the substantive content of preferences informs researchers about what political actors want to achieve, their drive to achieve it and power in the bargaining game depend on the intensity of these preferences.

Several authors have elaborated various versions of this causal mechanism. For example, Thomas Schelling analyzed the paradox that, in a bargaining situation, the actor who is the weakest because he or she is constrained the most to accept only a small range of possible solutions can use these constraints as an advantage in the negotiation.<sup>63</sup> This relatively more constrained actor can say “look, I need this, you see how I am forced by the circumstances to only accept this option, no other choice will work for me.” This is a powerful argument for the other side in a negotiation, inducing other actors to walk toward the most intense one.

Robert Putnam has explained a similar logic in his article on two-level games. Putnam wants to explain the complex game of international bargaining when policymakers have to conduct two interdependent negotiations simultaneously: at the national level with domestic groups and at the international level with their counterparts. In this metaphor, a negotiator must bargain with another negotiator to reach an international agreement (Level I), but also with a group of constituents that must ratify or accept the international agreement (Level II). Each negotiator has a win-set, the set of all possible international arrangements that would gain acceptance among their own constituents.<sup>64</sup> Because an agreement is reached when win-sets overlap so that a position acceptable to both sides is agreed upon, the bigger the win-sets, the more likely that negotiators will be able to conclude a deal. However, win-sets also affect the distribution of joint gains from the international bargain. The larger the win-sets of a negotiator, the more he or she can get “pushed around,” especially if the other negotiator knows that many deals are acceptable for his or her constituency. Conversely, a small

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<sup>63</sup> Schelling 1986, 22–23

<sup>64</sup> Putnam 1988, 437

domestic win-set is an important bargaining advantage. A negotiator can say “I would like to accept your proposal, but I could never get it accepted at home.”<sup>65</sup>

Perhaps counter-intuitively, preference intensity is thus the opposite of benefitting the most from an agreement no matter what form it has. States who have other good alternatives to the current negotiation are less intense in their preferences, and can accept a wider range of outcomes. Policymakers will usually compare the current bargaining with their best possible alternative. For liberal scholars, therefore, “[t]he power of each government is inversely proportional to the relative value that it places on an agreement compared to the outcome of its best alternative policy – its ‘preference intensity’.”<sup>66</sup> The most intense actor therefore sets the policy, but is also ready to make more concessions and compromises to acquire his or her preferred policy. Other states will take advantage of this intensity, obtaining compensations for supporting the most intense state’s preferred option. Governments with less intense preferences have less incentive to provide concessions.<sup>67</sup>

Despite concessions made by the actor with the most to lose if the negotiation fails, other actors may refuse the agreement. The reason is that rational actors will want to reject an agreement if, in the end, it leaves them worse off than their best alternative. Sometimes, it might be better not to agree and to walk out entirely. In other words, in such cases, win-sets do not overlap.

Moravcsik gives historical examples on security issues for how power depends on preference intensity rather than capabilities:

A ‘strong preference for the issue at stake can compensate for a deficiency in capabilities,’ as demonstrated by examples like the Boer War, Hitler’s remilitarization of the Rhineland, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Chechnya. In each case the relative intensity of state preferences reshaped the outcome to the advantage of the ‘weak.’<sup>68</sup>

Because liberal scholars believe that state policymakers must align their preferences with powerful societal actors, it is dangerous for a state leader to go against the preferences of his or her constituents, and rational from his or her perspective to avoid anything else than the preferred policy. At the other end of the spectrum, a policymaker whose national groups will

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<sup>65</sup> Putnam 1988, 440

<sup>66</sup> Moravcsik 1998, 62

<sup>67</sup> Moravcsik 1998, 63

<sup>68</sup> Moravcsik 1997, 524

accept anything is much more flexible. This is both an advantage and a curse, this powerful actor is in less a hurry to conclude a deal and can accept a wider range of preferences, however, he or she may also be pushed to accept another more intense state's policies and lack the willingness to strongly oppose it. Sacrifices and concessions are born of intensity, and difficult to justify in the circumstances where many outcomes will be beneficial anyway, or when constituents are indifferent to the outcome.

Preference intensity operates at both the domestic and international level. The most intense societal actors become the most important or powerful because they know their preferences, are willing to defend them, and know the effect that various outcomes will have on their interests. At this level, preference intensity is a mechanism of preference formation. At the international level, once preferences are transmitted to state policymakers, these policymakers can gain power by emphasizing their intensity, and the associated constraints forcing them to choose a specific course of action. In this sense, preference intensity is an international bargaining mechanism.

### *Bargaining Tactics*

Despite preference intensity being the most important mechanism for international power, a liberal theory also recognizes that state negotiators will employ a variety of other tactics to try and get the best outcome possible, the one closest to what they prefer. Offering side-payments is one such tactic, the more intense actor concedes something or gives something to the less constrained counterpart in order for him or her to accept his or her preferred policy.

Another mechanism that may occur is issue-linkage. Although liberal scholars believe that different issues are often negotiated separately and that each issue-area has its own configuration – which partially stems from the fact that societal groups are often influencing the state for issues that concern them, and not all issues – states will sometimes attempt to link issues together. Linkage occurs “when governments have varying preference intensities across different issues, with marginal gains in some issue-areas more important to some than to others. It may thus be to the advantage of both parties to exchange concessions.”<sup>69</sup> The exchange then becomes “I give you this on this issue if you give me this on this other one” so that agreement can satisfy the various intense preferences of the actors engaged in

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<sup>69</sup> Moravcsik 1998, 65

bargaining. Despite this possibility, liberal theorists believe that issue-linkage is rare and that issues are often separated in the bargaining game. One constraint to issue-linkage is the fact that it has domestic distributional implications. States will be reluctant to link concessions if it creates “losers” and discontent in their domestic constituency.

Another tactic that can be a source of bargaining power is the threat of exit. For the state with intense preferences, other states walking out without making a deal can be devastating. Such a threat, if it is credible, can thus be used to pressure the players who want the policy leader to make further concessions.<sup>70</sup>

Paradoxically, a leader who is popular at home and with domestic constituents may be weaker on the international scene. The popularity of this leader suggests that she or he has a lot of influence over its constituents, and so a bigger win-set, which in turn provides less leverage in international bargaining.<sup>71</sup> Foreign policymakers engaged in bargaining may therefore try to improve the standing of their counterparts and boost their popularity. This not only should make the agreement easier, but will diminish the other players’ leverage in the negotiation. “Look at how popular you are at home, surely you can make your constituents accept this deal” is the logic here.

Finally, state policymakers also have an interest in various obfuscation and manipulation tactics that will enhance their bargaining leverage. Because there is often some uncertainty about what information players have, especially about their domestic win-set, a policymaker may understate her or his win-set to gain leverage.<sup>72</sup> Sometimes, such tactics can take the shape of time pressure or unfold in ways similar to the threat of exit. One example is to tell the opposite side in a negotiation “you better make a deal with me, because the alternative to me, which you will have if I fail and am replaced by another negotiator, is even worse.”<sup>73</sup>

### *Institutions and the International Environment*

In theory, the liberal international approach is distinct from the systemic-functional model, or what is sometimes called neoliberal institutionalism. Moravcsik has argued that it rests on

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<sup>70</sup> Moravcsik 1998, 63

<sup>71</sup> Putnam 1988, 451

<sup>72</sup> Putnam 1988, 452

<sup>73</sup> Putnam 1988, 453

different assumptions: for liberal theorists preferences are variable and international outcomes depend on the pattern of these preferences, not on the asymmetry of information, the avoidance of transaction costs, or other functions that need to be fulfilled for cooperation to run smoothly.<sup>74</sup> In practice, however, it is not always easy to distinguish the two approaches, especially when it comes to the international bargaining phase. Both approaches emphasize rational actors pursuing their preferences and negotiating to obtain the best possible outcome. For example, in his 1998 book on European integration, Moravcsik argues that states choose to pool or delegate sovereignty in order to enhance the credibility of their commitments.<sup>75</sup> Institutions thus serve the function of solving the problem of incomplete contracting and binding states in the future to live up to their commitments without cheating, an argument that functional-systemic theorists would appreciate.

Liberal theorists seem to vary on how much they consider the reverse, top-down dynamic where international pressures change domestic preferences. Moravcsik opens a backdoor for the international environment to influence preferences. Although as I mentioned liberal scholars define preferences as a set of policy goals “independent of any particular international negotiation,” which means that preferences are decided before bargaining, international dynamics are expected to have indirect consequences for the evolution of preferences. For instance, because the preferences of transnational actors matter, then dynamics beyond the boundaries of the nation-state may be important to consider for preference formation. Moravcsik assumes preferences to be stable on each issue for each country for specific cases of negotiation,<sup>76</sup> but also argues that over the long term, a mechanism of feedback occurs.<sup>77</sup> In that case, the preferences of states adapt to their strategic circumstances. For example, if economic cooperation alters the economic structure, then domestic groups might encourage further movement in the same direction.

Putnam has discussed conscious influence from the international realm, restructuration, and a less intentional feedback effect, which he calls reverberation. A policymaker attempts to restructure the game and alter the others’ win-sets when he or she intervenes in their domestic negotiations, for instance by reaching out to opposition party

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<sup>74</sup> Moravcsik 1997, 536–37

<sup>75</sup> Moravcsik 1998, 73

<sup>76</sup> Moravcsik 1998, 24

<sup>77</sup> Moravcsik 2010b, 238

leaders or giving foreign aid to certain groups.<sup>78</sup> I do not include restructuration in my Liberal model of international leadership. Intense and forceful restructuration is likely to be rare, especially between democratic countries where interference in the domestic affairs of other democracies is not seen as appropriate. Reverberation, on the other hand, includes instances when international pressures unintentionally influence domestic coalition and may tip the balance, thus modifying the conditions of international bargaining. Putnam writes that “[g]iven the pervasive uncertainty that surrounds many international issues, messages from abroad can change minds, move the undecided, and hearten those in the domestic minority.”<sup>79</sup> Reverberations can be positive as much as negative, international pressure may convince domestic groups to accept new policies, but it can also cause a backlash and make agreement more difficult.

Notwithstanding these possibilities, most of time, and especially in the short term, liberal theorists expect state preferences to remain stable, but their strategies and the means to reach these preferences to vary with strategic interactions. If the international situation shifts in a way that changes the calculations of potential costs and benefits for a policy, or where the effectiveness of a given option is perceived differently, then policymakers may alter the policy that they are pursuing, although the underlying preferences remain the same.

#### A Liberal Theory of International Leadership

What does this theoretical perspective imply for the leadership configuration? First, it suggests that policymakers’ international positions should be informed by their preferences, which in turn depend on the preferences of the most influential societal actors among their constituents. The mechanism of preference transmission should operate in the leadership configuration, so that policymakers are concerned with domestic support and the preferences of their most intense interest groups. Groups should draw their intense preferences from policy ideas and their identity, commercial interests, or their ethnic ties. Both leaders and followers will want to defend their preferences, and to safeguard or improve the interests of their constituents.

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<sup>78</sup> Putnam 1988, 454

<sup>79</sup> Putnam 1988, 455

Second, the liberal paradigm also suggests a mechanism for leader selection: preference intensity. The policymaker who has the relatively most intense preferences should be the most motivated and capable of taking the lead. For this intense policymaker, fewer international positions would be acceptable to his or her constituents. Rationally, he or she therefore has a powerful incentive to speak first and advocate for his or her favored position. For other policymakers whose constituents can accept a wider range of international positions, it is less risky to let someone else take the lead.

The most intense policymaker is also the most capable to lead because preference intensity is a powerful bargaining mechanism. Less intense policymakers are likely to be pushed to recognize the constraints that their intense counterpart must face, and to yield to his or her stance. The most intense policymaker thus has a powerful argument to initiate bargaining, which he or she also seeks to do because, during a negotiation, the party that can commit first gains an advantage.<sup>80</sup>

There is an important drawback to intense preferences: because a convergence on the leader's position is less important for other policymakers, they are in a position to force important concessions from the leader. The issue concerns them much less, so that to obtain their followership, the intense leader needs to deploy various tactics. Emphasizing one's constraints might sometimes do it, but in other cases, side-payments and issue-linkages are going to be necessary to get followers on board. Policymakers reluctant to follow may threaten to exit the negotiation, or squeeze so many concessions out of the prospective leader that no agreement is reached, and leadership falls apart.

If a leader emphasizes various commitments or the benefits of future cooperation, then the line between functional-systemic and liberal approaches is less clear. For example, Oran Young has developed the concept of structural leadership, which he defines as the attempt by a party to a negotiation to obtain bargaining leverage by tactics such as arms-twisting, side-payments, committal tactics, and various forms of threats or promises.<sup>81</sup> This bargaining logic is also consistent with the alliance dependence approach. Alliance dependence is a theoretical perspective from authors who have studied cooperation in the context of asymmetric military alliances. In a highly asymmetric alliance, they argue that for

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<sup>80</sup> Schelling 1986, 24–26

<sup>81</sup> O. Young 1991, 288

less powerful allies the fear of entrapment is greater than the fear of abandonment from the dominant power, forcing the alliance leader to use “external pressures” and “coercive bargaining” tactics.<sup>82</sup> This means that leadership is neither automatic nor easy even for a state that has much more resources and material power. The leader still needs to bargain and reach a deal with followers. As postulated in the processual leadership framework, structure does not determine the policymakers’ behavior: they retain their autonomy, and mechanisms are thus required to account for their decisions.

Finally, liberal scholars may expect that in some cases, the international environment and the leader’s foreign policies may alter the strategies, and more rarely, the preferences of other actors. This should be the case when international developments change the calculus of costs and benefits of adopting a given international position for policymakers, or for their domestic constituents. International institutions may provide channels and fora to facilitate interstate bargaining, but according to the liberal perspective, these institutions are not actors in themselves for international leadership. Societal actors, state policymakers, and the configuration of states’ preferences are the main drivers of international leadership, not institutional actors. Table 2 below provides a summary of the main empirical implications for the Liberal Theory of international leadership.

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<sup>82</sup> Bennett, Lepingold, and Unger 1994; Kupchan 1988; G. H. Snyder 1984

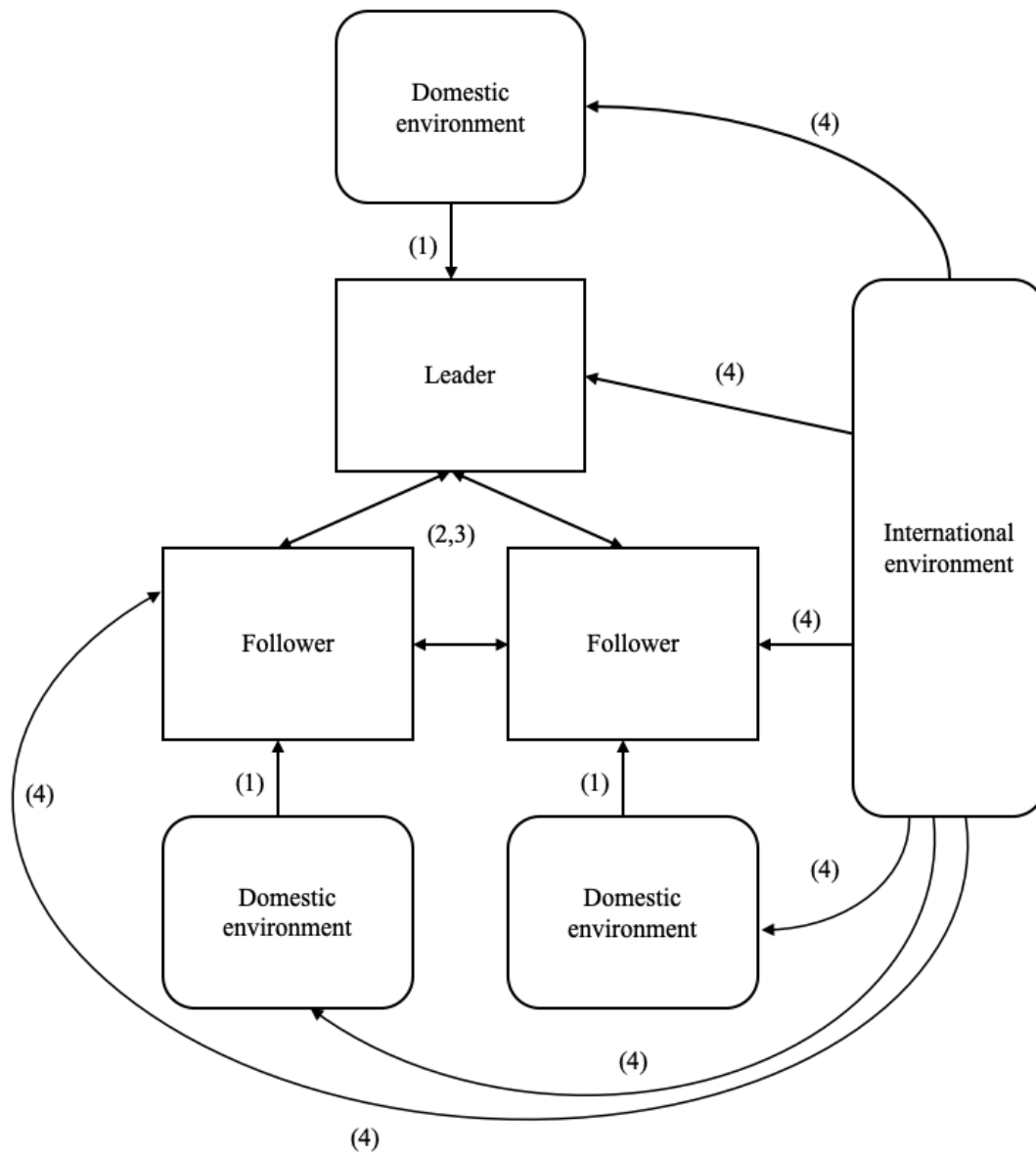


## **Table 2. Empirical implications of the Liberal Theory of international leadership**

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1. Policymakers will defend international positions in line with influential and intense domestic constituencies' preferences in their own domestic sphere.
  2. The policymaker with the most intense relative preference will attempt to lead.
  3. Other policymakers will follow the leader if his or her international position is in line with their dominant domestic constituencies' preferences.
  4. Followers' positions will shift to align with the leader when he or she emphasizes his or her own domestic constraints.
  5. Less intense policymakers will extract concessions from the leader in exchange for following the leaders' position.
  6. A shift in the leader-follower process occurs when ideational, business, or ethnic societal groups mobilize to defend their preferences.
  7. A shift in the leader-follower process comes from an event in the international environment altering the costs or benefits related to an international position for followers and their domestic constituencies.
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**Figure 2. Mechanisms of Liberal international leadership**



Legend: The numbers indicate the different mechanisms driving each process of influence. (1) preference transmission mechanism between domestic constituencies and policymakers, (2) relative preference intensity mechanism at the center, influencing who leads, (3) bargaining tactics between the leader and followers, and between followers, and (4) feedback and reverberation effects from the international environment to domestic constituencies and policymakers calculations.

### A Note on the Liberal Theory

The theory that I built in this section from previous works of liberal authors should be seen as a novel application of liberal principles. That is, although I draw from these theoretical perspectives, liberal leadership theory should be seen as a different and new theory. This means that testing the specific empirical implications of this theory will not necessarily count as a test for other liberal theories that make different specific assertions. A second important point is that I recognize that most liberal approaches are grounded in a neopositivist philosophy of science, that is, a philosophy that like critical realism assumes a mind-independent reality, but that rejects the view of science in terms of transfactual causal mechanisms. Yet, as I have shown, I believe that liberal theorists make propositions that can be translated into causal mechanisms and wider social processes, and understood as such, have empirical implications that can be assessed in my conceptual framework without excessively deforming the theory and its logic.

### **Cognitive-Affective Leadership Theory**

*To take a stand, to be passionate – ira et studium – is the politician’s element, and above all the element of the political leader.*

– Max Weber<sup>83</sup>

The above quote suggests an intuitive explanation for leadership emergence: the leader is a policymaker who has the most intense belief, the crusader who wants to advocate a given course of action. Historically, seemingly unlikely leaders like Joan of Ark, Mao Zedong, or Adolf Hitler often arose as hedgehogs, as leaders who know “one big thing” and have intense beliefs focused on a given course of action.<sup>84</sup>

In this section I forge a new international leadership theory to challenge the Liberal approach. One great accomplishment of the Liberal paradigm is to take the extraordinary diversity of objectives pursued by international actors seriously, and to give a clear explanation as to why one goal is preferred over another. But societal actors’ interests are not

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<sup>83</sup> Weber 1958, 95

<sup>84</sup> Berlin 1953

the only way to explain this diversity. Cognitive-Affective leadership Theory, or CAT, emphasizes how the beliefs and emotions acquired by policymakers from experience drive their current international position. When these emotional beliefs become shared, policymakers form communities and acquire social identities that shape the leadership configuration.

### The Basic Elements: Emotional Beliefs

CAT takes its name from the importance of its two basic elements: cognitive and affective processes. Although some may prefer to call such a theory more broadly as psychological constructivism,<sup>85</sup> I prefer a different label for the specific middle-range theory of international leadership that I develop here.

#### *Cognition*

Two interdependent processes interact in the mind of every human, and they are crucial to understand policymakers' intentions and explain their decisions. The first is cognition, the people's perception of the world understood as ideas, beliefs, attitudes or a structure of beliefs (cognitive schemas).<sup>86</sup> Policymakers' beliefs are often embedded in a narrative, a story that gives purpose and meaning to their actions and decisions. Cognitive processes are grounded in past experience of the material and social world.

Researchers who have studied decisionmaking in conditions of uncertainty have discovered that two independent, but simultaneous cognitive processes shape decision-making on parallel tracks.<sup>87</sup> In the associative system, also sometimes called heuristic, diffuse or default system, decision makers intuitively and automatically make a choice based on cognitive shortcuts, simplifying the world around them. Ideas and emotions trigger other ideas and emotion, and these associations create patterns that are automatically integrated in a person's reasoning.<sup>88</sup> Cognitive shortcuts are usually called heuristics. Heuristics are principles that simplify the world by focusing on a limited number of cues that are easy to

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<sup>85</sup> On psychological constructivism, see J. Hymans 2010

<sup>86</sup> Fiske and Taylor 1991, 9, 14

<sup>87</sup> Ferreria et al. 2006

<sup>88</sup> Kahneman 2011, 51–52

assess by the observer. They sometimes lead to quicker and better decisions, but may also introduce significant bias in the equation.

In the second cognitive process, sometimes labeled the analytical or rule-based process, people make conscious efforts to arrive at a decision through formal logic and the use of abstract rules. If activated, this process can override the automatic associative system. However, this second conscious process requires significantly more cognitive resources from individuals, as well as the motivation to focus on a problem and solve it analytically.<sup>89</sup> It also narrows attention on a few details that appear relevant to the problem at hand, at the cost of making it more difficult to have a broader view of a situation.<sup>90</sup> It is not possible for humans to focus analytically on everything all the time because doing so bears a significant cost. In this thesis, I will refer to these cognitive processes respectively as the associative and analytical systems.

Believing that something is the right thing to do and holding a preference to pursue a particular goal might seem to be similar concepts. However, the ways in which liberal and cognitive scholars define these terms differ widely. Liberal theory suggests that policymakers order their preferences in ways that are intransitive and invariant. If a policymaker prefers *A* to *B*, and *B* to *C*, he or she will also prefer *A* over *C*. These preferences are also assumed to be quite stable in the course of policy selection and international bargaining. Cognitive theorists, on the other hand, have shown how preferences can be reversed depending on how a question is framed. Experimental studies have shown how humans often violate the assumptions of intransitivity and invariance.<sup>91</sup> The way issues are presented and framed in the course of deciding on them can change which beliefs are brought forward, or how these beliefs are pursued. Furthermore, powerful emotions are associated with these beliefs.

### *Emotion*

The second element is emotion. For the purpose of this research, an emotion is a “subjective experience of some diffuse physiological change.”<sup>92</sup> A feeling is the consciousness and labeling of such an experience. Affect refers to a wider category also including longer lasting

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<sup>89</sup> Ferreria et al. 2006, 798

<sup>90</sup> Kahneman 2011, 32–36

<sup>91</sup> For a review, see Druckman and Lupia 2000, 12–13

<sup>92</sup> Mercer 2014, 516

emotional experiences such as moods or dispositions to feel certain emotions.<sup>93</sup> Although emotions are grounded in the body of individuals and subjective, they are also partly intersubjective, that is, socially constructed. Individuals have learned and been socialized to interpret the change in their body based on culturally constructed categories and situation-specific interpretations. Notwithstanding the fact that humans often experience emotions as natural and physical, emotions require cognition to give it structure and meaning as it flows into consciousness. Psychological constructionist neuroscientists have argued and provided evidence that both the physical-embodied aspect and the social meaning are constitutive of emotions.<sup>94</sup> Yet, socialization and the external environment never entirely determine the individual emotional experience, so that there remains a wide variety of emotional reactions even if the events and shared cultural understandings are the same.

In her social theory of emotion, Arlie Hochschild emphasizes that the social study of emotions must consider both the psychological and the social sides.<sup>95</sup> Emotions simultaneously and interdependently arise from two levels. In line with cognitive theorists, emotions are a subjective phenomenon that individuals experience in their interaction with other humans and with their environment. These embodied reactions inform humans about reality around them, and it prepares them for future interactions by shaping their expectations. These expectations are then confirmed or violated, which leads to further emotional responses. In line with constructivist scholars and sociologists, emotions are also intersubjective and serve, when combined with cognition, as moral evaluation or judgment in a wider social process.<sup>96</sup> Actors wonder how they should feel depending on the circumstances, how they should interpret events, who they are to respond or react in the way that they do, and how this emotion relates them to other persons or groups of people. Collectively, emotions aggregate into feeling rules or norms that associate the right emotion with the right time, situation, and level of intensity.<sup>97</sup> I refer to these prescriptions telling people how they should feel in a given situation as affective norms.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Gooty et al. 2010, 981

<sup>94</sup> Barrett 2017; Lindquist 2013; Barrett 2012

<sup>95</sup> Hochschild 2003, 228

<sup>96</sup> Koschut 2014b, 535; A. A. G. Ross 2014, 33

<sup>97</sup> Hochschild 2003, 85

<sup>98</sup> On emotion and norms, see Koschut 2014b; Elster 1999, 154–57

### *Cognitive-Affective Interdependence*

Although they are separated for analytical purposes, cognitions and emotions are closely interdependent and impossible to understand apart from one another.<sup>99</sup> Cognitions evoke emotions and structure emotional responses, while emotional reactions to the world influence ideas about the world and how it should be represented.<sup>100</sup> Emotion without cognition has no object to be emotional about, and cognitions become important and a driving force for actors because of the power of intense emotions associated with them.<sup>101</sup> Recent advances in neuroscience have reinforced this interdependent understanding of cognition and emotion, notably by discovering how emotions are essential for humans to make even the simplest decisions.<sup>102</sup> This does not mean that all emotional processes are conscious and that the person affected is always aware of them, sometimes clues in the environment can orient behavior even when we do not consciously focus on them.<sup>103</sup>

There are several ways to label this interconnected mix of beliefs and emotions. Jonathan Mercer has combined these two terms in the concept of emotional beliefs, a case where “emotion constitutes and strengthens a belief...”<sup>104</sup> Emotional beliefs may also be called convictions, issue-specific attitudes with strong emotional commitment, ego preoccupation (i.e., attitude is important and often comes to mind) and cognitive elaboration (i.e., attitude is connected to other beliefs and knowledge).<sup>105</sup>

To illustrate this interdependence, consider an important emotional belief: how a policymaker may base his or her judgment on a historical analogy because he or she lived this particular event, and has memories and emotions associated with it. These emotional beliefs make the analogy salient in the present, driving the actors to choose a given course of action and feel strongly about it. Prior life experiences shape every step of the policymaking process, including policymakers’ calculations and the options they consider.<sup>106</sup> This is

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<sup>99</sup> Fiske and Taylor 1991, 410; Mercer 2014, 521

<sup>100</sup> N. C. Crawford 2000, 137–40

<sup>101</sup> Fridja 1994

<sup>102</sup> Bechara et al. 1997; Damasio 1994

<sup>103</sup> Fridja 1994

<sup>104</sup> Mercer 2010a, 2

<sup>105</sup> Abelson 1988, 272–73

<sup>106</sup> Fuhrmann and Horowitz 2015, 73

possible because affect has a synthetic quality, existing dispositions and experiences fuse with current events to shape affective responses.<sup>107</sup>

Yuen Foong Khong has studied historical analogies and argued that they are not mere justifications for policymakers, they influence the decision-making process from the beginning. Khong shows how lessons drawn from the Korean War or the deception of Hitler at Munich influenced American policymakers toward military intervention in Vietnam.<sup>108</sup> During the Johnson presidency, the memory of these historical precedents structured policymakers' thought processes in escalating the war, framing Vietnam as an instance where it is morally right to use military might (Munich), and where strongly countering communist powers could be successful (Korea).<sup>109</sup>

Another example where an event from the past structured a foreign policy response is the use of the Pearl Harbor analogy in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks. Andrew Ross has shown that Pearl Harbor was often referenced in the media at the time, and that it framed 9-11 as an act of aggression calling for a military response. This historical analogy evoked “powerful normative and affective associations” taking Americans “from outrage and fear to courage, pride, and resilience.”<sup>110</sup>

In order to link emotional beliefs to wider international cooperation processes, cognition and emotions also need to be aggregated at a collective level. Cognitive and affective processes are important for the social identity of international actors.

### The Leader Prototype

*[T]here is an abundance of evidence that people's gravitation toward groups, and, when in them, the things they do with and for other group members, are driven not by personal attraction and interest, but rather by their group-level ties.*

– Alexander S. Haslam, Stephen D. Reicher and Michael J. Platow<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> A. A. G. Ross 2006, 214

<sup>108</sup> Khong 1992, 11

<sup>109</sup> Khong 1992, 99–102, 134–41, 175–76

<sup>110</sup> A. A. G. Ross 2014, 72, 74–75

<sup>111</sup> Haslam, Reicher, and Platow 2010, 49



Social identity theory stems from the idea that individuals identify with groups; this group membership then becomes part of the individuals' self. Social identity is thus "those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which he [or she] perceives himself [or herself] as belonging."<sup>112</sup> Social identity scholars argue that people value group membership to maintain positive self-esteem,<sup>113</sup> or to reduce uncertainty by providing meaning to their actions.<sup>114</sup> Self-categorization theory has developed social identity theory further by focusing on the process of depersonalization.<sup>115</sup> According to this process, group members see themselves in terms of the ingroup prototype and enhance the difference between themselves and the outgroup.<sup>116</sup> Social influence is enhanced between group members, and the leader is likely to be prototypical of the members in the group, the ingroup.<sup>117</sup>

Prototypicality is at the very core of the way the human mind works.<sup>118</sup> People categorize objects as ideal representations, which is why the category bird is more likely to first evoke a sparrow rather than an ostrich. Humans thus form beliefs by keeping in mind prototypes of various concepts. What does this mean for leadership? Social identity theory has found that the leader first maximizes his or her influence by showing how his or her positions are representative of group values, behavior, and norms, and secondly by emphasizing how different they are from outgroup behavior.<sup>119</sup> Studies in psychology have found that the prototypicality of an ingroup member enhances his or her likelihood to become a leader, and once the leader is selected, it increases endorsement of the leader by other members.<sup>120</sup> Experiments have even found that a leader is seen as more charismatic the most not when he or she has certain attributes or reaches a given level of performance, but rather when the leader is more identity-affirming.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Tajfel and Turner 1979, 40

<sup>113</sup> Tajfel and Turner 1979, 40; Hogg 2001, 187

<sup>114</sup> Hogg and Mullin 1999

<sup>115</sup> Turner 1991, 153–57

<sup>116</sup> Hogg and Abrams 1999, 11; Hogg 2001, 187

<sup>117</sup> Haslam 2004, 45

<sup>118</sup> Rosch 1977; Fiske and Taylor 1991, 106–9

<sup>119</sup> This is known as the principle of metacontrast, see Hogg, Hains, and Mason 1998, 1255; Hains, Hogg, and Duck 1997, 1088–89

<sup>120</sup> Hains, Hogg, and Duck 1997, 1098; Hogg, Hains, and Mason 1998, 1260; Haslam and Platow 2001, 1469; Platow and Van Knippenberg 2001

<sup>121</sup> Haslam et al. 2001

For example, Alexander Haslam and Michael Platow conducted an experiment in which they asked students to evaluate the leader of a university student council named Chris.<sup>122</sup> They told the 90 participants that Chris was either working on a governmental issue that was aligned with the students' values (decision to tighten gun control) or opposed to them (cut university funding). In three randomized conditions, Chris would nominate for a prize either a majority of progovernment members, an equal number of progovernment and antigovernment members, or more antigovernment members than progovernment members. So for instance, if Chris had nominated a greater number of members who favored more gun control than members who opposed this policy, his behavior was considered identity-affirming. The findings of this experiment are that students perceived Chris as fairer when he had an even-handed approach, but they supported his leadership more when he was identity-affirming.<sup>123</sup> In a variant of this study, Haslam and Platow designed another experiment in which they replicated the results, but also showed that participants were more likely to work for the leader – to make an effort in providing arguments for a new policy promoted by the leader – if his past behavior had been identity-affirming.<sup>124</sup>

The two researchers and several of their colleagues even replicated the results in another experiment in which they included how the finances of the student union had changed under the leader's tenure. They found that the leader's identity-affirming behavior was still the most important aspect of leadership for the participants, and that this behavior could even negate the link between perceived leadership performance and leadership attribution. The reason is that when followers see a leader as representative of their group, they might not attribute good financial results to his performance: after all, the leader was successful just because he was aligned with group norms, which are better.<sup>125</sup> In other words, for followers "positive outcomes are the natural result of values and beliefs that they and the leader clearly shared."<sup>126</sup> These experiments have shown how identity-affirming behavior is more important than fairness, charisma or obtaining good financial results.

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<sup>122</sup> Haslam and Platow 2001

<sup>123</sup> Haslam and Platow 2001, 1473

<sup>124</sup> Haslam and Platow 2001, 1476

<sup>125</sup> Haslam et al. 2001, 201

<sup>126</sup> Haslam et al. 2001, 201

The paradox of prototypicality is that leaders need to best represent the group, be “one of us,” and must also be exceptional and stand out. This is possible because leaders embody an idealized conception that group members have of themselves.<sup>127</sup> In contrast to the relevant outgroup, the message that members want to send when selecting their leader is “we are better than them.”<sup>128</sup> This is also paradoxical because once leadership has been established and the leader is accepted as the prototypical group member, this position may allow the leader to go beyond existing norms, to take the group in a new direction.<sup>129</sup> If taken too far in a new direction, of course, this process can make the leader not representative anymore of the group.

Two implications of this theory are particularly important for international leadership. First, which group is used as a reference and who appears as the most prototypical member depend on the social context and attributes primed in the members’ mind. For instance, self-categorization theory “would attribute the common observation that different types of leaders fare better in different international climates primarily to the fact that war and peace change the overall definition and meaning of a group...”<sup>130</sup> Leadership emerges both as a result of outside events and from conscious attempts by leaders to frame issues to enhance their prototypicality.<sup>131</sup> This is coherent with the ontological framework that accepts agency within a wider social process and environment. Social identity theorists argue that the psychological process always depends on social context. This is because people always hold a multiplicity of identities at the same time, and the boundaries between these identity processes are not clearly delimited, so that the social context and current situation matters.

Second, ingroup cohesion is enhanced in situations of crisis and intense emotions; these are times when people feel the need to compare with similar others.<sup>132</sup> Uncertainty increases the need for a “simple and distinct prototype” to lead the way.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Hogg 2005, 70; Haslam, Reicher, and Platow 2010, 154

<sup>128</sup> Haslam and Platow 2001, 1471

<sup>129</sup> Haslam, Reicher, and Platow 2010, 103–4

<sup>130</sup> Haslam 2004, 45

<sup>131</sup> Hogg 2001, 191; Reicher and Hopkins 2003, 201

<sup>132</sup> Schachter 1959

<sup>133</sup> Hogg 2001, 193–94

### *Assessing Prototypicality*

At the most general and minimal level, if a leader is to become representative of a group, he or she has to remain within the boundaries of acceptability. The advocated position should be acceptable to other ingroup members, whether they feel strongly in favor of this position or not. The leader increases the chances of success by justifying an international stance based on accepted affective norms, and by emphasizing shared beliefs within the group. Even if the leader has to persuade followers that this is the right position, persuasion is likely to be very difficult if it strongly clashes with established emotional beliefs in the group. Therefore, the leader also attempts to anticipate the followers' reaction to forge his or her own position.

In the dynamic leadership configuration, acceptability may also change because of external events or shocks that affect members of the ingroup. Events out of the control of the leader can change what is accepted and make the leader's position more representative of the position that the group *should* adopt in the minds of potential followers. Conversely, the context can also derail leadership by making the leader's position untenable, for instance if convergence on this position is seen as responsible for the situation worsening.

Another way to enhance prototypicality is for the leader to emphasize an outgroup, to focus on differentiating his or her position with that of another group of reference. The group identity will be reinforced the more it can be opposed to the features of this Other. Rhetoric constructed on the back of an outgroup may evoke emotions of outrage, fear, and a sense of urgency, all of which may increase uncertainty and enhance the need for leadership, thus increasing the leader's influence. Sometimes, with their behavior, tentative outgroups do the work themselves of alienating another group and cementing cooperation against themselves.

Finally, prototypicality may be enhanced not only by the leader's position, but also if his or her behavior are consistent with community values and ideas that the groups' members have of what an ideal leader looks like. In other words, stereotypicality sometimes enhances leadership, if stereotypicality is understood as the perceptions of people about "how effective leaders should behave in general and in more specific situations."<sup>134</sup> The cognitive schemas that people hold about types of leaders and how their leadership should be exerted is also the product of group dynamics that favor prototypicality.<sup>135</sup> Stereotypicality is particularly

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<sup>134</sup> Hains, Hogg, and Duck 1997, 1088

<sup>135</sup> Haslam, Reicher, and Platow 2010, 96

enhanced in a situation where the group is less salient, because people will then assess the leader's dispositions rather than his or her effectiveness in defending the group.<sup>136</sup> This might mean for a leader to be assertive, extraverted, and dynamic. This also implies behavior like constant consultation, showing understanding to other members of the group, being honest in his or her international dealings, or taking bold steps and risks for the group. A leader who has done something unacceptable and unrepresentative of the group's affective norms might lose followers even if they agree with his or her advocated position. In the leadership configuration, the way in which positions are advocated can thus be as important as the substantive content of these positions.

### Dynamics of Collective Emotions

*If a leader doesn't convey passion and intensity then there will be no passion and intensity within the organization and they'll start to fall down and get depressed.*

– Colin Powell<sup>137</sup>

Groups are not just built on shared cognitions, but also on collective emotions. Studies show that emotions felt and shared within a group enhance identification.<sup>138</sup> An affective community is “constituted and bound by socially embedded feeling structures that attribute emotional meaning and values.”<sup>139</sup> Once a group reaches a certain level of cohesion, a member will see itself as similar to other members, and thus expect to agree on issues and actively seek this agreement through processes of mutual influence.<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, members of a strongly cohesive group will want to advance the interests of the group as a whole rather than their own self-interest.<sup>141</sup>

However, emotional attachments do not necessarily imply harmony. Attachments may provoke crises between allies, with strong reactions signalling that cooperative ties matter.<sup>142</sup> Leader and followers are attuned emotionally, they share common emotional

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<sup>136</sup> Platow and Van Knippenberg 2001, 1514–15; Hains, Hogg, and Duck 1997, 1090

<sup>137</sup> Powell 2012

<sup>138</sup> Kessler and Hollbach 2005

<sup>139</sup> Hutchison 2016, 106

<sup>140</sup> Haslam and Platow 2001, 1471

<sup>141</sup> Haslam and Platow 2001, 1471

<sup>142</sup> Eznack 2011

responses.<sup>143</sup> Because of the importance of emotions, leaders must do a lot of emotional labor: be aware of their followers' emotions and display the right emotions themselves.<sup>144</sup> Studies show that leaders displaying the right emotions according to the context and their own followers' emotions is a source of influence.<sup>145</sup> Group-level emotions thus serve to promote or preserve the group identity, especially when the leader expresses congruent emotions with that of the group's situations and its members, thereby enhancing his or her representativeness.<sup>146</sup>

In the context of affective communities, emotional beliefs are not created equal. Some matter much more for the leadership configuration. First, emotional beliefs affecting members of the ingroup should affect the group much more, as its members identify with the affected members. According to the motto *all for one, and one for all*, members should feel personally affected even though it was another member of the group who was affected. One of the key findings of intergroup emotion theory is that group members "feel emotions in responses to events affecting other ingroup members as though those events were happening to them personally."<sup>147</sup> Second, negative emotions often exert a stronger influence due to the mind's bias toward loss aversion.<sup>148</sup> Studies have found that the mind has a "heightened sensitivity to negative information," and that the resulting negative emotions have a fundamental role in adjusting behavior.<sup>149</sup> These negative emotions often concern violations or behavior interpreted as a threat to the affective community. Third, emotional beliefs that are directly attributable to the intentional actions of an outgroup will often be affectively enhanced, as it allows prospective leaders to maximize the difference between ingroup and outgroup behavior, in other words, boost their prototypicality. Finally, violent and shocking events are likely to be the most vivid and take the affective foreground. Highly salient information, information that is "vivid, concrete, immediate, emotionally interesting or exciting" will weigh more in the policymakers' minds.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Gooty et al. 2010, 983; Eberly and Fong 2013, 696

<sup>144</sup> Burch, Humphrey, and Batchelor 2013

<sup>145</sup> Gooty et al. 2010, 991–93

<sup>146</sup> Tee, Paulsen, and Ashkanasy 2013, 905, 908

<sup>147</sup> Rydell et al. 2008, 1150–51

<sup>148</sup> Kahneman 2011, 282

<sup>149</sup> Cacioppo and Gardner 1999, 206

<sup>150</sup> Kaufmann 1994, 563; See also Yarhi-Milo 2014, 17–20

### Cognitive-Affective Mechanisms of Influence

In this section, I derive specific mechanisms from the above discussion that can explain the basic processes of the wider leadership configuration.

#### *Emotional Beliefs Intensity and Dissonance Avoidance*

The first mechanisms work at the level of the individual psychology of policymakers. Policymakers should be motivated to take an international position based on their emotional beliefs. The more intense and important these beliefs are for them, the more their conviction should strongly drive them to act. In the everyday politics of a community, leadership may sometimes appear easy and even unnecessary because members of the same community share the same emotional beliefs. Often, however, there will be differences and disagreements that will arise between community members.

The leader is likely to be the community member with the most intense emotional beliefs. This policymaker's response may come from emotional memories, the powerful historical analogies that he or she draws from, or deeply held principles. This policymaker will be driven to take a stance and advocate for it on the international scene, to employ intense language, active diplomacy and a variety of tactics to bring followers' emotional beliefs closer to his or her own. The prospective leader will also attempt to frame issues in line with his convictions, showing how others should perceive things in the same way.

Intensity does not refer to politically extreme emotional beliefs, a conviction can be very important for a policymaker and elicit powerful emotions for him or her, although it is not an "extreme" position. Intensity depends on the emotions and memories associated with the beliefs, as well as the centrality of the belief for the policymakers' world view.

Emotional beliefs often drive policymakers through the principle of dissonance avoidance.<sup>151</sup> Humans want to avoid the unpleasant feeling of being inconsistent. Dissonance can arise between contradictory emotional beliefs, incompatible beliefs, conflicting emotions, emotions that do not match the beliefs of how one should feel, or in the discrepancy between current positions and the emotional beliefs held by the actor. If dissonance arises and increases, policymakers will seek to reduce it. This attempt may include changing one's beliefs, finding a reason why one belief prevails over another, changing one's behavior and

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<sup>151</sup> Festinger 1962

positioning, or even trying to work oneself up to feel an emotion deemed more appropriate (deep acting).

### *Selecting the Appropriate Identity*

The second mechanism is about identity selection. International scholars' applications of social identity theory has often been criticized for not making clear how one identity is selected over another, and how this identity becomes salient and delimited in a specific case.<sup>152</sup> This is important because actors have multiple identities that partly overlap, because identities themselves are complex and contain several beliefs about how one with such an identity should feel and act, and because identities are fluid and constantly changing in their content and who they include.

Social identity theorists discuss identity selection in terms of comparative and normative fit. Comparative fit is simply the idea that a person will define him or herself as part of a category if differences between members of that category are smaller than the differences between members of that category and members of other categories that are salient in a context. Normative fit, on the other hand, is about the quality of the content of these categories. Normative fit implies that the nature of the difference between these categories is in line with the person's expectations.<sup>153</sup> This usually implies the ingroup category to have some type of special feature or superior quality.

For social identity theorists, the selected identity is always dependent on both the individual's characteristics and the current social situation. If we consider policymakers to have their own emotional beliefs and memories from past experience, and their own levels of attachment to various identities, then a situation is likely to prime one identity over another.

Priming effects are observed when a person is exposed to some stimuli in their environment, and this exposure then influences the person by activating previously held knowledge or dispositions. Priming can influence people's evaluation of another person,<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Reus-Smit 2014, 570

<sup>153</sup> Haslam 2004, 34

<sup>154</sup> DeCoster and Claypool 2004



their behavior,<sup>155</sup> their motivation,<sup>156</sup> their willingness to communicate with others,<sup>157</sup> their efforts to pursue certain goals,<sup>158</sup> or their attitude on an issue.<sup>159</sup> For instance, the mere presence of firearms in a room can prime aroused men to behave more aggressively.<sup>160</sup> Most relevant to our discussion, substantial evidence in social and political psychology shows that long-term memory, latent socialization in a social identity, can be activated by a prime in order to bring to the fore a specific social identity, and then influence a person's attitudes, decisions, and behavior in line with this identity.<sup>161</sup> Importantly, research has also shown that emphasizing one identity or another has a different impact on behavior. For instance, Margaret Shih and her colleagues have shown in their experiments that when Asian-American women are primed with their gender, they do worse than a control group on a mathematical test, but in line with the cultural stereotype, they do better than the control group if primed with their Asian ethnic identity.<sup>162</sup>

There are three types of priming mechanisms. In assimilation, the prime is included in the actor's evaluation, so that he or she will be biased toward the prime in making a social judgment.<sup>163</sup> Anchoring leads to the opposite effect: primes are used as standards of comparison causing the actor's evaluation to move away from the prime.<sup>164</sup> Finally, another possibility is correction: when actors become conscious of how the prime affected their evaluation, they correct their impressions to remove the bias. This, however, does not lead to unbiased perceptions: actors often overcorrect, resulting in evaluations that are further away from the primes.<sup>165</sup>

Priming influences choice because of accessibility in the associative system, as well as the functioning of the analytic system in the case of correction. Accessibility is the ease with which an information can be recalled. Prospect theorists have studied how things easily retrieved in our minds – what they call the availability heuristic – are seen as more frequent,

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<sup>155</sup> Dijksterhuis and Bargh 2001

<sup>156</sup> Aarts, Custers, and Marien 2008

<sup>157</sup> Pickering, McLean, and Krayeva 2015

<sup>158</sup> Aarts, Gollwitzer, and Hassin 2004

<sup>159</sup> Dragojlovic 2011

<sup>160</sup> Berkowitz and LePage 1967; I am grateful to Brianna Smith for bringing this article to my attention.

<sup>161</sup> Gaither, Sommers, and Ambady 2013; Althaus and Coe 2011; Hassin et al. 2007; Jonas and Sassenberg 2006

<sup>162</sup> Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady 1999, 80

<sup>163</sup> DeCoster and Claypool 2004, 3

<sup>164</sup> DeCoster and Claypool 2004, 3

<sup>165</sup> DeCoster and Claypool 2004, 3

more important, and more consequential in the world.<sup>166</sup> Political scientists have also studied the consequences of the accessibility heuristic on political issues.<sup>167</sup> Assimilation works to the extent that the prime connects with past experience and knowledge for an actor, it makes accessible similar aspects for evaluation.<sup>168</sup> Conversely, anchoring makes accessible contrasting aspects which are then compared to the target and evaluated against it. These dynamics arise because of the need of people for a reference point in making an evaluation.<sup>169</sup> Anchoring is likely to prevail when the primed identity is associated with an outgroup, so that the ingroup member accentuates differences between him or herself and the outgroup, or when the self is compared to an extreme prime.<sup>170</sup> At their most basic, assimilation and anchoring depend on the associative nature of the default system, where ideas and emotions trigger other ideas and emotions.<sup>171</sup>

Correction is a mechanism of the analytical system. It thus requires careful thought and consideration, and an actor sufficiently motivated and capable to correct his or her biased perceptions.<sup>172</sup> An actor realizing that he or she has made a mistake and been influenced by a prime is thus likely to overcorrect in the other direction if given the opportunity. The principle here is not accessibility, but the willingness by the actor to be correct, to avoid holding biased perceptions. Obviously, this is where the advantage of having the analytic system lies for humans: tending toward perceptions of reality that are as accurate as possible in order to avoid the mistakes of over or underestimating a factor from a different context which should not influence decisions. If people overcompensate to avoid this problem, they might create new problems by going too far in the other direction.

I argue here that priming effects describe how policymakers integrate information from the world. This incoming information will prime a given relevant identity, past experiences to be compared with the current situation, and a number of emotional beliefs that seem appropriate to mobilize in the context. A lot of these elements framing the question from the beginning may depend on the associative system and occur at a level below

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<sup>166</sup> Kahneman 2011, 129–42; Tversky and Kahneman 1982, 11–14

<sup>167</sup> For examples, see Huckfeldt et al. 1999, 890–92; Jacobs and Shapiro 1994, 527–28

<sup>168</sup> DeCoster and Claypool 2004, 3

<sup>169</sup> Tversky and Kahneman 1982, 14

<sup>170</sup> Schubert and Häfner 2003

<sup>171</sup> Kahneman 2011, 51

<sup>172</sup> DeCoster and Claypool 2004, 19–20

conscious awareness. However, when policymakers are confronted with dissonance between various emotional beliefs, disagreements in their community, or when following a course has seemed like a mistake, they may more carefully analyze the situation and try to (over)adjust for the bias of their previous stance.

### *Selecting the Leader Prototype*

Intense emotional beliefs and the selection of an identity appropriate to the situation are not sufficient to lead. The leader must be “one of us,” be representative of the ideal lead that members of the community envision. The leader consciously attempts to do this by emphasizing similarities with other group members, and presenting outgroup members to be as different as possible on some dimensions. Sometimes, the leader gets help from the wider situation and not much work needs to be done. An outside event or new information can enhance prototypicality. If the leader condemns an outgroup and argues for a strong response, for instance, outrageous or offensive behavior from the outgroup may enhance his or her prototypicality in the eyes of ingroup members. The most representative policymakers thus arise as leader both from the prospective leader’s own work and from the situation, the features that the situation makes the most salient.

Prototypicality is a mechanism that also works because followers want a positive self-concept and to reduce uncertainty. According to the principle of esteem, decision makers select an identity, and a leader representative of this identity, because their group identity is part of their self-identity, and they want their self-identity to be positively valued. Policymakers are also anxious about the future and uncertain about what is the right decision to make and the right way to frame events. In the words of Hogg and Mullin, “[u]ncertainty is aversive because it is ultimately associated with reduced control over one’s life, and thus it motivates behavior that reduces subjective uncertainty.”<sup>173</sup> The feeling of belonging to a specific group, to be different from others outside of it, and to be part of a community in which a leader can show the way all reduce this uncertainty and provide guidance. For the prospective leader, other members of the group who agree to follow validate his or her positions, thus reducing uncertainty about whether he or she is on the right course of action.

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<sup>173</sup> Hogg and Mullin 1999, 253

Followers find a path to take, meaning, and social validation when they follow another community member's lead.

Prototypicality implies that a policymaker who has done something outrageous for the community, has broken with community norms, or is seen as an outlier, highly divergent from members of the community, should not be able to become the leader. The leader needs to be intense and represent a valued principle in the community, but remain within the boundaries of what potential followers consider acceptable. Skillful leaders will try to anticipate other members' reactions to their moves, and make sure that their positions remain acceptable to the others at worst, or promote a valued representation of what the community stands for at its best. Erratic and inconsistent leaders, or leaders who devalue the group, would go against the main psychological principles driving the prototypicality mechanism.

### *Interaction Mechanisms*

*I sit here all day trying to persuade people to do the things they ought to have sense enough to do without my persuading them...*

– President Harry Truman<sup>174</sup>

Emotions and beliefs are diffused in many ways between policymakers. There are two types of interaction mechanisms, the first is the conscious mechanism of interaction between leader and followers, or between followers themselves, and the second is the unconscious mechanism of diffusion that can be enhanced by reactions to outside events.

The first mechanism I call persuasion. Leaders attempt to persuade followers that they should adopt the same international positions at least, or even better, that they should change their emotional beliefs for them to converge on the leader's emotional beliefs. According to social identity theory, messages coming from ingroup sources and in line with shared group beliefs are more likely to be given attention and perceived as valid by the receiver.<sup>175</sup> Policymakers look to fellow group members to provide guidance for their own behavior. They will therefore give a prospective leader a lot of attention and thought. A leader can use

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<sup>174</sup> Cited in Neustadt 1960, 10

<sup>175</sup> Van Knippenberg 1999, 320–21; Haslam 2004, 95–96

this opportunity to persuade potential followers that the course which he or she has chosen is the right path.

Alternatively, a follower who has been deeply converted and adopted not just the public positions, but the leader's emotional beliefs, may also do work to persuade other members to follow the leader. I call these followers champions: they did not initiate the position, but once they adopt it, they attempt to influence other community members. They enhance the leader's influence by consciously promoting and defending the leader's positions.

There is a wide variety of principles that explain why persuasion attempts succeed or fail. Leaders and champions can appeal to the potential followers' emotions, arguing that they should feel a certain way according to the community's affective norms. They might use persuasive information and mobilize facts, showing that their way is the most efficient or most likely to yield a good outcome. Persuasion tactics may even include pressuring partners for time and making the situation more dangerous and uncertain than it is currently perceived to be. This works because reducing uncertainty is a key human drive in following leaders. Building a convincing frame to interpret the situation is also an important aspect of it. Framing, as a goal of social actors to give meaning to issues, is therefore important at this level too, just as it is for identity and leader selection mechanisms. There is a variety of roads that can be taken to achieve persuasion, but these mechanisms share the same type of dynamics, where the position of an actor shifts because another has attempted to change their mind without coercion and also without incentives directly affecting the actor like threats, promises, rewards, or some punishment.

The second interaction mechanism may be labeled contagion or diffusion, but I will use the term emotional resonance.<sup>176</sup> Emotional resonance is how intensely actors are emotionally affected by incoming information. These feelings are likely to impact their emotional beliefs regarding a specific issue, which will in turn enhance or diminish the appeal of prospective leaders and their advocated positions. Resonance is not controlled and conscious like persuasion, in moments of crisis, it often streams as emotions spread like an "affective wave" overcoming several actors who cannot oppose the powerful tidal wave of

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<sup>176</sup> On emotional contagion, see Mercer 2014, 524; A. A. G. Ross 2014, 22–26

emotions.<sup>177</sup> This is possible because actors who share a common identity also often share affective norms, so that events will emotionally resonate with them in similar ways. Resonance depends on policymakers' past experiences and their socialization to a given identity.<sup>178</sup>

To take a different analogy, resonance often works like the contagion of a virus. Imagine that social identity is actually the actor's immune system. Societal actors, policymakers, and the media may share common vulnerabilities that will allow the virus to spread quickly among them. This does not mean that every single member of the group will be affected in the same way, but even unaffected members will have to recognize the public health problem of a virus that has spread widely.

At its most basic, the reason resonance works is the same reason why humans have emotions. Responding emotionally to stimuli in our environment provides us with a great evolutionary advantage, for instance, emotions drive us to fear what is dangerous, to avoid or to prepare for it if it cannot be avoided. Events thus resonate with policymakers because it provides information about the world. Emotions provide expectations about how things should go, and a violation of these expectations provokes further emotions, providing clues as to how policymakers should change their emotional beliefs about other actors and situations.

Powerful emotions that affect policymakers may open opportunities for leaders to enhance their persuasion attempts. However, emotional resonance can also disrupt the leader-follower relationship. In moments of emotional intensity, the boundaries of acceptability for international positions, the content of emotional beliefs, and the representativeness of a policymaker may all shift. Emotions inform policymakers about the world, but they also motivate them to act on what they believe. Emotions constitute identities and the associated norms. Emotions can reshape ideas, or in some moments of emotional upheaval, completely destroy existing beliefs to replace them with new ones.

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<sup>177</sup> Hall and Ross 2015, 859

<sup>178</sup> This is similar to what Kahneman calls an availability cascade, see Kahneman 2011, 140–45

## *Beyond Policymakers?*

*Have I ever obeyed, I could not say, I know no other rule than to be convinced and to convince others.*

– Jean Monnet<sup>179</sup>

The social psychological mechanisms that I identified are expected to work not just for policymakers, but also for other actors involved in international politics. This can be domestic groups seeking to influence foreign policy, international organizations, or multinational businesses. For example, prototypicality may work at the national level, where a representative policymaker will establish him or herself as leader in his or her domestic environment. But because I am focusing on international leadership here, persuasion and emotional resonance are the most important mechanisms for the domestic to state policymaker conduit. Individuals and groups with particular emotional beliefs or who are affected emotionally by international events can attempt to persuade their state's policymakers to adopt a certain international position. In a world of fast communication and spread of information, emotional resonance may affect individuals and groups living in a state, who will then put pressure on policymakers and other organizations to act. Feedback loops may occur and escape policymakers' control, for instance when other states' policymakers and groups in their own domestic sphere share common emotional beliefs, resonate emotionally in a similar way, and then embolden each other to express even more intensely their feelings. Such an echo chamber of emotional resonance can make it very hard for a policymaker to resist these calls. Cognitive-Affective Theory therefore reveals complex dynamics of influence.

There is also a role for international institutions in CAT. Unlike in the liberal approach, where institutions are bargaining fora, Cognitive-Affective Theory expects institutions to constitute who actors are and to provide a stage for announcing their positions and justifying their stances. Exclusive institutions may change policymakers' identities if they are strongly attached to it. For example, the European Union, its existence, coordination

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<sup>179</sup> Monnet 1976, 475

mechanisms, and culture – in which policymakers and officials are socialized – make several Europeanist policymakers want to reach common ground with their European partners and seek a consensus with them. They thus ask what would be best for Europe and what their European partners want, not only what they want.<sup>180</sup> Institutions in which state representatives frequently participate also increases the connections and encounters between policymakers and their diplomats, which in turn may facilitate the diffusion of emotions and beliefs. Institutions are thus important social facts that structure leader-follower dynamics, for instance by delimiting group membership or providing opportunities for persuasion. However, in CAT the mechanisms themselves are not institutional. Identity selection, leader selection or persuasion may all occur outside of institutional forums and official encounters. Leader and followers can sometimes even set up ad hoc and temporary institutions to structure their cooperation if they feel like the current institutional structure is insufficient. Institutions are facilitators or part of the actors' social reality (domestic and international environment), but they are not, in themselves, core mechanisms driving the leadership configuration.

As perspicacious readers will note, there is nothing in the mechanisms presented above that makes policymakers the only candidate for leadership. Indeed, historically, important leaders have emerged from outside of official states' roles. Perhaps the most well-known example of the 20th century is Jean Monnet. Notwithstanding the fact that he was never elected and never held an office with executive power, Monnet led by providing powerful ideas to shape European cooperation and integration. According to Monnet, European states had to begin by delegating their authority to supranational agencies which would serve the function of administering specific economic sectors. This integration would bind European countries together in ever closer cooperation and prevent the return of war. Monnet had access to several important policymakers and their advisers because of a network of influence that he had built during the two world wars. He had his own tactics of persuasion to spread his beliefs, one-on-one meetings to explain the advantages of his ideas, converting the close advisers of important policymakers, letting policymakers claim leadership for his ideas, and gathering information from his circle of important friends.<sup>181</sup> The Monnet method

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<sup>180</sup> This has been called the consensus-building orientation or consultation reflex, see Smith 2004, 107–9; Tonra 2003, 739–40; Nuttall 1992

<sup>181</sup> Chira-Pascanut 2014, 1246–49



was also successful not just because of his work and his social position, but also because the right circumstances provided an opportunity for his ideas to prevail. He confidently wrote that the chance to push his ideas would come because “it is obvious that men of power lack new ideas – they lack time and information – and want to do well, as long as the merit is attributed to them.”<sup>182</sup> He expressed this idea to wait patiently for the right time by linking his political advocacy to the time when he was a business representative in the Cognac industry: “I know to wait the circumstances for a long time. In Cognac, one knows how to wait. It is the only way to make a good product.”<sup>183</sup>

It seems that Monnet’s leadership was based on several mechanisms found in CAT: emphasizing a common European identity, mobilizing affective ties to a number of people, persuading policymakers that this was the right thing to do, being consistent in one’s ideas, and benefitting from the right circumstances, the time when emotional beliefs resonate with policymakers. Yet, it is unlikely, but not impossible, to find actors who had as much influence on international cooperation as he did. Even he had to convince policymakers and they, in the end, especially French policymakers, acted as leaders on the world scene.<sup>184</sup> Consequently, although I do not argue that only state policymakers can lead, I maintain that they are the most likely actors for international leadership. This is especially true for states with more material and ideational power, although as I argued in the introductory chapter, dominating in the structure is neither sufficient nor necessary for leadership.

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<sup>182</sup> Monnet 1976, 98

<sup>183</sup> Monnet 1976, 44

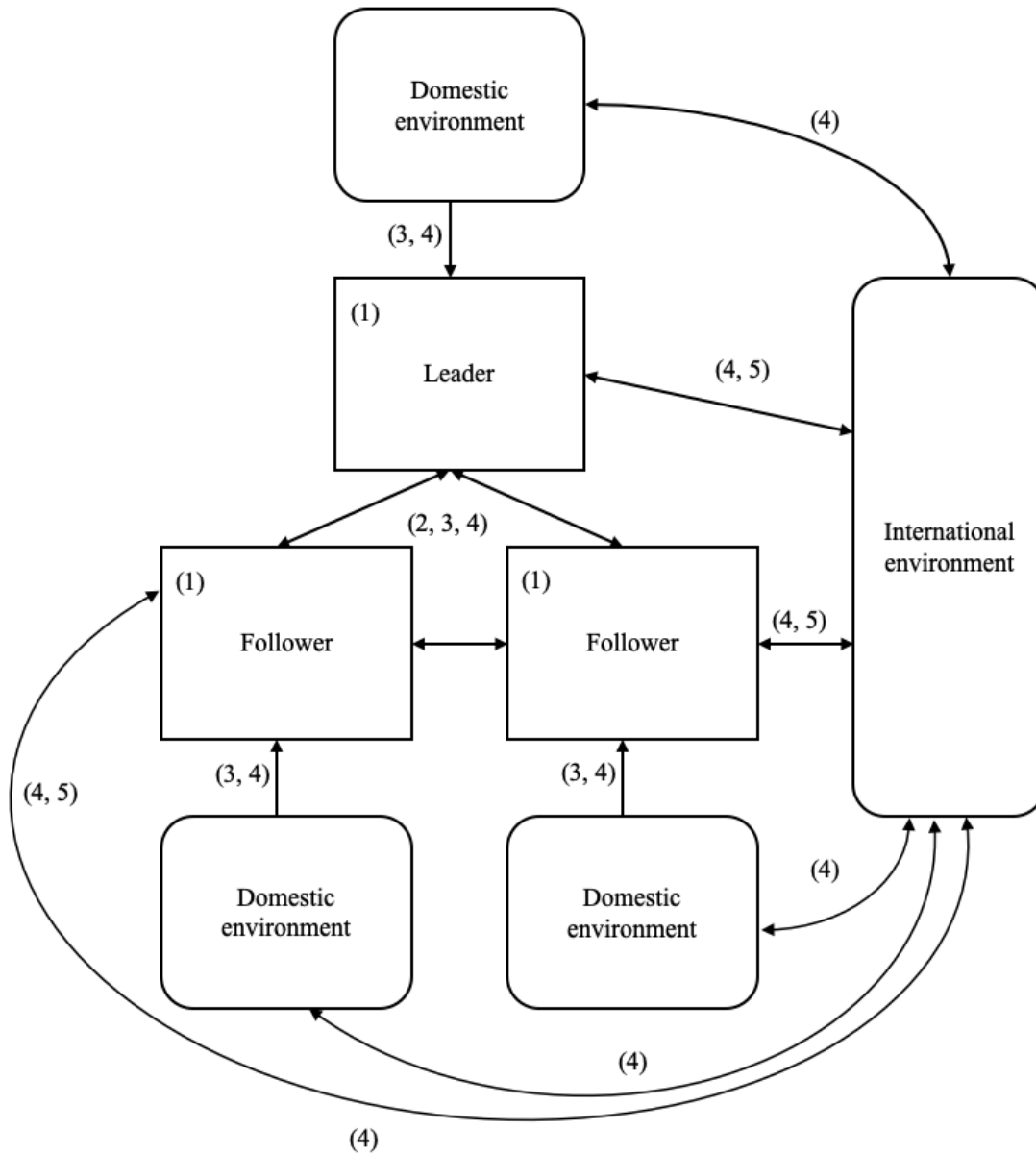
<sup>184</sup> Parsons has documented the necessity of aggressive French international leadership for the European Economic Community to come together. See Parsons 2003, 53–54, 102

### **Table 3. Empirical implications of the Cognitive-Affective Theory**

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1. Policymakers will be driven by their emotional beliefs to adopt international positions.
  2. The policymaker with the most intense emotional beliefs will attempt to lead.
  3. Other policymakers will follow the leader if his or her international position are representative of the community's values and affective norms.
  4. Elements of the situation will prime a way for policymakers to frame the issues.
  5. The leader will claim that his or her international positions are representative of the ingroup's ideals and maximize the difference with an outgroup.
  6. A shift in the leader-follower process comes from emotionally resonant events of the international environment or persuasion attempts by the leader.
  7. Domestic groups and the media are also driven by their emotional beliefs and amplify emotionality around events.
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**Figure 3. Mechanisms of Cognitive-Affective international leadership**



Legend: The numbers indicate mechanisms driving the processes of social influence. Top policymakers in each state are driven by emotional beliefs (1), the leader is selected through relative emotional beliefs intensity and prototypicality (2), and in interactions with other policymakers, positions and emotional beliefs can diffuse through (3) persuasion or (4) emotional resonance. Domestic environments can affect state policymakers through persuasion or emotional resonance (3, 4). The international environment can affect domestic constituencies, the leader and followers through emotional resonance (4). Finally, the international environment can prime specific social identities in the minds of the leader and followers (5).

### *Agency and Emotions*

It would be easy to depict CAT as a theory that completely destroys the possibility of agency, and paints a world where actors are victims of emotions that they do not control. Because in the Western world reason has often been opposed to the negative situation in which one is prey to its instincts or passions, it is easier to think of emotional actors as unable to do anything by themselves, as capricious children. This would make emotions a mere abstract variable rather than an embodied phenomenon interacting with cognition and the social context. Although political actors may not want to be presented as emotional, it is important to remember that affective dynamics can be positive, as in empathy and determination.

Moreover, emotions are both a conscious and unconscious phenomenon. Some emotions reach the level of consciousness to become feelings, and actors with high levels of emotional intelligence may then be able to be aware of their emotions, understand other actors' emotions, and even use emotions strategically. In emotional work, an actor can bring him or herself to feel a given emotion, not merely to behave like they feel on the surface, but to do deep acting, to "make feigning unnecessary" by convincing oneself.<sup>185</sup> Studies have shown that leaders can do this as well, for instance by focusing on emotional memories to bring themselves to certain emotions, or by reappraising the situation to frame it in a different light, leading to different emotional responses.<sup>186</sup> Thus, emotions are not only things that happen to us, but also things that we do. Leaders and champions will actively deploy emotions to persuade followers to come along.

Of course, emotions can also sometimes influence actors more than they think it does. When the focus of attention of decision makers is elsewhere, emotions might influence their thinking in ways that they are not fully aware of. Finally, it is also worth noting that awareness does not necessarily mean that emotions are then unable to produce their effects: an actor may be aware of his or her intense feelings, and still act in accordance with them.

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<sup>185</sup> Hochschild 2003, 33

<sup>186</sup> Edelman and Van Knippenberg 2017, 748; See also Burch, Humphrey, and Batchelor 2013

### *Discrete versus Mixed Emotions*

Scholars of emotion have begun to analyze the impact of discrete emotions in international politics. For instance, they have studied emotions like fear, humiliation, empathy, and anger.<sup>187</sup> In the current study, however, I will not focus on a particular emotion or type of emotions.

Because of the socially constructed nature of emotions and the potentialities of agency, emotional reactions are expected to be diverse and yield different responses. The very boundaries between emotions are fuzzy and fluid. Andrew Ross has demonstrated how emotions are mixed and complex, how they can transform in the social process to blend with other emotions, mutate into new emotions, or attach themselves to new objects with no logical link to the prior object that had elicited an emotional response.<sup>188</sup>

Furthermore, although particular emotions may reinforce the tendency of actors to perform some actions rather than others, there is a big jump from action tendencies to actual behavior. Actual behavior is constrained by situation factors and the social context. There are many behaviors that can stem from the same impulse or emotional tendency.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, I avoid to presume that certain discrete emotions will always cause a certain effect, or that emotional transformation dynamics can be predicted.

### **Anticipating Criticism of the Cognitive-Affective Theory**

In this section, I anticipate criticism of the Cognitive-Affective Theory. I confront scholars who have been skeptical of such theories and are likely to reject such an approach.

### Reductionism

*Consequently, every time that a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon, we may be sure that the explanation is false.*

– Emile Durkheim<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Hall 2017; Holmes and Yarhi-Milo 2017; N. C. Crawford 2014; Moisi 2009; Saurette 2006

<sup>188</sup> A. A. G. Ross 2014, 18–20, 43–50

<sup>189</sup> D. M. Mackie, Devos, and Smith 2000, 614

<sup>190</sup> Durkheim 1964, 104

The most important text on attacking psychological approaches such as the one presented here was Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, first published in 1979. Waltz accuses approaches focused on the individual actor and their interaction with each other as instances of reductionism, that is, an approach where "the whole is understood by knowing the attributes and the interactions of its parts."<sup>191</sup> He argues instead in favor of a systemic theory that focuses on the entire system that actors are in, he is interested in a "set of constraining conditions" that specify how actors "stand in relation to one another."<sup>192</sup> Waltz deploys three arguments to oppose psychological reductionist theories.

First, states' attributes are so numerous that such an approach would lead to a "proliferation of variables" making generalizations about international behavior impossible. Second, Waltz sees international politics as a realm in which similar outcomes and processes are often repeated, so he argues that idiosyncratic factors cannot account for them. Finally, he also writes that a theory of foreign policy is unhelpful and unnecessary: it is possible to study wider structural processes of international politics without a theory of how states make their foreign policy. A theory of the market does not require a theory of the firm, or in other words, "the theory does not tell us why state X made a certain move last Tuesday. To expect it to do so would be like expecting the theory of universal gravitation to explain the wayward path of a falling leaf."<sup>193</sup> Waltz is focused on a general theory of gravitation, not on specific explanations.

The importance of Waltz's book in the discipline of International Relations (IR) has meant a bias against psychological theories, despite the weakness of his arguments. The study of the international structure can lead to a proliferation of variables just as much as the other levels: distribution of power in the system, economic interdependence, existing alliances, geographical configuration, homogenous or heterogenous systems, etc. For instance, Kalevi Holsti identifies five system-level components: the boundaries of the system, the main characteristics of political units in the system, the power structure of the system, the forms of interaction between component units, and finally the explicit or implicit rules or customs between system units.<sup>194</sup> He also shows that each component can be divided in a greater

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<sup>191</sup> Waltz 2010, 18

<sup>192</sup> Waltz 2010, 74, 80–81

<sup>193</sup> Waltz 2010, 121

<sup>194</sup> Kalevi Jaako Holsti 1988, 24

number of variables, for instance the type of interactions may include diplomatic practices, the level of trade between states, or the type and amount of communication between state decision makers. A proliferation of variables is thus possible even by focusing on the international structure. Waltz builds a much simpler theory because he chooses to reduce the structure of the system to one core element, the distribution of power. Ironically, Waltz argues against reductionism and then constructs one of the most reductionist theory of international politics, that reduces everything to one aspect of the international structure (macroreductionism).

Waltz's second argument ignores the fact that a variety of lower level processes can lead to the same outcome. International actors with different beliefs and personalities may clash, which in many different cases leads to war, even if the substantive features of the actors and their interactions differ. Furthermore, Waltz greatly simplifies the diversity of human history and exaggerates the distinction between domestic and international politics. No two wars are alike. And although Waltz argues that it is the anarchical structure of the international system that allows the recurrence of war, civil wars and state breakdowns are just as frequent. There is no reason why structural factors should always prevail in an explanation of interstate conflict. In neopositivist fashion, Waltz is more interested in finding regularities for generalization, some kind of universal law, rather than to study how conflicts actually arise.

Finally, several authors have argued that foreign policy and international politics cannot and should not be separated.<sup>195</sup> Foreign policies make international politics, and it is not possible to argue that international politics work a certain way if policymakers consistently build their foreign policies in ways that contradict this structural logic. The theory of gravitation is especially inappropriate in this instance: international politics is made by actors, their decisions and their actions, so that "*structure exists, and evolves only because of agents and their practices*. All structure micro and macro, is instantiated only in process."<sup>196</sup> Leaves do not create the tree that they fall from, nor do they decide how and when they fall, and coordinate their action in doing so. In any case, how are we to test international political theories if no instance of foreign policy decision can inform on their

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<sup>195</sup> Schweller 2003, 321–22; Elman 1996

<sup>196</sup> Italics in original, Wendt 1999, 164

validity? Unsurprisingly, Waltz himself empirically bases his own theory on specific foreign policy decisions made by states.<sup>197</sup>

Waltz is averse to psychological or socio-psychological factors because they fail to make “reliable explanations or predictions.”<sup>198</sup> Instead, Waltz prefers his neorealist approach although it fails his own test.

### *Avoiding Reductionism*

Despite these shortcomings, there are good reasons for scholars to consider the accusation of reductionism seriously. If we understand reality as stratified, an explanation at a given level does not necessarily apply to a higher level. Alexander Wendt also rejects reductionism because several micro-level combinations can result in the same macro-state, and also because “some causal mechanism exists only on a macro-level, even though they depend on instantiations at the micro-level for their operation.”<sup>199</sup>

However, reductionism should not prevent psychological explanations to be considered. First, psychological level mechanisms may actually apply in a similar way at the level of international politics. This is especially true for social psychology, which studies psychology in social contexts and not by assuming atomistic and isolated individuals. Various strata of reality are partly dependent and partly autonomous from one another. In the words of Wight, “[e]ach level has its own emergent powers that, although rooted in, emergent from and dependent upon other levels, cannot be explained by explanations based at the more fundamental level.”<sup>200</sup>

Secondly, the processual approach to leadership developed in this chapter, and the suggested cognitive-affective processes, are not merely at the individual level but also consider the wider process of interactions between agents. It neither reduces agents to be mere pawns in the social structure, nor does it argue that agents can modify the structure at will.

Finally, although I suggest that many psychological level processes work at the international level, I also draw from international and sociological insights to build my

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<sup>197</sup> Waltz 2010, 165–67, 170–71

<sup>198</sup> Waltz 2010, 19

<sup>199</sup> Wendt 1999, 139, 154

<sup>200</sup> Wight 2006, 36



Cognitive-Affective Theory. I do not assume that social psychological theories tell us everything we need to know: theoretical propositions need to be adapted, and in the case of this thesis, they will also be tested to see if they are valid at the international level. There would be no need for a theory of international leadership if lower level psychological theories already and directly explained international politics. International leadership is a combination of individual/psychological mechanisms and social/international emergent processes.

### The Overwhelming Difficulty of Studying Emotions

Another common argument against theories focused on affective dynamics is that emotions are just too hard, and nearly impossible, to assess empirically, so that the theory cannot be tested. Not only are emotions fluid, personal, and subjective, decision makers often instrumentalize them to achieve their strategic goals. The argument is that researchers may never really know if emotions are fully “interiorized” and genuinely felt, or used by policymakers as political tools. Emotions are both hidden from the outside observer, and can be simulated in deceptive performances by international actors. Skeptical scientists may have read the current chapter and thought that emotion is only a façade, a mask to hide interests and true preferences. Neta Crawford remarks that in IR, “...passions are often treated as fleeting, private, reactive, and not theorizable or amenable to systematic analysis.”<sup>201</sup>

I agree that studying emotions is a challenge, especially the unconscious part of emotions, and particularly in this case where international processes include several actors and their interactions. In the next chapter, I take up this challenge by situating the leadership configuration in the transatlantic community, by identifying specific cases that concentrate leadership dynamics in time, and by devising a method and specific tools to study the leader-follower process. Before I do, I want to address here some of the skepticism about testing psychological and emotion theories in particular.

First, social groups and policymakers’ preferences, a key element of liberal theories, are just as hidden from view and impossible to directly access for researchers as emotions are. Moravcsik recognizes the challenge of studying preferences, he writes:

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<sup>201</sup> N. C. Crawford 2014, 536

State preferences must be clearly distinguished from strategies and tactics and then must be inferred either by observing consistent patterns of state behavior or by systematically analyzing stable elements internal to states, as revealed in decision-making documents, trustworthy oral histories and memoirs, patterns of coalitional support, and the structure of domestic institutions.<sup>202</sup>

Researchers thus have to infer preferences from the actors' actions, discourses, and wider social position. Emotions can be inferred in the same way. The fact that scholars are never a hundred percent certain that an actor feels specific emotions should not prevent them from hypothesizing that such is the case, and that this has an impact on their foreign policy decisions. I agree with O'Mahoney who argues that "[e]xcessive weight is often placed in IR on the possibility of misrepresentation."<sup>203</sup>

Second, notwithstanding the fact that political scientists may not directly study policymakers' brains in a lab or have access to their interior dialogue, this does not prevent them from assessing the credibility of claims about their emotions. Good scientists do not study naively what policymakers say and accept it at face value. They assess the situation in which actors said certain things. They analyze the timing when actors change their discourse, which may inform on the reasons why this shift occurred. They also compare what actors say in public to what has transpired of what they say in private. Scholars may also consider what actors have said compared to the details of their implemented policies to see if it matches the rhetoric. Scientists thus have many ways to test if emotions appear genuine or were merely instrumentalized, and although some uncertainty sometimes remains, this can be significantly reduced by careful analysis.

Finally, what is interesting about the criticism that emotions can be instrumentalized and faked is that this very possibility stems from the assumptions that emotions have social power. As Todd Hall argues, "[i]t is precisely because emotions play such an important role in our everyday lived social existence that displaying emotions on the international stage has value."<sup>204</sup> If all policymakers could perfectly control their emotions and use them strategically, then emotional persuasion would not work on anyone. Theorists need to assume that emotion matters to then consider that they might be instrumentally manipulated. Neta

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<sup>202</sup> Moravcsik 1997, 543–44

<sup>203</sup> O'Mahoney 2015, 249

<sup>204</sup> Hall 2015, 21

Crawford has argued that “[e]ven the ‘manipulator believes that others think emotions are important and is constrained by emotion to a certain extent.’”<sup>205</sup>

Several aspects of the Cognitive-Affective Theory minimize the worry about instrumentalization. First, I argue that in some circumstances the member of a group might feel pressure to express a given emotion, as this is the emotion deemed appropriate within the group, even if he or she does not deeply feel it or only weakly so. This is because affect is a powerful vector of socialization, it signals that a member belongs in the ingroup, and has the right values, shared beliefs, and respects the group norms. This applies as much in an affective community at the international level as it does at the national level, when the people of a nation strongly feel something and the nation’s leader needs to express that he or she shares their emotions.

Second, research has shown that when humans perform a certain behavior, this can elicit associated emotions. Articulating a discourse and enacting a given behavior, even if just a performance based on emotions that are not really felt, can lead to the consequences that the performing actor will begin to feel the emotion. Psychologists have studied how facial expressions, gaze, varying pace and tone of voice, posture and other actions elicit the associated emotions in people even when they do not know that this is the purpose of the experiment. In these experiments, people who contract their facial muscles like a smile report feeling happier, when they speak in a loud and harsh voice they experience anger, and when they adopt a slumped and contracted posture they have less confidence and feel sadder.<sup>206</sup> There is some truth in “fake it until you make it” because our own words and actions probably inform our mind on how we should feel. We are ourselves one of the many cues that shape our emotional response, and the response then further influences our behavior. This is especially the case when situational cues reinforce the behavioral cues associated with a given emotion. Policymakers may only adopt a behavior or express various emotions because they believe the situation warrants it, but get caught at their game in actually feeling what they were pretending to feel.

Finally, actors performing emotions are not the only potential preys to deeper emotional changes, it is also the case with other actors around them. Psychologists have

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<sup>205</sup> N. C. Crawford 2000, 155

<sup>206</sup> For a review of these studies, see Laird 2007, chaps. 2–3

studied what they call the “behavior engulfing the field effect.” In this effect similar to the fundamental attribution error, the emotional behavior of an actor becomes so salient that it influences other actors who observe this behavior. In such cases, “the content of an observed action overpowers the influence of contextual factors.”<sup>207</sup> The most interesting part is that this effect remains even if the actors observing the behavior know that it is a performance, that this is an attempt at deception. This means that even when a policymaker know that someone is feigning, he or she may nonetheless be affected by the displayed emotions of this person. In a way similar to how we can be affected by the emotions of actors in a movie, an international policymaker performing emotional behaviors becomes vivid and takes the affective foreground, influencing other policymakers. This could explain why affective waves spread between actors even when some actors doubt the sincerity of these emotions or do not share them, but are carried away anyway by the power of affective dynamics.

#### Psychological Research and International Politics

Another line of criticism focuses on attacking psychological studies themselves as not representative of how policymakers actually decide. For convenience, psychological research is often done on university students that have a very different background from top policymakers. The closed and controlled setting of the experiment cannot replicate the complexity of the outside world.<sup>208</sup> Because of how different they are from the general public and the situation that they are in, policymakers in a situation of crisis are “a skewed sample of human decision making.”<sup>209</sup> As Rose McDermott has argued, political scientist are often obsessed with external validity and use this argument to dismiss experimental studies.<sup>210</sup>

James Druckman and Cindy Kam have argued that student subjects are not an inherent problem because experimental work is focused on testing specific mechanisms and attaining internal validity.<sup>211</sup> The problem is usually theoretical, not methodological: if the experimenters did not control for the appropriate elements in their research design, then even a perfectly representative sample will not yield accurate results. Furthermore, no one uses

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<sup>207</sup> DePaulo, Zuckerman, and Rosenthal 1980, 132

<sup>208</sup> Jeffery 2014, 586

<sup>209</sup> Kaufmann 1994, 560

<sup>210</sup> McDermott 2002, 334

<sup>211</sup> Druckman and Kam 2011

one study done on undergraduate students to base their affirmations. Research programs usually involve dozens if not hundreds of independent studies conducted on various participants and using different manipulations to test a phenomenon.<sup>212</sup>

The fact that research is conducted on a different segment of the population may actually facilitate research. If certain relevant dispositions are underrepresented in this segment of the population, and a causal effect is still observed, then the relationship found in the laboratory may underestimate the power of this effect in the political world.<sup>213</sup> Recent research on how emotions affect political behavior suggest that policymakers may be more emotional than laypeople, not less so. Despite the cliché of a machiavellian and calculating politician, Miller has found that higher levels of political sophistication are associated with more emotionality in politics.<sup>214</sup> Highly sophisticated citizens are more attentive to politics, have more knowledge, more stake in political issues, and richer memories associating emotions to political objects. They are more emotional about politics and more likely to behave in a way that is biased by their emotions.<sup>215</sup> Logically, top policymakers, who have often spent years of activism in a political party, have a lot of knowledge, and great stakes in political outcomes, should thus be even more affected by cognitive-affective mechanisms than undergraduate students.

Psychological experimental studies can be useful to isolate basic mechanisms which may activate in various circumstances.<sup>216</sup> These basic mechanisms can be useful ingredients in building a theory of international cooperation. Instead of assuming that actors think in some ways that are unrealistic, it is still probably better to begin with some ideas that we have discovered about how people actually think. The next step will then be to specify if these mechanisms work at the international level, and if they do, how they work, when they activate and how do they interact with other dynamics. This is how psychology is used in this study. In this sense, external validity is something that needs to be discovered by studying the political world.

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<sup>212</sup> McDermott 2002, 335

<sup>213</sup> Druckman and Kam 2011, 51–53

<sup>214</sup> Miller 2011

<sup>215</sup> Miller 2011, 578

<sup>216</sup> Holmes 2018, 65; McDermott 2002, 335

Psychological theories, like all science, are continually refined and contested. Rather than the final word on the subject, psychological processes should be seen here as the application of the current state of the science to international leadership. If we find evidence of mechanisms at play in international politics that have also been found in laboratory experiments, this should give us more, not less, confidence in our findings.

In summary, there is no good reason to exclude psychological theories *a priori*, and these theories can and should be tested. Like any other theories its mechanisms cannot be directly observed, but that is true whether we theorize about preferences, norms, beliefs, or emotions.

## **Conclusion**

*State is the name of the coldest of all cold monsters.*

– Friedrich Nietzsche<sup>217</sup>

Nietzsche's metaphor served to emphasize the capacity of the state to serve its own interest and to deceive without a second thought. International scholars have often assumed that the state and the policymakers speaking and acting in its name are just as cold-blooded. Realist, institutionalist and liberal theories consider international actors to be rational, calculating, and motivated to serve their own interests, or the interests of their constituents. In arguing that states follow norms of appropriate behavior according to their identity and the situation they face, many constructivists have painted policymakers that are just as dispassionate. The Cognitive-Affective Theory developed here rejects this conception of human decisions and interactions. Hymans has argued that states "are not gigantic calculating machines; they are hierarchically organized groups of emotional people."<sup>218</sup> When states interact, it depends on the work of policymakers, advisers and diplomats driven by their emotional beliefs. When the leader of a group or some event light the spark of divine madness, when policymakers and their constituencies catch fire, when affective waves spread and ramp up the heat, international cooperation is fired up by powerful forces and reforged in its fundamental dynamics. In the following chapters, by demonstrating the validity of Cognitive-Affective

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<sup>217</sup> Nietzsche 2006, 34

<sup>218</sup> J. Hymans 2010, 462

leadership Theory, I hope to take international studies beyond this perception of states and policymakers as cold monsters.

## **Chapter 2 – More Than a Feeling: Testing International Leadership Theories**

In this chapter, I devise a method to test international leadership theories. In order to see which empirical implications of each theory are borne out empirically, I need to focus on specific events. I need a theater in which actors of the same troupe can take the lead or follow their fellow performer's lead. I need a stage where leadership dynamics are performed and to study the appropriate type of plays where such performances unfold with unusual intensity. Finally, after selecting more specific plays in the same repertoire, I need methods to study the actual performances according to particular elements so that I can draw conclusions from it.

Put differently, I need to select the group in which a leadership configuration emerged, the type of cases for which leadership matters, the intense moments in these cases to concentrate the analysis, the specific cases to study, and finally the means to analyze them in order to draw inferences about the validity of leadership theories. I focus on the transatlantic community when it is confronted with internationalized intrastate conflicts. During these conflicts, I concentrate on specific issues and moments of international crisis. Four such cases will be studied in-depth. In this chapter, I explain my choice with regard to each of these elements in turn.

My methods of investigation can best be described as following the logic of abduction: gaining explanatory power from the evidence to distinguish between rival theories. I will spend some time explaining the logic of abduction, as it is not well known and less frequently used in the study of international politics. I finish the chapter by detailing how I analyze each empirical implication discussed in the previous chapter in the course of the empirical chapters that follow.

### **Selecting the Group: The Transatlantic Community**

*A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.*

– Henrik Ibsen<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibsen 1900, 109



The flagship in the West as far as security communities are concerned is the transatlantic community. The North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 united the main Western powers in resisting the spread of communism and Soviet domination, but the community has developed beyond the military alliance (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO), and endured even after the fall of the Soviet Union. Today, it is the most powerful alliance in history, and an advanced pluralist security community in which the now 29 members share common identities, values, and norms.

Karl Deutsch and his colleagues proposed the concept of a security community to describe a group of states between which war is unthinkable. Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett have developed the concept of security community further in the same spirit, as “a transnational region comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change.”<sup>2</sup> They presented members of a community as having “shared identities, values and meanings,” many-sided and direct face-to-face relations, as well as a certain degree of reciprocity, altruism, and trust.<sup>3</sup> They conceived this community as “the ability to project a sense of purpose that has a magnetic pull; in other words, the core power is not someone to be feared but rather someone to be emulated.”<sup>4</sup>

This magnetic pull has been undertheorized and understudied. Is the core power, the United States, the only member able to set the course for the community and to pull other members closer to its position? This superior power may be required for the community to come into existence, but once the community is established, are members automatically and always pulled toward the core power’s positions? I argue that this is not the case, and although some members may be better positioned or have more resources that allow them to take the lead than others, the transatlantic community is not trapped in always following American leaders. While trust or reciprocity may hold the community together like glue, a more dynamic concept is required to explain how members pull together with a common purpose when confronted to salient issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Adler and Barnett 1998, 30

<sup>3</sup> Adler and Barnett 1998, 31

<sup>4</sup> Adler and Barnett 1998, 424

Authors have studied the relationship between security communities and their neighbors.<sup>5</sup> The concept has sparked debates about the existence and consequences of this community for the North Atlantic region.<sup>6</sup> Above all, researchers have focused on the norms, ideas, and emotions constituting the community, as well as how these elements have been endangered in some key moments in the history of the community.

For example, constructivist scholars of emotions have labeled transatlantia an affective community. Simon Koschut has shown how affective bonds contribute to mutual identification and trust in the transatlantic community, and how emotion norms help members resolve their conflicts.<sup>7</sup> Lucile Eznack studied the community's moment of affective disruptions during the Suez crisis, France's withdrawal from NATO's military command, and the 2003 US-led intervention in Iraq. She argued that affective ties between members of the community should be taken in consideration, and that crises both provoke the members in signalling their disapproval about other members' behavior, and set the stage for repairing the damage to community relations.<sup>8</sup>

The details of how policymakers inside such a community cooperate is a question that has been neglected. Who sets the course and exerts this magnetic pull? How does cooperation succeed and why? One notable exception is Mark Wintz's book *Transatlantic Diplomacy and the Use of Military Force in the Post-Cold War Era*. Wintz studies how member states arrive at common positions on the use of force. He contends that three factors are the most important in explaining transatlantic cooperation on this issue: the cost-benefit risk analysis of an intervention, the ideological compatibility of major national leaders, and the collective domestic pressures supporting or opposing an intervention in major member states. Wintz writes: "if a collective policy is desired on a particular issue, regime member states (even a superpower like the United States) must usually exert some form of diplomatic influence, rather than simply assuming that others will automatically fall in line."<sup>9</sup>

I agree with Wintz that cooperation, even in such a closely-knit community, needs to be explained, not taken for granted. Successful leadership can accomplish a high degree of

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<sup>5</sup> Pouliot 2010; Bellamy 2004

<sup>6</sup> Cox 2006; Pouliot 2006; Cox 2005; Mowles 2004

<sup>7</sup> Koschut 2014b, 537–38

<sup>8</sup> Eznack 2012

<sup>9</sup> Wintz 2010, 16

cohesion, and a better coordinated response in the community. This is not something that should be neglected, both in responding to problems that the community wishes to address, and also in influencing and reshaping the relationships within the community itself. NATO being the most powerful military alliance, the positions that its members adopt, justify, and implement have wide repercussions in the international system. How this cooperation comes to succeed or fail can also inform scholars about how things work in the community, what its members believe as well as how norms, institutions, and ideas structure community interactions.

I go beyond Wintz by studying the leadership configuration that makes this cooperation possible, not just the formation of “successful collective regimes.” The theoretical framework established in the previous chapter allows me to consider power and influence within the cooperation process, and not just cooperation as an outcome to explain. In testing international leadership, I also want to consider issues beyond military intervention. And finally, while some factors identified by Wintz are in line with the Liberal Theory of leadership, it is unclear how the other factors that he identifies interact with domestic pressures. In a democratic country, are the top policymakers’ ideologies not going to reflect their constituents’ choice? Can domestic preferences override the policymakers’ risk analysis?

Despite their limits, research by Wintz, Eznack, Koschut, and others have all demonstrated that the transatlantic community matters for international politics, that it truly exists, that it has consequences for cooperation, and that scholars need to better understand the mechanisms behind these processes. Studying leadership can contribute to this literature, but first leadership requires a setting in which it can be tested. For the purpose of this research, the transatlantic community provides the ideal group to test leadership theories. This is so for two reasons.

First, it is clear that cognitive-affective leadership assumes that group members share a common identity and affective ties with each other. Testing it therefore requires a meaningful and important group for its members. The transatlantic community has endured through several moments of crisis, and a major change in the structure of the world order with the end of the Cold War. Its members share common norms and values, they are committed to multilateral practices, and emphasize norms of communication like regular

consultation, information sharing, and responsiveness to each other's concerns.<sup>10</sup> The Atlantic alliance is also "a relatively highly affectively charged institution for its members."<sup>11</sup> Members of the community have the "we-feeling" that defines a security community, and have integrated it as part of their own identities.

Second, the transatlantic community is also the ideal setting to study the alternative theory of leadership, the Liberal approach. The community has all the elements that liberal scholars suggest should enhance cooperation. Liberal theorists argue that sharing liberal democratic institutions, participating in international organizations, and the presence of a liberal hegemon all contribute to better cooperation between state policymakers. Globalization is a fundamental condition of modern politics, and liberal scholars argue that they best explain these developments and the consequences of further societal and economic integration.<sup>12</sup> The transatlantic community has been the leader of what liberal scholars call the "Western spirit," the overwhelming consensus on market economy, democracy, and freedom, and this spirit "gives this political order cohesiveness and solidarity."<sup>13</sup> Most liberal research has focused on the specificity of advanced Western democracies, and the assumptions of liberal theory should be especially relevant to understand the foreign policy of these countries. The transatlantic community is thus the right place to look for mechanisms of domestic transmission, preference intensity, and international bargaining.

### The Main Protagonists: Transatlantic Powers

I focus the empirical analysis on the cooperation dynamics among policymakers representing and deciding positions for the four core transatlantic powers. As the world's sole superpower, the United States is by far the most powerful member because of its military capabilities, technological capacities, and economic resources. In Europe, with its population of 80 million, the rising economic force is Germany. Nonetheless, Germany's military force and international involvement have not matched its economic power. The United Kingdom and France are the two most powerful states that remain, for their military forces, economic production, and their influence resulting from their history and culture. Not only can they

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<sup>10</sup> Koschut 2016, 166–70

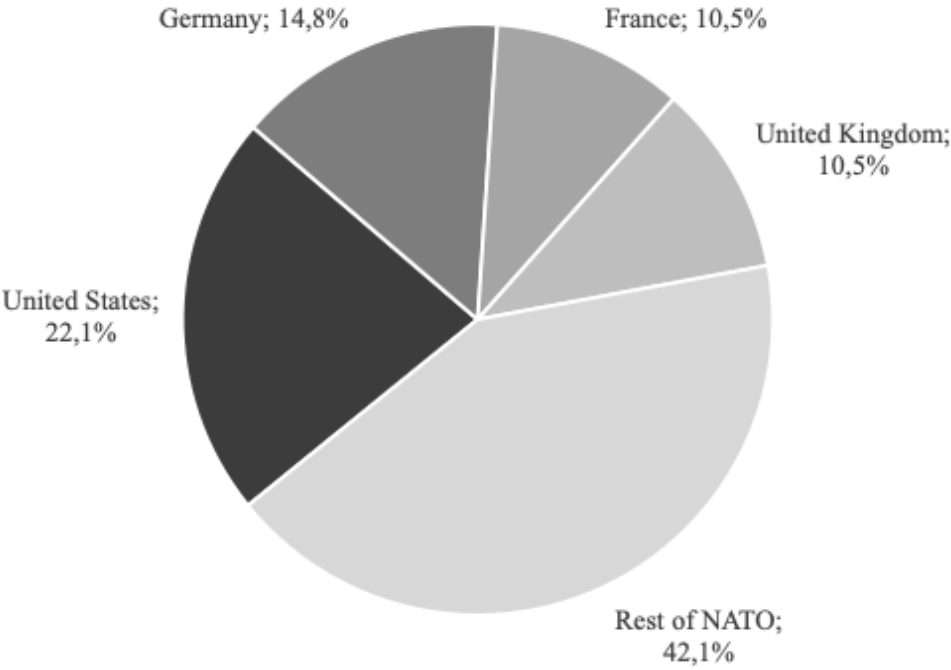
<sup>11</sup> Eznack 2012, 21

<sup>12</sup> Moravcsik 2010b, 236; Moravcsik 2010a, 113

<sup>13</sup> Deudney and Ikenberry 1999, 192

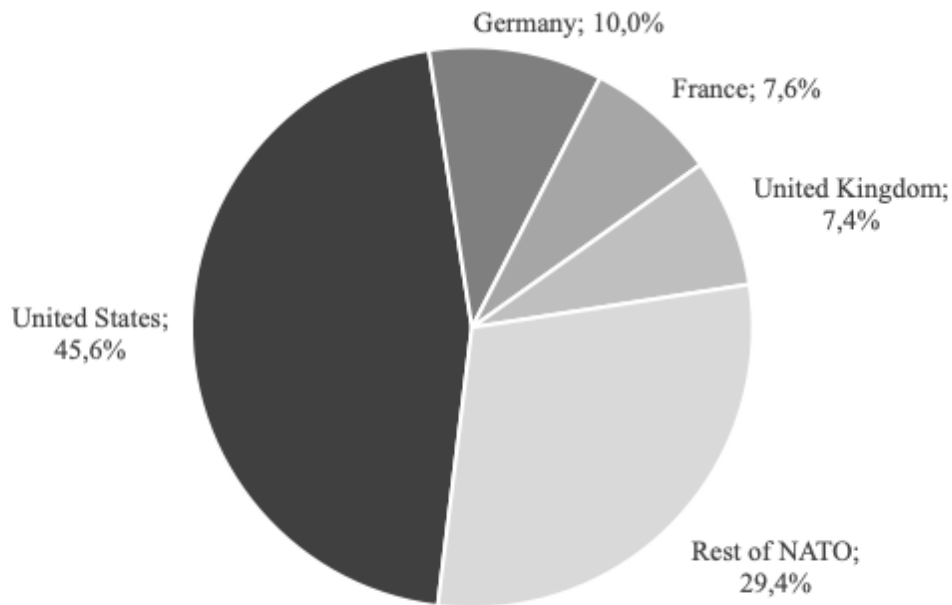
draw on networks of relations from the time of their colonial empires, unlike Germany they also have a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council. Together, these four powers contribute the most to the alliance, both in terms of contributions to the common budget of the organization, and in terms of defense expenditures. Approximately 58 % of NATO's budget and 70 % of total defense expenditures in the alliance are provided by these four powers.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 4. Cost arrangement for the NATO common budget, 2018-2019**



<sup>14</sup> NATO 2018a; NATO 2018b

**Figure 5. Defense expenditures of NATO countries, 2016**



I remain open to the possibility that a leader may emerge from other member states, or even from actors outside of formal state policymakers. In order to keep the empirical analysis manageable and feasible, and avoid the multiplication of data and interactions to consider, I focus on cases that involve the leadership of one of these powers. Because of their influence and weight in the community, followership of policymakers from these states is also usually the most important in giving acceptance and legitimacy to the leader's stance. When the Big Four agree on something, it is likely to tip the balance in the community toward this position, and make it difficult for other members to go against this consensus.

When I write about Western or transatlantic policymakers, I will therefore mean the top decision makers of core transatlantic states who make decisions and represent the state. The head of state – President, Chancellor or Prime Minister – is usually the most important in this regard, followed by the Secretary or Minister of Foreign Affairs, and sometimes by other policymakers who have a say in the decisions made and the positions adopted on the international scene, like Finance Ministers, Defense Ministers, and other officials with

executive power. Leading ideas may also arise from policy advisers or diplomats who take part in the policymaking process.

### **Setting the Stage: Internationalized Intrastate Conflicts**

The next step to test international leadership theories is to identify the particular issues and moments on which to zoom in to analyze leadership configurations. I focus on the transatlantic community's response to internationalized intrastate conflicts and moments of international crises.

#### Internationalized Intrastate Conflicts

*The immediate threat to our East is not of advancing armies, but of creeping instability.*

– President Bill Clinton<sup>15</sup>

There were certainly important leader-follower dynamics during the Cold War, but I want to show how leadership theories are relevant for contemporary politics, and provide an empirical analysis that is more immediately applicable. Since the end of the Cold War, destabilizing intrastate conflicts are more frequent than major interstate wars. Michael Brown writes that “[a]lmost all of the deadly conflicts of the post-Cold War era have been either intrastate conflicts or intrastate conflicts with regional complications.”<sup>16</sup> These conflicts often engender great human costs not just for the people directly killed or injured in these disputes, but also by pushing a mass of refugees fleeing the hostilities to migrate and potentially destabilize other countries as well.<sup>17</sup> These conflicts are especially hard to manage for transatlantic decision makers, as illustrated by President Clinton's quote.

The Upsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) has been gathering data and studying conflicts in collaboration with the International Institute for Peace Research (PRIO). The researchers at UCDP/PRIO define an armed conflict as “a contested incompatibility that

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<sup>15</sup> Cited in Rees and Mahncke 2004, 4

<sup>16</sup> M. E. Brown 2007, 39

<sup>17</sup> M. E. Brown 2007, 40–43

concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths.”<sup>18</sup> A conflict is considered internal when it “occurs between the government of a state and one or more internal opposition group(s).”<sup>19</sup> An intrastate conflict can be internationalized or not depending on the intervention of other states, that is, whether other states send troops.<sup>20</sup>

Internationalized or potentially internationalized intrastate conflicts are particularly relevant to study leadership in the transatlantic community. For instance, intrastate conflicts are discussed at length in NATO’s 2010 strategic concept titled *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement*. In the policy paper, a major source of uncertainty is identified as “[t]he persistence of corrosive regional, national, ethnic, and religious rivalries.”<sup>21</sup> The strategic concept mentions conflicts as potential black holes that could turn into havens for criminals or terrorists, and the potential that these conflicts have of spilling over into interstate war.<sup>22</sup> The strategic concept underlines the responsibility of NATO toward stabilizing these situations by comparing them to a “homeowner who has an interest in the safety of his or her neighborhood.”<sup>23</sup> When these conflicts are in a region of interest, transatlantic decision makers often give them a high priority, react quickly to the developments on the ground, and attempt to take action to resolve the conflict or prevent it from worsening. They experience the most intense moments of these conflicts as international crises.

### Moments of Intensity: International Crises

Scholars have defined international crisis as a prelude to war,<sup>24</sup> a potentially destabilizing situation for the international or regional system,<sup>25</sup> or as a moment of intensity as perceived by decision makers.<sup>26</sup> A crisis is defined in this last meaning in the current project, as a situation with three conditions: this situation “(1) threatens high-priority goals of the

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<sup>18</sup> UCDP/PRIO 2018a, 1

<sup>19</sup> UCDP/PRIO 2018a, 10

<sup>20</sup> UCDP/PRIO 2018a, 10

<sup>21</sup> NATO 2010, 13

<sup>22</sup> NATO 2010, 14–15

<sup>23</sup> NATO 2010, 20

<sup>24</sup> McClelland 1972, 83

<sup>25</sup> Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1989, 5; O. R. Young 1967, 10

<sup>26</sup> Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1989, 5; O. R. Young 1968, 9



decision-making unit, (2) restricts the amount of time available for response before the decision is transformed, and (3) surprises the members of the decision-making unit by its occurrence.”<sup>27</sup> Crises produce a high level of intensity in the interactions between actors, they break the routine flow of politics, and they stem from both material and perceptual factors.<sup>28</sup>

Four reasons make crises an appropriate focus for studying leadership. First, in order to argue that leadership matters, it should matter in these crucial and intense moments of international politics where decision makers pay attention and perceive their decisions as important for how events develop. Crises break the routine bureaucratic operations of everyday politics, thus requiring top executives to pay attention and decide.<sup>29</sup> They usually provoke a “contraction of authority to the highest levels of government” which increases the importance of top decision makers.<sup>30</sup>

Second, focusing on these moments also makes sense if we want to hone in on leadership dynamics. While crises are influenced by the context and previous events, they condense in time leadership dynamics in a way that makes it possible to study them. Decision makers at the summit often need to take positions on several emerging issues that could not be foreseen before the crisis began. In the midst of crises, leadership becomes more important at the same moment as it becomes more difficult, with decision makers in need to swiftly coordinate their positioning to avoid a cacophony of divergent voices. Crises bring forward and accelerate the leadership process.

Third, leadership is enhanced in times of crisis because the reduction of uncertainty is an important human motive. The primary way for people to reduce this uncertainty is through group membership.<sup>31</sup> By confronting their responses to those of other decision makers considered to be their similar or significant others, decision makers can test the validity and acceptability of their own reactions, and obtain social and moral support.<sup>32</sup> Studies show that this need for affiliation is greater under stress.<sup>33</sup> Stress increases the

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<sup>27</sup> C. F. Hermann 1972, 13; While the first two conditions are accepted as necessary for a crisis, the third condition is more contested, see Brecher 1979

<sup>28</sup> O. R. Young 1968

<sup>29</sup> Allison and Zelikow 1999; O. R. Young 1968, 11

<sup>30</sup> M. G. Hermann et al. 2001, 85–86

<sup>31</sup> Hogg and Mullin 1999, 255, 265

<sup>32</sup> This is also a social mean to reduce the dissonance inherent in making decisions, see Festinger and Aronson 1968; Festinger 1962

<sup>33</sup> Janis 1968, 80; Schachter 1959, 19

proportion of intra-coalition communication and the tendency of decision makers to open direct lines of communication.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, decision makers are expected to increase their level of interaction with each other when in crisis mode.

Moments of crisis increase the psychological need for leadership. Inside the storm of a crisis, policymakers have a higher need for structure and increase their use of simplifying strategies.<sup>35</sup> Crisis and the increase of uncertainty enhance leadership. Decision makers apply the rule “[w]hen in doubt, follow a lead.”<sup>36</sup> Michael Hogg writes that “[u]ncertainty reduction automatically endorses the leader”,<sup>37</sup> or, as Lester Seligman writes even more forcefully: “widespread insecurity seeks resolution in submission to leadership.”<sup>38</sup>

Fourth, policymakers feel the need to respond and to address crises because they could have large consequences for their security and economic interests. Thus, it is also a key moment for the Liberal approach to leadership. The public and domestic groups may be greatly concerned and become politically engaged in times of crisis. Policymakers feel pressured not to stay on the sidelines or look unresponsive.

Both for practical reasons of identifying a moment where leadership dynamics are highly focused, and for theoretical reasons as an appropriate time to test leadership theories, international crises provide a great opportunity to study leadership. Nevertheless, this concept should be handled with care. The focus on crises in the study of the transatlantic community has sometimes had the negative effect of exaggerating disagreements and disruptions.<sup>39</sup> I avoid this problem by focusing on moments of successful cooperation and on international crises related to intrastate conflicts, and not internal crises within the community. The empirical application of the crisis concept is often contested. When did a crisis really begin and end? What were the critical junctures? How important and intense was the crisis for policymakers? I take these limits of the crisis concept seriously. Crises should be studied carefully and in-depth, and the leadership process is not an outcome or a variable, it is a constantly changing set of positions and relationships, and it does not unfold independently of the crisis itself.

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<sup>34</sup> O. R. Holsti 1972, 75

<sup>35</sup> Fiske and Taylor 1991, 161–62, 505; Korten 1968, 355

<sup>36</sup> Searing 1995, 680

<sup>37</sup> Hogg 2001, 194

<sup>38</sup> Seligman 1950, 906

<sup>39</sup> On this, see W. J. Thies 2009

### **Selecting Specific Plays: Case selection**

My inquiry focuses on four cases of internationalized intrastate conflicts that were important for the transatlantic community. These cases are drawn from a population of 42 internationalized intrastate conflicts that have occurred since the end of the Cold War.<sup>40</sup> The population of cases was built from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset.<sup>41</sup> Among these cases, many of them have not been important for transatlantic policymakers. Cases usually acquire more significance because of their geographical proximity – and thus their potential to spillover and influence transatlantic states – or because of their importance in the eyes of Western policymakers. Importance is politically constructed and may involve material interests, perceived threat, attachment to various actors involved in the events, or even a personal willingness from some policymakers to make a given region or issue their priority. The civil war in Guinea-Bissau (1998-1999) or the uprising in Lesotho (1998), for example, are of relatively small importance and occupied little attention on transatlantic policymakers' radar. In order to have sufficient material and study cases where actors are willing to lead, I have opted instead for cases that were more significant in the minds of Western policymakers.

Transatlantic leadership does not arise in every case of internationalized intrastate conflict. Leadership takes time and effort, whether through bargaining, persuasion attempts or emotional labor. Because of these limits, we should not expect leadership dynamics to be present all the time in every conflict no matter where they are. Moreover, testing international leadership theories requires cases where policymakers possibly have intense preferences or intense emotional beliefs. Thus, only cases where they pay attention and are deeply involved are interesting for this purpose.

Aside from this criterion of the significance of the conflict for policymakers, I employ three other criteria to select cases. My priority is to test international leadership theories, and selected cases should provide an opportunity to do that. Because my preferred theoretical approach is the Cognitive-Affective Theory, I should also look for cases that are hard to explain for this theory. Cases will be less likely to simply confirm my theory the easier they are to explain for the alternative theory, the Liberal approach. I therefore select two cases

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<sup>40</sup> See Annex A for the complete list.

<sup>41</sup> Pettersson and Eck 2018; Gleditsch et al. 2002

where analysts already claim that their liberal explanation does a good job of explaining cooperation dynamics. Because of the nature of the issues in these cases (recognition and economic sanctions), domestic groups are concerned and involved in these conflicts, and liberal mechanisms are relevant. These are least-likely cases for cognitive-affective leadership, and most-likely for the Liberal approach.

Because the theories that I develop are new, I should prefer cases that can contribute to improving theories or reveal new insights about how their mechanisms worked in actual political events. Theory-building is easier with most-likely cases where the explanation laid in a theory is likely to play out. Most-likely cases are not necessarily easy to figure out in advance for Cognitive-Affective Theory because of the novelty of the approach. Yet, I select two cases that appear easier to explain for CAT, at least in comparison to the Liberal theory. The issues in these cases, peace-making and air strikes against actors identified as terrorists, do not appear as relevant for domestic groups or economic interests. Peace-making requires cognitive and emotional skills to bring belligerents to accept that they share common ground. Terrorism provokes intense emotions, especially in the West since the events of September 11, 2001. In both cases, I thus expect CAT to fare better.

The second and third criteria for case selection concern variation. In order to enhance the external validity of my findings, I would like to study different leadership configurations that vary on a number of key aspects. The goal is not, as in neopositivist research, to find out whether different variables have a certain causal effect on an outcome, or whether some conditions are necessary or sufficient for leadership to succeed. The goal is to study the processes behind a variety of leadership configurations, and to understand which basic mechanisms were involved and how they interact with each other. Each leader-follower process is unique in many ways, but common mechanisms driving the process forward may occur in several instances.

One key aspect in which leadership configuration varies is who takes the lead. We may observe different dynamics when the most powerful state takes the lead compared to when European powers attempt to take the initiative. For this reason, I select two cases of American leadership and two instances of European leadership, one by German policymakers and the other by French leaders.

A final criterion on which cases differ is their specific historical context. Although these cases all occur in the post-Cold War world where the United States is the system's superpower, there remains historical differences. The particular policymakers who happen to be in official positions of authority at the moment when these crises arise make a significant difference in the positions that are adopted and in the possibilities of cooperation. The cases selected in this inquiry are spread across a sufficiently long time span so that not all cases involve the same actors. I analyze the foreign policies and interactions of three US presidents, two German chancellors, three British prime ministers, and three French presidents, as well as a great many foreign ministers. This increases the chances that the explanations developed here does not apply to only one specific actor, and does not depend on a particular party being in power at a given time.

Interestingly, I select two instances of American leadership that are biased in some way against my Cognitive-Affective Theory. Unlike his predecessor and his successor, President Barack Obama has been described as pragmatic, “calculating,” “coldhearted,”<sup>42</sup> and a “Spockian.”<sup>43</sup> He has been criticized for taking his time to consider his options before making a decision, and is often presented as a policymaker skilled in controlling his emotions and communicating them. Studying Obama's leadership therefore stacks the deck against the cognitive-affective explanation.

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<sup>42</sup> S. Walt 2014

<sup>43</sup> Goldberg 2016

**Table 4. Main criteria for case selection**

<b>Testing Cognitive-Affective Theory</b>		
	Least-likely cases	Most-likely cases
<b>Who leads?</b>	European policymakers  Recognition of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia  War in Yugoslavia	Peace Plan  Russo-Georgian War
	American policymakers  Economic Sanctions against Russia  Ukraine Conflict	Air Strikes against ISIS  War in Iraq and Syria

The Recognition of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia

In chapter three, I revisit a landmark case for the Liberal approach, the German recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as war broke out in Yugoslavia in the course of the year 1991. The three other transatlantic powers opposed German recognition and Germany’s partners, especially in Europe, were angered by its unilateral recognition. However, German policymakers’ leadership gradually succeed, first with powers of the European Community following their lead, and later the United States as well. Escalation of the war in Bosnia and the recognition of Bosnia Herzegovina as a new country were closely connected to these issues. This crisis occurred during an extraordinary moment of change and effeverscence in Europe, right after Germany’s reunification ended close to fifty years of separation between its Western and Eastern parts. Furthermore, several European countries had just liberated themselves from the grip of Soviet communism, and during the crisis, the Soviet Union itself began to dissolve. As if that were not enough, during the crisis, European states negotiated a new foundation for Europe that would bolster European integration in the Treaty of Maastricht. The winds of change were still blowing when the Yugoslav tragedy commanded the attention, time, and energy of Western policymakers.

### The Peace Negotiation during the Russo-Georgian War

In chapter four, I tell the story of how French policymakers took the lead in negotiating for peace in order to put an end to the Russo-Georgian War in 2008, and how other transatlantic actors backed the French initiatives. Like the Balkans, the South Caucasus is another multiethnic region close geographically to Europe. However, in this case, a major power, Russia, directly intervened in the conflict, and Georgia had further importance due to its symbol as a former Soviet state, its relationship with Washington, its willingness to join NATO, and its infrastructure for the transport of energy. This crisis unfolds under the Bush Administration, an American decision-making team that had been very assertive if not overly aggressive, and ready to act unilaterally if their allies did not agree with them. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 is an oft-studied typical example. Surprisingly, in the case of the Russo-Georgian war, the United States did not attempt to take the lead, and they even acted as a good supporter in following the course set by French policymakers. How did French leaders manage their partners' disagreements, Russian and Georgian policymakers' sensitivities, and succeed in halting the conflict, eventually obtaining the agreement for the deployment of European Union monitors in Georgia?

### Sanctioning Russia in the Ukraine War

The next two chapters tell tales of American leadership. Although President Obama had shown that he can follow his allies' diplomatic initiatives, as illustrated by the NATO intervention in Libya, he has resolutely taken the lead in other cases. In 2014, a few months after their President rejected an Association Agreement with the EU, Ukraine descended into civil war between the pro-West and pro-Russia segments of its population. Russia actively supported the pro-Russian side and played a role in helping separatists seize the province of Crimea, which Russia then annexed in March 2014. The Obama Administration took the lead in advocating for broad economic sanctions to punish Russia for its interference in Ukrainian affairs. As liberal scholars would expect, however, for several months European policymakers were reluctant to take the path of sanctions, and attempted to engage Russia in order to find a peaceful solution. Liberal commentators described European powers as dependent on Russia for their own economy and energy supply, and corporate lobbies

actively opposed sectoral sanctions. In this case, economic interests should trump the West's willingness to help Ukrainians, because these costs would be too high to bear, especially for European countries. This is an easier case for the Liberal theory because analysts expected a replay of the Georgian case where sanctions were not seriously considered. Just as events were going the way liberal scholars expected, suddenly, a civilian plane filled with European passengers was shot down by pro-Russian separatists, and the outrage rippled in an affective wave that transformed transatlantic leadership.

### Air Strikes against ISIS

In the last empirical chapter, I discuss the coalition built by American leaders in order to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and especially how US policymakers and diplomats convinced French and British decision makers to participate in their campaign of air strikes. This broad transatlantic cooperation did not prevent Germany from opting out of direct participation in the bombardment campaign. Although President Obama was elected on a promise to pull American troops out of Iraq, and wished to emphasize other priorities such as his pivot to Asia, he was drawn again to the Middle East by the crisis that erupted as ISIS fighters advanced toward Baghdad. In a post-9/11 world, strong beliefs and intense emotions are associated with terrorism in the West, both for the public and for foreign policy elites. In this chapter, I dive into how these emotional beliefs influenced leadership dynamics in fighting the Islamic State.

### **Elementary Qualitative Methods: The Logic of Abduction**

*It is of the highest importance in the art of detection to be able to recognize, out of a number of facts, which are incidental and which vital. Otherwise, your energy and attention must be dissipated instead of being concentrated.*

– Sherlock Holmes<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Doyle 1953, 469



Deduction and induction are the best-known forms of reasoning, the first consists in logically deriving observable implications from theoretical reasoning, and the second in deriving general theoretical ideas from observing regularly occurring patterns in a number of instances. Lesser-known is the logic of abduction, which is central to critical realist research. The idea of abduction was developed by Peirce and it has the following logical form:

The surprising fact, C, is observed;  
But if A were true, C would be a matter of course  
Hence, there is reason to suspect that A is true<sup>45</sup>

Abduction is the operation of inferring a more general principle from a fact and arguing that if this fact is accurate, then the unobserved principle behind it must also be true. In critical realist language, empirical observations imply that a causal mechanism is at play behind the events. Abduction works by creating explanatory leverage from a single or a few pieces of evidence. It has also been called “inference to the best explanation.”<sup>46</sup> To infer is to derive a proposition from a fact or from another statement. Inferring to the best explanation suggests that inference is guided not by logical deductions or observing the repetition of a pattern, but by explanatory considerations.<sup>47</sup>

For instance, abduction explains why studying a single event, if surprising, strange, unusual, or otherwise qualitatively different can be a big leap for science. Anomalies have the power to differentiate between explanations and reveal a causal mechanism at work. Examples of this abound in medical science and explain some of the most important discoveries. In 1844, in Vienna, Ignac Semmelweis sought to understand why several mothers died of puerperal fever after giving birth. He also wanted to explain why, in the teaching hospital where he worked, one division was affected by high rates of such fevers, while in the other the disease was rare. In the first division, medical students examined pregnant women, while midwives did so in the second section where the disease occurred at a much lower rate. In 1847, a colleague of Semmelweis, Jakob Kolletschka, accidentally cut himself during a medico-legal autopsy. The unfortunate colleague became ill and died. This event gave Semmelweis the idea that the particles from a dead body can make someone sick

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<sup>45</sup> Buchler 1978, 151

<sup>46</sup> O’Mahoney 2015, 248

<sup>47</sup> Lipton 2004, 19–20

if they enter someone else's bloodstream. He reasoned that medical students in the division with high rates of mortality also performed autopsies on bodies in the hospital morgue, and must be transferring something to the pregnant women, thus causing the infection. Because he was able to correctly abduct from this accident to some approximation of the mechanism that caused it, Semmelweis discovered that the practice of disinfection could dramatically reduce the rate of childbed fever.<sup>48</sup>

Notice that in identifying the cause of fever in the affected section of the hospital, Semmelweis did not infer that the transmission of decaying particles was a necessary or sufficient condition. Women did survive despite the practices in the affected division, while others died despite being in the second division usually spared by the disease.<sup>49</sup> It is also worth mentioning that the logic of abduction in this case does not merely allow the researcher to formulate new conjectures, but also, combined to other strategies of inquiry, to provide evidence that disconfirms competing hypotheses and reinforces Semmelweis's particle transfer proposition.<sup>50</sup> Semmelweis inferred an unobserved mechanism from a fact, and knowing the explanatory power of certain facts, he was able to test this mechanism through disinfection, an experiment that conclusively confirmed his hypothesis. No other rival explanation could account for the drop of the rate in the disease since disinfection was the only change applied to the case.

The reason why abduction not only helps theory building, but is also central for theory testing. The very reason why a surprising fact leads a researcher to a new given explanation is that this fact cannot be explained by existing theories. This is possible because such a fact greatly differentiates between competing explanations, in other words, it has diagnostic properties. The underlying questions of abduction are "what unobserved mechanism could explain this fact?", "can known theorized mechanisms explain this fact?" and "what evidence would best distinguish between competing explanations?" A theory is weakened when it cannot explain something that is observed, in the case of Semmelweis the contrast between the two divisions of the hospital, and strengthened when the facts match what the activation of such a causal mechanism would imply.

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<sup>48</sup> D. A. Freedman 2008, 223–25

<sup>49</sup> Lipton 2004, 87

<sup>50</sup> Lipton 2004, 88

Of course, in the process of scientific research, all three forms of reasoning are employed. Abduction is especially useful when combined with deduction and induction. Knowledge of how existing theories apply to facts (deduction) makes one surprised by a particular instance that defies conventional wisdom, and the explanatory power of this particular instance suggests a novel explanation (abduction). This new explanation then motivates the researcher to make additional observations, and the pattern in those observations may provide support for her or his hypothesis (induction). Thinking about this new theory may yield additional predictions about what should be observed in the world (deduction), and then concentrating the analysis on some of these observations may be particularly useful to distinguish between rival explanations (abduction). After aggregating a broader and bigger set of data, inconsistencies in the evidence may convince the scientist to revise his or her theory (induction).

### Testing Strategies

Social science research, through the logic of abduction, often resembles crime detection. Detectives need to rely on a small number of clues and gain as much leverage as possible from scarce evidence to mount a conclusive proof that a specific suspect is guilty. Political scientists wonder what the preferences or beliefs of policymakers are; investigators want to find the motive behind the crime. Researchers seek to understand social processes and find the best explanation for them; detectives need to find how a crime was committed and to find who, amongst the suspects, was really guilty.

If there ever was a superhero of abduction, one who has extraordinary powers of observation, who can gain the maximum explanatory power even from the smallest details, and who almost always infers to the best explanation, then surely this hero would be the famous consulting detective Sherlock Holmes. The investigations in Arthur Conan Doyle's novels and short stories are so interesting for their logic of reasoning that they have been used in criminology to teach the proper investigative mindset.<sup>51</sup> David Collier, a political scientist, has likewise suggested that social scientists should read Holmes's stories to understand the logic of qualitative inference.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Carson 2009

<sup>52</sup> Collier 2011

In this section, I explain ways for researchers to increase the explanatory power from their evidence by providing analogies with crime detection, and Sherlock Holmes in particular.<sup>53</sup>

### *Certainty and Uniqueness*

An important element to distinguish how evidence informs researchers about the explanatory power of their theory is whether it provides a certain or a unique test for the theory. Theories forecast with certainty that something will or will not occur in the empirical record. If the theory's prediction is not borne out empirically, then this provides a strong negative test to reject the explanation that it provides. Stephen Van Evera calls these tests "hoop tests," the logic is similar to a lion jumping through a fire hoop. If the theory successfully passes the test, it is still alive, if not, it gets badly burned.<sup>54</sup> However, such a test does not confirm a theory above other competing explanations: other theories remain possible, and they may also pass their own hoop tests. It can eliminate a theory or confirm that it is still plausible, but does not tell scientists whether it is more likely than competing theories.

A well known hoop test in the domain of crime detection is the alibi. An alibi is a hoop test for the theory that a suspect is guilty. If a detective finds evidence that a suspect could not have been there at the moment of the crime, then this person could not have committed the crime, at least directly. A good alibi eliminates suspects, but it does not help the detective find out who committed the crime.

Hoop tests are useful because they can screen out some explanations so that researchers can focus on others. In the novel *The Sign of the Four*, Holmes explained to his friend Watson the method of elimination this way: "How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the

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<sup>53</sup> Some readers might argue that what I am doing here should be called "process tracing." Although I do draw some insights from scholars who have sought to develop qualitative studies through process tracing, I prefer to avoid the term that has multiple definitions, and is sometimes unclear in its meaning. Ironically, process tracing is usually defined as studying the intermediate steps between an independent and a dependent variable, it understands social processes not in a processual manner, but as linking discrete and substantive variables. Other similar definitions entail the reconstruction of the process leading to an outcome, another discrete and fixed state. The discussion by Bennett and Checkel who are uncertain whether intermediate steps in the process should be treated as intermediate variables or causal mechanisms, which are two very different elements, only adds to the confusion, see Bennett and Checkel 2015, 5–7; For other definitions of process tracing, see Beach and Pedersen 2013, 33; Rohlfing 2012, 36; Collier 2011, 823; A. George and Bennett 2005, 6

<sup>54</sup> Van Evera 1997, 31

truth?”<sup>55</sup> In the introductory chapter, I have already employed the logic of certainty to eliminate realism, hegemonic leadership, and other structural explanations. These theories expect that only the superpower can lead. Because I could find instances when countries other than the United States did lead, then structural explanations which argue that the structure strongly constrain actors fail an important hoop test.

The second type of test focuses instead on the uniqueness of the evidence. Evidence is highly unique if it is expected by a theory, but not by other rival explanations. This test provides the reverse of tests emphasizing certainty: it can strongly confirm a theory in comparison to all others, but if the theory fails the test, it does not strongly infirm it. This is because only one theory can explain this fact, while rival accounts have a very hard time to provide plausible explanations for it.

In line with crime analogies, Van Evera calls unique tests smoking-gun tests.<sup>56</sup> Arriving at a crime scene and finding a smoking gun in the suspect’s hand right after a shooting highly increases the confidence that this person is guilty, and competing explanations may have a hard time proving that this person is innocent after such damning evidence. This proof of guilt does not prove that other individuals at the scene are innocent. Nor does the absence of such rare evidence prove that someone is innocent.

David Collier has used Arthur Conan Doyle’s famous story *Silver Blaze* to illustrate the utility of different kinds of tests.<sup>57</sup> I give an example here from another story in *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, “The Reigate Squire.” In this short story, the coachmen of the Cunninghams, a man named William, was shot dead and found with a piece of torn paper in his hand. According to J. P. Cunningham and his son Alec, the night of the crime, they rushed to the scene when they heard a struggle. They then saw a burglar shoot William and run away. Their theory is that this burglar was trying to enter their house, but their coachmen, wanting to stop him, wrestled with him until the burglar shot him and ran away.

Throughout the story, Holmes submits the burglar theory to several hoop tests, which it always fails. For example, the consulting detective questions the Cunninghams as to their whereabouts at the moment of the events, to which they reply that they were in the house with their lamps lit. The famous detective immediately remarks how suspicious that is: “Is

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<sup>55</sup> Doyle 1953, 118

<sup>56</sup> Van Evera 1997, 32

<sup>57</sup> See Collier 2011

it not extraordinary that a burglar (...) should deliberately break into a house at a time when he could see from the lights that two of the family were still afoot?"<sup>58</sup> It is quite certain that a thief would not behave this way, so that this theory should be rejected. Fortunately for Holmes, he is able to distract Alec Cunningham and steal a piece of paper from his pockets. This piece corresponds to the other half of the sheet that was found in the dead man's grasp, providing a smoking-gun confirming that he is responsible for the murder. Only the theory that Cunningham tore off a piece of paper from William's hand after killing him because it contained incriminating information explains why the other half of the torn paper was in his pockets. Combining both types of tests thus leads Holmes to eliminate the false story concocted by the Cunninghams, and confirm that they did it themselves.

Political scientists can gain leverage by knowing what different types of evidence says about their likely explanation. Some clues can certainly eliminate a theory, others are so unique that they can make a theory more likely than rival explanations. In the course of research, it is best to combine the two tests both to filter out some theories and to look for unique evidence to distinguish between standing rival theories.

### *Timing Is Crucial*

*When* something occurs can be a powerful indication of whether one explanation is better than another. A meticulous look at the timing of events can provide both hoop and smoking-gun tests. If a theory requires that events unfold in a certain order, finding evidence that this was the chronological order in a specific case can keep a theory plausible. If only one theory suggests that two events should happen at the same time, the fact that it is the case would strongly reinforce our confidence in this theory over its competing theories.

Sherlock Holmes uses timing as a powerful ally in his abductions during *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*. In attempting to find details about the mysterious and bizarre way in which a lady was killed, Holmes remarks to Watson, "[w]ell, there is at least the curious coincidence of dates. A ventilator is made, a cord is hung, and a lady who sleeps in the bed dies. Does not that strike you?"<sup>59</sup> Although I will not spoil to you the extraordinary means by which the assassin committed murder in this case, Holmes clearly gains

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<sup>58</sup> Doyle 1953, 465

<sup>59</sup> Doyle 1953, 307

explanatory leverage by the fact that all these things happened at the same time, and that no other theory can explain this timing.

As an illustration in international politics, a researcher may look at the timing when international positions shifts for the various actors involved in the crisis. The researcher asks “why would this policymaker change his or her position at this specific point in time?” Chaim Kaufmann, for instance, has argued that the timing when foreign policymaker shifted their position on an issue can reinforce or undermine our confidence in rational and psychological explanations.<sup>60</sup> Theories of international leadership have a different expectation as to when international positions should change.

### *Actor Consistency*

Another important notion is the idea of consistency. I do not mean here the obvious idea that empirical patterns should match what a theory expects, I mean the internal consistency of each actor involved. Is the rhetoric deployed by a policymaker consistent in many occasions and through time during the crisis? Are the actions of this policymakers matching his or her words? Are public and private positions and justifications aligned? Answering these questions can discriminate between rival explanations. Inconsistency may mean that a policymaker is not genuine in some of the beliefs and emotions that he or she expresses. For example, researchers may suspect that a policymaker who expresses intense feelings, but then acts contrary to these feelings may hold other preferences and interests that are more important. Conversely, an actor framing the issues in terms of domestic interests may build a discourse for domestic audiences that has little effect in international politics if he or she then takes actions going against these interests, or finds some justification to downplay these issues with international counterparts.

Political scientists do not study any aspect of these policymakers in isolation. These features are compared to other evidence about them, and situated in their historical and immediate context. Some fact that may appear trivial may be quite meaningful and informative when placed in its context, whether because of its novelty, strange character, or connection to other elements of the situation.

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<sup>60</sup> Kaufmann 1994

An example of the clues that inconsistency provides can be found in *The Valley of Fear*. In this novel, Holmes investigates the alleged murder of John Douglas. According to Douglas's wife, she heard a gunshot, came down the stairs, but then was persuaded by a friend of Mr. Douglas who lived with them, Cecil Barker, to go back to her room because her husband was dead, and she could not do anything about it. The very day after her husband's murder, Mrs. Douglas was seen chatting with Barker and laughing lightly at some jest. Holmes and Watson then discuss how this behavior is suspicious and inconsistent with a wife who loved her husband and just learned that he was brutally murdered. In the words of Holmes, "[s]hould I ever marry, Watson, I should hope to inspire my wife with some feeling which would prevent her from being walked off by a housekeeper when my corpse was lying within a few yards of her."<sup>61</sup> Inconsistencies can thus give away policymakers' attempts at hiding their true motives or distorting the truth.

#### *Triangulation and Consilience*

Researchers often combine evidence in order to reinforce their overall confidence in their findings, and provide a stronger test for theories. Triangulation involves drawing from different sources to see if they tell a coherent story, while consilience emphasizes "the idea that a theory or hypothesis gains in credibility to the extent that the several pieces of evidence in its favor are unrelated."<sup>62</sup> Consilience is not just about the confluence of different sources, but about different classes of evidence that are put together. For instance, confidence in our data is stronger if a policymaker made a statement both in front of his or her home crowd, and in front of international counterparts. A justification that is consistent with the policymakers' significant actions, two different classes of evidence, strengthens the investigator's confidence in the data. Explaining incoherences can lead to insights for theory construction, but sometimes it only serves to weaken the confidence in the validity of the analyzed data.

I will therefore employ strategies that emphasize certainty, uniqueness, timing, consistency, triangulation, and consilience in the following chapters to assess theoretical explanations for

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<sup>61</sup> Doyle 1977, 506

<sup>62</sup> O'Mahoney 2015, 248



international leadership. In the next part of this section, I discuss the sources from which I draw relevant data, and the related question of the internal validity of my inquiry.

### Data Analysis

*Data! Data! Data! (...) I cannot make bricks without clay.*

– Sherlock Holmes<sup>63</sup>

Garrison Keillor began his satirical piece on President Bush Sr.'s saving and loans program this way:

Vast hordes of barbaric Huns invaded Chicago, Illinois and took over the savings and loans offices while President Bush was playing badminton in Aspen. Bush, caught off guard by news of the invasion, said “We’re following that whole Hun situation very closely, and right now it looks encouraging...” Over the next three days as additional Huns swarmed into Chicago, Mr. Bush was said to be conferring with John Sununu, meeting with the Cabinet, weighing his options, on the verge of taking some kind of dramatic action. According to a poll, 70 % thought the President was doing an excellent job with the barbarians. So the President didn’t make an address on TV but simply issued a statement that barbarianism is a long-term problem and must be met with patience and wisdom, and the answer is education, and that everything that can be done is being done.<sup>64</sup>

This piece is especially funny for political scientists who have analyzed a great many public declarations. Note also that the satirical piece assumes that policymakers care about public opinion, in line with Liberal Theory. Policymakers’ meaningless chorus often repeats a lot of these filler sentences. When a crisis arises on the international scene, policymakers often proclaim something like this: “We call all parties to restraint and we condemn violence from all sides. We remain in contact with all our allies to find a balanced and effective solution that will ensure peace and stability.” If political rhetoric on foreign policy issues was always like that, researchers would gain little by studying political statements. Fortunately, when policymakers are ready to announce a position, when they want to defend their actions, or when they seek to influence other policymakers, they often employ more precise, interesting,

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<sup>63</sup> Doyle 1953, 368

<sup>64</sup> Keillor 1989, 42

and emotional language. The fact that there is so much empty and vague speech makes these moments of clarity stand out even more.

In this research, I will draw from as many different sources as possible to assess the accuracy of the evidence. This includes primary sources like public declarations and statements, memoirs, interviews, and official government reports; as well as secondary sources like scientific, and newspaper articles. Although I draw from a wide variety of newspapers, the *New York Times* was by far the most useful for my research. I also draw heavily from *The Guardian*, *Le Monde*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. The two older cases of Yugoslavia and Georgia have more secondary sources available than the two more recent ones, especially as far as scientific literature is concerned. I completed the data for the more recent cases of the Ukraine crisis and the coalition against the Islamic State, for which secondary sources has still scarces, with a chronological comparative content analysis (CCCA) and a few interviews.

CCCA is a tool that I developed at Laval University with Professor Jonathan Paquin. I have argued elsewhere that the CCCA method “makes it possible to reconstruct the chronological sequence of declarations and facilitates in-depth qualitative comparison.”<sup>65</sup> There are five main steps to realize a CCCA.

- (1) Official declarations are selected according to different criteria that specify the sources, timeframe, and type of documents appropriate for the study. These declarations are then retrieved from official archives.
- (2) The retrieved files are then imported into a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (sometimes referred to as CAQDAS). In this process, variables are associated with each imported document, so that the analysts can easily find information like the date of the announcement, the author of the declaration, and the crisis that it deals with.
- (3) The third step consists in creating a codebook. The codebook should include a wide range of issues of interest, it should provide for clear rules as to what is to be coded and how. The goal of the codebook is to facilitate the identification of all key positions related to a given crisis.
- (4) The fourth step is an iterative process whereby the documents are coded and the codebook is refined. Coding consists in associating the codes to segments of text. As the coding progresses, coders can identify issues that were not in the codebook or that are specific to a crisis. They can then create a new code in the codebook or modify the definition of an existing one, and then go back to code it accordingly in the declarations.

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<sup>65</sup> Beauregard 2016, 379

- (5) Finally, positions are extracted from the coding, by looking at the issues that policymakers have emphasized the most or have given justifications for. Key positions, precise stances that the actors take, are identified according to various criteria selected by the researcher. The software makes it easy to retrieve segments of text and to identify the date where each actor was the first to adopt a given position.<sup>66</sup>

In previous studies, in collaboration with my colleagues, I used CCCA to identify the alignment of Canada's foreign policy,<sup>67</sup> to assess US leadership after the 2003 invasion of Iraq,<sup>68</sup> and to verify the level of commonality of foreign policy positions among EU powers.<sup>69</sup> CCCA permits a fine-grained analysis of public declarations, it makes it possible to situate them in time, and to compare them across states. It verifies the consistency of policymaker's rhetoric. It also aims to be systematic and to establish what the usual rhetoric is like, and when it shifts decisively. Here are the procedures that I followed to test international leadership theories in the present inquiry.

- (1) One thousand and ten declarations were retrieved from online websites of the relevant agencies. The files consisted in all official statements, speeches, and interviews of heads of state and foreign ministers for the four transatlantic powers. See Annex B for more information. The analysis focuses on intense moments of crisis relevant to the issues under study. The time frame for the Ukraine crisis is from February 1<sup>st</sup> to July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014, while June 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014, delimits the Islamic State case.
- (2) The files were then imported into the QDA Miner software. The documents were categorized according to the date of the declaration, the crisis that it is about, the institutional source of the document (e.g., US Department of State), and the country that it represents.
- (3) I created a codebook based on previous research and the specific material under study in this case. Forty codes were used in the analysis. See Annex C for the full codebook.
- (4) I systematically coded all the documents, for a total of 15,264 coded segments. See annex B for details on the repartition of coded segments.
- (5) The chronological comparative analysis then focused on two issues, economic sanctions against Russia in the case of Ukraine, and air strikes against the Islamic States in the second case.

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<sup>66</sup> Beaugregard 2016, 379–80

<sup>67</sup> Paquin and Beaugregard 2013

<sup>68</sup> Paquin and Beaugregard 2015

<sup>69</sup> Beaugregard 2016

To complete the content analysis, I conducted five interviews, two with French officials, one with a State Department official, as well as a NATO and a EU official.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of advisers, diplomats, and other officials that I contacted either did not reply to me or refused to give me an interview.<sup>71</sup> The interviews focused on how policymaking and coordination occurred during the crisis. I avoided directly asking respondents “why” questions that would demand them to theorize on the issues that I was studying. The interview were semi-directed and quite flexible, very often I strived away from my questionnaire to ask questions to go where my interviewee seems the know the most and had the most relevant things to say. The objective was to gather as much relevant information as possible as to what occurred behind the public scene.

### *Internal Validity*

In any research, especially an ambitious research like this one were four powers and their interactions are studied in four different crises, trade-offs are always made. Sometimes researcher move on when they decide that they have enough confirmation of a given fact. At other times, despite a lot of effort, some details cannot be known for certain. The most important is that the strategies and data chosen in this chapter are not biased against or in favor of any of the theories tested in this thesis.

Policymakers may want to avoid both emotional and self-interested rhetoric at various moments during an international crisis. Downplaying emotions might show the policymaker as in control of the situation, and continuing to serve her or his constituents despite the crisis situation. However, in other moments, self-interested behavior and rhetoric may appear as cold and insensitive. Policymakers also have incentives to hide that they are defending their own preferences and the interests of their domestic constituents. In a community, members should advocate what is best for the community and be willing to make compromises. Being stubborn on one’s position to defend a particular interest or refusing to hear a member who is significantly negatively affected by the current course of action may not float politically. Yet, at other times policymakers may want to remind their domestic audiences that they are doing this for them, and that what they advocate is in their interests.

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<sup>70</sup> The procedure for these interviews was approved by Laval University’s Ethical Review Board (2016-229). See Annex D for the list of interviewees.

<sup>71</sup> I contacted 41 people to request an interview, five agreed to the interview, 19 refused, and 17 did not reply.

If they want to cover-up their true intentions, no matter if these intentions derive from preferences or emotional beliefs, policymakers are sure to find many devices, justification and rationalization, delaying tactics and ways of avoiding questions, to succeed in doing so. However, this is something that is hard to do consistently for a long period of time. Surface acting is difficult because many hints may give away that the performance is hollow, and the performance may extract an important toll from the performer who then feels inauthentic and stressed that the performance will be discovered to be fake.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, researchers can analyze not only the answers, but also the silences, the questions avoided, and the contradictory arguments. All of this may reveal that something is amiss.

One of the most famous clue in all of Sherlock Holmes history of investigations is found in the story *Silver Blaze*. Despite being guarded by a dog and a man, the racehorse was stolen from the stable. While the man guarding it was drugged, people who were sleeping nearby did not hear the dog bark. The absence of something is easy to overlook, and Scotland Yard's detective overlooked this clue. For Holmes, however, the fact that the dog remained silent proves that it knew whoever came in the stable to take the horse at night: a powerful clue to find out who was guilty, and to exonerate the stranger who was suspected of having done the deed.<sup>73</sup>

Both emotions and preferences may leak in similar ways despite some policymakers' attempt to hide them. If anything, the data that I gather is biased against the cognitive-affective explanation. Policy circles often valorize traditional manly behavior, like effectiveness and assertiveness, rather than expressing emotionality. Samantha Power, for example, has argued that US officials "brand as 'emotional' those U.S. officials who urge intervention and who make moral arguments in a system that speaks principally in the cold language of interests."<sup>74</sup> As I will show in my case studies, the media also share the same culture and publish several analyses that implicitly take a liberal stance arguing that domestic interests pressure policymakers in certain directions. These political commentaries may therefore be biased against CAT. However, because the media thrive on sensationalism, conflict, and emotional events, they are also glad to report any emotional outburst, and even sometimes exaggerate their importance. As Auguste Dupin remarks, Poe's character who is

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<sup>72</sup> Edelman and Van Knippenberg 2017, 748

<sup>73</sup> Doyle 1953, 397, 400

<sup>74</sup> Power 2002, xviii

Holmes's ancestor, "[w]e should bear in mind that, in general, it is the object of our newspaper rather to create a sensation – to make a point – than to further the cause of truth. The latter end is only pursued when it seems coincident with the former."<sup>75</sup>

Because I am developing new theories and seek to provide a first test for them, I am mostly concerned here with internal rather than external validity. The fact that I chose four different conflicts with various issues at stake in them may enhance external validity, but this is not the focus of the current research. It is important to first get theories right before we ask how far their propositions can extend to other empirical domains.

### **Operationalizing Theoretical Concepts**

Although there are some quite straightforward expressions of emotions or advocacy for various interests, some theoretical concepts of the previous chapter are harder to test and assess. In this section, I briefly discuss each empirical implications from international leadership theories and how we can test the comparative validity of each theory.

#### Liberal Expectations

1. Policymakers will defend international positions in line with influential and intense domestic constituencies' preferences in their own domestic sphere.

I will understand this implication in the broadest possible sense and sift through evidence whether it concerns business groups, ethnic lobbies, citizen groups, or shifts in the public opinion. I will also search for data on the stake in a given crisis for a country related to issues of trade and energy security. When domestic groups defend their commercial interests, it may be easier to assess relative intensity by comparing the size of economic interests involved and trade dependence for each state. National newspapers are a useful source because groups will often not only want policymakers to adopt their preferences, but also the broader public, so that they will publish ads or make public actions that are widely discussed. Public opinion surveys may also provide clues as to how policymakers are tied by their constituencies.

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<sup>75</sup> Poe 1938, 181

This first empirical implication is clearly a hoop test: domestic preferences need to be in line with international action. If the Liberal Theory is to stand the test, policymakers should seek positive consequences for domestic constituencies, and to avoid negative consequences. Even if domestic preferences and international positions align, this informs us little about CAT. By understanding this implication broadly, I accept the test as passed if any domestic interest would explain policymakers' international position. I thus make the hoop wider, and the test easier for the liberal approach.

2. The policymaker with the most intense relative preference will attempt to lead.

Another important hoop test is that early on, the policymaker with relatively the most intense preferences should vigorously attempt to take the lead. This should be seen in the policymaker's statements, actions, and interactions with partners. The concept of intensity appears as something that can be measured on a scale, like heat on a thermometer. Unfortunately, we can almost never reach that level of precision with social indicators. It is not possible to attribute objectively some value to a policymaker's declaration of its preference, or to the actions of groups pushing for their voice to be heard. Possible costs from trade disruptions is an exception where precise numbers can be counted, however, it is often uncertain how much a given policy will disrupt trade or how this disruption weighs in the formation of actors' preferences in comparison to other elements of their domestic environment.

Despite these difficulties, if we conceive of relative intensity as a process, then there should be evidence that such a process is underway. Domestic constituencies should advocate for their preferred foreign policy position in public and lobby for it in private. Journalists should question policymakers on the interests related to the issue under consideration, and policymakers should defend their position. The rhetoric of intense policymakers should clearly send the signal to their domestic and international audiences that what they do is in their constituents' interests. This would increase their popularity at home and their leverage internationally.

3. Other policymakers will follow the leader if his or her international position is in line with their dominant domestic constituencies' preferences.

Liberal Theory would be severely injured if policymakers followed a leader when it goes against the preferences of their domestic constituents and their interests. However, if such followership is in line with their constituents, or if constituents do not care one way or the other, then the Liberal approach can still explain why followers come along. Whether domestic and state preferences align can be determined in the same way that has been discussed for the first liberal empirical expectation. This is another hoop test: whether followers' preferences align to their domestic constituencies or not does not say much about CAT.

4. Followers' positions will shift to align with the leader when he or she emphasizes his or her own domestic constraints.

Evidence for this point may be harder to find, but if such evidence is found, this would be a powerful smoking-gun test. No other international leadership theory predicts the curious fact that policymakers should emphasize how constrained they are as a strategy to gain power in international bargaining. Public statement as well as anything that transpired from private negotiations are relevant for this test. This implication would be further reinforced if the timing of the tactics of emphasizing constraints matches the shift in the followers' international position. If not, the test is much weaker, and it shows an attempt at using this tactic, not that it succeeded. The gun is smoking in the hands of someone for sure, but no one was shot.

5. Less intense policymakers will extract concessions from the leader in exchange for following the leaders' position.

Evidence that the leader has offered concessions, especially economic incentives to followers, or that followers have asked for such compensation, increases the chance that the liberal explanation is valid. Such an exchange may be politically sensitive, so that political actors may attempt to hide it. If discovered, however, this would suggest that bargaining instead of persuasion was central to the leadership process. This is another smoking-gun test, so the absence of such proof does not lower the likelihood that the liberal explanation is true. There is no reason, in CAT, to expect such an exchange of concession to take place.



6. A shift in the leader-follower process occurs when ideational, business, or ethnic societal groups mobilize to defend their preferences.

If the timing of the shift in the leader or followers' positions coincides with a sudden increase in domestic pressure, and this pressure comes from societal groups advocating for their ideas, domestic interests, or ethnic kin, then this increases the likelihood that the Liberal Theory is right. It would be unlikely that change occurs at this precise time if domestic preferences are not influencing state preferences. This test is particularly effective if the shift does not coincide with an emotionally resonant event that would explain this change. For instance, if business groups make a public statement that their financial interest will be hurt by a policy, and right after the statement the official position changes in this direction, whether or not this is the position of an international prospective leader, then this would clearly favor the liberal approach.

7. A shift in the leader-follower process comes from an event in the international environment altering the costs or benefits related to an international position for followers and their domestic constituencies.

This is the final liberal smoking-gun test. Both theories expect leader-follower dynamics to be affected by important events in the international environment. What would confirm liberal theory is if this change occurs because it alters the economic, ideational, or ethnic interest of societal groups, or if the leader and followers act in anticipation that this will do so. If a shift occurs in international positions simultaneously with an event that affects interests in this way, but not the actors' beliefs or emotions, we would be right to strongly suspect liberal mechanisms at play.

### Cognitive-Affective Theory's Expectations

1. Policymakers will be driven by their emotional beliefs to adopt international positions.

When policymakers announce their specific stance on an international issue, they should discuss their relevant beliefs – like the values, principles, or worldview that justifies their

decision – and the associated emotions driving their choice. This is a simple hoop through which the Cognitive-Affective Theory has to jump through. This can be assessed by analyzing the policymakers' statements, and whether their discourse is coherent with their actions and positions.

2. The policymaker with the most intense emotional beliefs will attempt to lead.

This is a central expectation of CAT, and the theory should at least survive this test. As is the case with preference intensity, it is not easy to assess emotional beliefs intensity. It almost certainly cannot and should not be quantified or calculated in an index. One reason for this is that we know emotions and the intensity of emotional beliefs mostly through what policymakers say and do. Declarations and actions are always somewhat ambiguous and qualitatively different. Is it more intense for a policymaker to say that this is the most serious crisis since the end of the Cold War, or to point out the tremendous suffering caused by the conflict? Is it more emotional to say that someone's behavior is absolutely appalling, or to employ colorful metaphors, comparing this someone to a cancer? Another problem is that intense and emotional expressions cannot simply be counted and aggregated. Many factors influence how policymakers express themselves. This may vary depending on their language – policymakers in this study speak English, French, and German – or their political culture, with some emphasizing short statements, and others preferring lengthy interviews to get their point across. Policymakers also have their own personal style, which influences how often, and in what way they express their beliefs and emotions.

Despite these difficulties, if a process is occurring in which a policymaker is attempting to lead driven by more intense emotional beliefs, then we expect to find some evidence. The prospective leader should strongly advocate for specific international positions earlier than his or her counterparts, he or she should attempt to persuade others within the community that this is the right course of action, and this policymaker should make clear what are the emotions and principles associated with this decision. Furthermore, I shall try to find if personal and political experience were behind policymakers adopting a specific position rather than another. It may not always be possible to find defining moments in decision makers' life or career to account for their emotional beliefs, but I shall attempt to do so by digging in their memoirs, biographies, or statements. When doing so is possible, I can

draw a more complete portrait of a policymaker and the beliefs and emotions that he or she is likely to hold in a given situation. If a transatlantic policymaker is the only one with such experience, it would explain the higher intensity driving him or her to lead. Finally, for a variety of reasons – like emotional attachment, historical memory, or specific beliefs – some international events may resonate much more with some policymaker's than another, and this could be the origin of a more intense willingness to lead. I expect to be able to discover and empirically establish at least one of the elements discussed in this section to consider that CAT has passed the hoop test.

3. Other policymakers will follow the leader if his or her international position are representative of the community's values and affective norms.

The most motivated policymaker should express how the beliefs and emotions supporting his or her selected international position are representative of community norms and values. If prototypicality is at play, these policymakers should emphasize that their stance is the stance that others in the community should take. This is another hoop test. Shared or complementary preferences may explain why the leader is prototypical, so this test does not say much about the Liberal Theory. But it would strongly invalidate Cognitive-Affective Theory if a leader would establish itself by going against the community's values and affective norms. We should also be very surprised if the community, its relevance, and the course that it should take are barely discussed.

4. Elements of the situation will prime a way for policymakers to frame the issues.

Policymakers should draw from their experience to assess the current situation, and elements of this situation should prime various memories, beliefs, and emotions. These primed elements will in turn lead policymakers to frame the situation in a specific way. Public rhetoric is especially relevant to assess how policymakers frame the issue in relation to the crisis in each case. How do they frame the problem? On what historical analogies do they draw for guidance or comparison? What elements of the situation matches with their framing and possibly had a role in priming this specific understanding of the issues?

Whether or not evidence for priming can be found remains uncertain. But if such evidence is found, this would significantly increase our confidence in Cognitive-Affective Theory. CAT is the only approach that expects priming to be of major importance, where small elements of the crisis underway can have big consequences in how policymakers frame the issues. The rival liberal theory expects framing and understanding of the problem to arise from societal groups or from the understanding that state policymakers have of their domestic environment, not from the context and elements of the international situation itself.

5. The leader will claim that his or her international positions are representative of the ingroup's ideals and maximize the difference with an outgroup.

Cognitive-Affective Theory is the only theory that explains why it is a good strategy for a prospective leader to maximize the difference with an outgroup. Evidence that a policymaker condemns an outgroup again and again, that he or she demonizes this Other, or at least that negative emotional language is associated to the antagonist provides a strong smoking-gun test for CAT. Furthermore, the policymaker attempting to lead should seize any new development as an opportunity to show this ingroup-outgroup difference in order to enhance her or his own prototypicality. Such empirical findings would strongly increase our confidence that prototypicality played a key role in the leadership process. It would be very difficult to make sense of such evidence from the liberal perspective. Liberal theorists might instead expect policymakers to keep all their options open, including potential cooperation with current enemies. Rational policymakers prefer to have a greater number of alternatives available to them in order to increase their bargaining leverage, the state's source of power in the Liberal approach.

6. A shift in the leader-follower process comes from emotionally resonant events of the international environment or persuasion attempts by the leader.

There is no way to be sure whether a policymaker has been shaken to its core by some external event. But resonance can bring leader and followers to shift their positions, to express these emotions, and to recognize how events resonate or should resonate with them. If the timing of an event coincides with a shift in international positions and evidence about its emotional resonance, then this is another strong smoking-gun test in favor of Cognitive-

Affective Theory. Liberal theory does not expect the emotional resonance of international events to shape leader-follower dynamics. International events should bring about a change in positions only if they have consequences for domestic or national interests.

Likewise, the simultaneous occurrence of a persuasion attempt by the leader and a change in a follower that was the target of this persuasion attempt would be a strong indication that CAT is valid. This is especially the case for evidence of persuasion that rests on appeal to emotion, strong beliefs that an option is better, or to the common identity of the group to convince followers. Information about interpersonal private encounters or phonecalls between policymakers is especially important to assess if this happened. Interviews and inside sources in the newspaper can provide such evidence.

7. Domestic groups and the media are also driven by their emotional beliefs and amplify emotionality around events.

A final unique expectation of CAT is that domestic groups and the media will also be driven by their emotional beliefs. Evidence that these groups shifted their stance because of an emotionally resonant event, and that they attempt to pressure policymakers in adopting this stance not because of their interests, but by appealing to their emotion, would boost our confidence in Cognitive-Affective Theory.

**Table 5. Summary of empirical implications and their associated tests**

<b>Liberal Theory</b>		<b>Cognitive-Affective Theory</b>	
<b>Implication</b>	<b>Type of test</b>	<b>Implication</b>	<b>Type of test</b>
1. Policymakers in line with domestic preferences	Hoop	1. Policymakers driven by emotional beliefs	Hoop
2. Leader has the most intense preferences	Hoop	2. Leader is policymaker with most intense emotional beliefs	Hoop
3. Followership if leader position aligns with followers' domestic preferences	Hoop	3. Others follow if leader's position is representative	Hoop
4. Followers shift when leader emphasizes constraints	Smoking-gun	4. Situation primes policymakers' framing	Smoking-gun
5. Followers extract concessions from leader	Smoking-gun	5. Leader represents ingroup and maximizes difference with outgroup	Smoking-gun
6. Shift when groups mobilize to defend their preferences	Smoking-gun	6. Shift when emotionally resonant event occurs, or persuasion attempts	Smoking-gun
7. Shift when event alters cost-benefits calculations	Smoking-gun	7. Domestic groups and media driven by emotional beliefs and amplify emotionality	Smoking-gun

Each theory expects their own approach to pass through three hoop tests, and to potentially find four types of evidence counting as smoking-gun tests.

**Conclusion**

Drawing from the testing strategies explained in this chapter, the next four chapters provide a detailed analysis of the four cases. Each chapter is constructed with a similar structure. I first discuss the nature of the issue at stake in the intrastate conflict of interest, and its relevance for leadership. I then describe the events of the crisis, and how a specific leadership configuration arose in this case. I focus on who led the community and who followed the

leader. Finally, I compare the liberal and cognitive-affective explanations in order to assess which theory better explains the empirical findings.

## Chapter 3 – Leading by Defection: Transatlantic Recognition of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia

*The hour of recognition nears with every shot your cannon and tanks fire. We will not be able to stand by and watch any longer.*

– Foreign Minister of Germany, Hans-Dietrich Genscher<sup>1</sup>

After the death of Yugoslavia's founding father Jozip Broz Tito, decades of economic hardships that widened inequalities between its constitutive republics, and the fall of communism in discredit, opportunistic politicians saw an occasion to use nationalistic sentiments to gain power.<sup>2</sup> Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic was the first to master this strategy in his methods and rhetoric, justifying the need for aggressively nationalistic policies with the Serbs' sentiment of victimhood.<sup>3</sup> After taking control over the Serb Republic, Milosevic's staged protests to spread his influence to Kosovo, Voivodina and Montenegro. His ascent accelerated the demise of the federation as Slovene and Croat policymakers led the charge in forging an independent policy from Belgrade. In the summer of 1991, after Slovenia and Croatia's declarations of independence, all-out war for territory erupted ripping the federation apart.

In this chapter, I focus on the transatlantic community's recognition of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia. Recognition was a highly contested issue within the community. In many ways, this case is a landmark case for liberal theories. Scholars have argued that domestic pressures on German policymakers motivated their leadership, and that bargaining mechanisms explain their partners' followership. Although there is some evidence to suggest liberal dynamics at play, liberal arguments do not tell the whole story and are employed inconsistently. A Cognitive-Affective approach provides a better explanation. Strong convictions and powerful emotions motivated German leadership, and developments on the ground as well as emotional appeals pushed European powers to follow the German lead.

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<sup>1</sup> Tagliabue 1991b

<sup>2</sup> For a good review of the factors responsible for the Yugoslav conflicts, see Jovic 2001

<sup>3</sup> Lukic 2003, 84, 96–99



This chapter begins with a discussion on the importance of the recognition issue. I then recapitulate the transatlantic cooperation process with a focus on who led and what policies were considered. Finally, I compare explanations for the leader-follower process.

### **I Say Therefore You Are: The Recognition Issue**

Despite the tendency by some to see the European Community's (EC) recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as either a move that helped improve the situation, or worsened it and caused the conflict to spread to Bosnia, the Yugoslav conflict actually operated to a large extent independently of recognition.<sup>4</sup> Recognition itself neither created nor stopped the violence. For instance, as early as September 1991, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) was already making preparations and deploying on the ground to go to war on the side of the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the issue of recognition is important for several reasons.

First, it provides an interesting case study for leadership theories as it represents a strong case for the liberal approach. Scholars have argued that domestic politics and international bargaining best explain the leader-follower dynamics in this instance.

Second, despite being unable to solve a violent intrastate dispute by itself, recognition had a major impact on how the crisis unfolded. In the context of a secessionist crisis like the one in Yugoslavia, recognition provides the most important currency sought by secessionist movements: legitimacy on the international stage.<sup>6</sup> Recognizing new states changes the world map. It represents established states' policymakers taking position for the secessionist republics against the central state. Furthermore, recognition is the first step to legitimize and prepare international involvement in the conflict. Without recognition, it remains an internal dispute in which international actors should not interfere. This was especially true at the beginning of the 1990s, as this was before the development of Responsibility to Protect norms.

Third, in order for recognition to influence the conflict to an even higher degree, European powers innovated with conditional recognition in the case of Yugoslavia. Recognition thus became a policy tool to entice new states to adopt various standards in terms

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<sup>4</sup> Caplan 2005, 11

<sup>5</sup> Lukic 2003, 208

<sup>6</sup> Coggins 2011

of democracy, human rights, and minority rights. Recognition was seen as an incentive to orient the institutions and policies of new states.<sup>7</sup> Overall, the EC approach represented a shift from a factual perception of sovereignty, where only decolonization could justify granting statehood, to a constitutive and normative approach where the behavior of states and the way they become independent mattered.<sup>8</sup> This new conception endures even today.

Finally, more specifically about Yugoslavia, as I will demonstrate, Germany was severely accused for the way they handled recognition, and these events influenced transatlantic cooperation for the rest of the conflict.<sup>9</sup> In the next section, I describe how transatlantic policymakers attempted to deal with the wars in Yugoslavia and to coordinate their international response.

### **Germany's Lead: Reunifying the Transatlantic Position**

Before explaining the cooperation process, it is important to know in detail what is to be explained. The leader-follower dynamics in this case are very complex and surprising, and I unpack them in this section.

#### The Initial Consensus

*Yugoslavia cannot be part of Europe unless she remains united.*

– Prime Minister of France, Edith Cresson<sup>10</sup>

*We can understand your intention but we don't want to ignite the powder keg.*

– Chancellor of Germany, Helmut Kohl<sup>11</sup>

The German Chancellor's restrained response when he met Slovenian Prime Minister Lojze Peterle in the summer of 1990 is representative of the initial transatlantic consensus against recognizing new Yugoslav states. This position was shared by all major transatlantic powers and nearly a year later, in May 1991, it was still the consensual view.<sup>12</sup> The US State

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<sup>7</sup> Caplan 2005, 146, 170–79

<sup>8</sup> Caplan 2005

<sup>9</sup> Létourneau and Hébert 1996, 80

<sup>10</sup> Cited in Wood 1994, 131

<sup>11</sup> Cited in Caplan 2005, 98

<sup>12</sup> Wintz 2010, 35

Department made clear that it supported the “territorial integrity of Yugoslavia within its present borders,” and that “the US shall not encourage or reward secession.”<sup>13</sup> European Community’s foreign ministers met and all agreed, including Germany, that the unity of Yugoslavia should be preserved.<sup>14</sup> On June 19, all the main political parties in Germany issued a declaration in support of Yugoslav unity.<sup>15</sup> On the same day, a statement by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), drafted by German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, was released in support of the “unity and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia.”<sup>16</sup> The EC foreign ministers met again on June 23, when they declared that they would “refuse all high level contacts” if Slovenia or Croatia seceded.<sup>17</sup>

The United States’ most important attempt at influencing events in the region at the time was a visit by US Secretary of State James Baker to Belgrade on June 22. Baker went there specifically to reassure Yugoslav leader Markovic and warn the Republic’s leaders that “Neither the U.S. nor any other country will recognize unilateral secession.”<sup>18</sup> At the outset, Western allies agreed on preserving the unity of Yugoslavia.

### The War Divides Allies

The Parliaments of Slovenia and Croatia declared their respective independence on June 25, 1991.<sup>19</sup> Only two days after the declaration, the first clashes occurred in Slovenia between Slovenian forces and the JNA. Yugoslav forces attempted to reclaim border posts but met with fierce resistance from Slovenians who employed guerrilla tactics to divide and weaken their adversary. Although the move to retake border posts had been authorized by President Markovic, the Yugoslav Army at the time already followed Milosevic’s orders rather than the Yugoslav constitution.

The EC quickly seized the opportunity to dispatch a diplomatic mission to mediate the conflict. The mission was headed by the EC troika of the foreign ministers from Italy, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. It was launched with a triumphant attitude promoting

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<sup>13</sup> Almond 1994, 40

<sup>14</sup> Almond 1994, 47

<sup>15</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 493

<sup>16</sup> Caplan 2005, 18

<sup>17</sup> Almond 1994, 48

<sup>18</sup> J. A. Baker 1995, 482

<sup>19</sup> Sudetic 1991a

European leadership. Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos notoriously declared that “[t]his is the hour of Europe, it is not the hour of the Americans,”<sup>20</sup> and Italian Foreign Minister Giannina de Michelis emphasized that this was a European affair, stating that “Washington is being kept informed but is not being consulted.”<sup>21</sup>

British policymakers appeared content to let events unfold, declaring for instance that “the Yugoslav federal army might have a role in restoring order if there were widespread civil unrest.”<sup>22</sup> French policymakers were more uneasy with the violence in Slovenia, and the French President stated that “a federation cannot be held together through force.”<sup>23</sup> The German position is the one that shifted the most, as the Chancellor argued that unity should not be maintained by the use of arms,<sup>24</sup> and German officials, political parties, the media, and the public all sided with Slovenia and against the federal government in view of the violent developments.

The Germans took the community’s lead. On July 1st, Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced support for the independence of the new republics and argued for recognition on the basis of the right to self-determination of people. It became the official position of the Christian-Democratic Party (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, CDU) that Germany would speak in favor of recognizing the breakaway republics, but would do so as a good partner, and try to reach consensus among EC member states. From this moment onward, German policymakers, especially Foreign Minister Genscher, leader of the Free Democratic Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei*, FDP) and member of the governing coalition, pushed for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in EC political meetings.<sup>25</sup> German policymakers characterized the conflict as a Serbian war of aggression against newly emerging democracies.<sup>26</sup>

This new stance divided allies. The main transatlantic powers, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France all resisted shifting their position. Several EC members preferred preserving Yugoslavia and argued that recognition would worsen the conflict.<sup>27</sup> As

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<sup>20</sup> Riding 1991a

<sup>21</sup> Riding 1991b

<sup>22</sup> C. Hodge 2006, 9

<sup>23</sup> De Bresson 1991

<sup>24</sup> Caplan 2005, 18

<sup>25</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 92

<sup>26</sup> Gow 1997, 168

<sup>27</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 494

the conflict began to intensify in Croatia, Genscher spearheaded Germany's efforts and threatened to consider recognition if the JNA continued on the same course.<sup>28</sup> However, at the same time, France's Foreign Minister warned that recognition would "throw oil on the flames,"<sup>29</sup> and argued that "[i]t is not the role the EC to promote the independence of peoples."<sup>30</sup> For the time being, EC policymakers could only agree on freezing arm sales and financial aid to Yugoslavia,<sup>31</sup> while American policymakers stayed out of the conflict in order to let Europe handle it. Finally, the EC mission appeared successful: on July 7 the Brioni Accords put an end to the conflict in Slovenia, with Croatia and Slovenia accepting a three-month moratorium on the implementation of their independence in exchange for the demobilization of the JNA and the deployment of EC monitors.<sup>32</sup>

Although clashes occurred in Croatia as early as March,<sup>33</sup> the JNA and Serb militias were ready to proceed with their attack on a broader scale only in July, after the war had mostly ended in Slovenia. Unlike relatively homogenous Slovenia, Croatia had an important Serb minority. About 12 % of the population of Croatia was Serb, and many of these 582 000 people were concentrated in the region of Krajina.<sup>34</sup> Nationalists among the Serbs of Krajina refused to recognize the legitimacy of the new government of Franjo Tudjman. They accused the new Croat State of fascism, and proceeded to declare their independence from Croatia with the support of Serbia. Paramilitary groups of Croatian Serbs, aided by Serbia and the Yugoslav army, clashed with Croatian forces and attacked major cities for territorial control. Internally, they terrorized and killed moderates. This war reached an unprecedented level with much worse consequences than the short conflict in Slovenia.

A ceasefire negotiated in Ohrid at the end of July was the first of a long series of ceasefires which failed to halt the escalation of hostilities.<sup>35</sup> In August, both Croat forces, and the Serb militias allied to the JNA expelled civilians from ethnically mixed areas that they thought belonged to their people.<sup>36</sup> The belligerents were very unequal: Croat forces were

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<sup>28</sup> Woodward 1995, 185; Conversi 2006, 63

<sup>29</sup> Riding 1991c

<sup>30</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 213

<sup>31</sup> Riding 1991c

<sup>32</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 190

<sup>33</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 153

<sup>34</sup> Lukic 2003, 157

<sup>35</sup> Sudetic 1991b

<sup>36</sup> Woodward 1995, 173

poorly equipped in comparison to the JNA and Serb military units.<sup>37</sup> The EC voted additional resources to extend the EC Monitoring Mission in Slovenia to Croatia on July 29, but the United Kingdom demanded that the mission be accepted by all parties – including Milosevic – before any deployment.<sup>38</sup> The Serb leader rejected the EC mission’s extension.

### Peacemaking and Peacekeeping

On August 7, at an emergency meeting of the EC foreign ministers, French Foreign Minister Dumas unveiled a French proposal: send an interposition force of the West European Union (WEU) to separate the groups at war in Yugoslavia.<sup>39</sup> France long had plans to develop the WEU as the military arm of Europe which unlike the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would be free of United States (US) interference. French policymakers wanted an interposition force to make Croatia “more reasonable,”<sup>40</sup> and never intended it as a way to punish Serb aggression, which was the reason why German decision makers supported it. Dumas’s proposal, however, was opposed by both Serbs and Croats, as well as by British officials who pointed out that such a force opposed by both sides could become a target.<sup>41</sup>

The division within the EC became clearer with the French proposal. Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Denmark were increasingly supportive of the secessionist states.<sup>42</sup> Hungary and Austria, which were not yet members of the community, also preferred recognition. On the other side, France and the United Kingdom still supported Yugoslavia’s territorial integrity.

Meanwhile, Serb forces were actively waging war to annex territories in Croatia and preparing for another war in Bosnia. The conflict in Croatia continued to ramp up at the end of August. By August 21, it was estimated that about 300 people had died in Croatia since the declaration of independence. The escalation is evident if we consider that in the five days from August 17 to August 21 alone, 52 people were killed.<sup>43</sup> This escalation was due to the Serb-Yugoslav forces laying siege on the cities of Vukovar and Dubrovnik.<sup>44</sup> Just as the

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<sup>37</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 194

<sup>38</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 198

<sup>39</sup> Greenhouse 1991b

<sup>40</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 198

<sup>41</sup> Greenhouse 1991b

<sup>42</sup> Conversi 2006, 72; Wintz 2010, 42

<sup>43</sup> Sudetic 1991c

<sup>44</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 200

initial conflagration had shifted German position, this escalation in the conflict coincides with increased pressure by German leaders. On August 24, German Foreign Minister Genscher declared:

If the bloodshed continues and the policy of faits accomplis by force supported by the Yugoslav army is not halted immediately, the Federal Government [of Germany] must seriously examine the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia in their given frontiers. It will also commit itself to a corresponding examination within the European Community.<sup>45</sup>

On September 7, in another attempt to resolve the conflict, the EC established a Peace Conference on Yugoslavia. Lord Peter Carrington, a former British Foreign Secretary and NATO Secretary General, was selected as the chairman of the conference.<sup>46</sup> Germany was behind the conference initiative, while French policymakers suggested the creation of a body to provide legal advice to the Conference, the Arbitration Commission, often referred to by the name of its president, French jurist Robert Badinter.<sup>47</sup> At the Peace Conference held in The Hague, the German Chancellor brought the possibility of recognizing Croatia, but when facing opposition German policymakers stopped short once again of a unilateral move.<sup>48</sup> However, Foreign Minister Genscher continued to use the threat of recognition publicly to attempt to influence Serbia's leadership. By the time the Peace conference began, the mounting violence had eroded the original transatlantic position further. For example, French Foreign Minister Dumas declared that the question was "no longer to know if these republics were independent but how they will be so."<sup>49</sup>

France continued to push for their idea of a WEU peacekeeping force, an idea which was endorsed by the Netherlands, then occupying the rotating presidency of the EC Council. However, British policymakers still opposed the policy. As a British official said "we're interested in peacekeeping not peacemaking."<sup>50</sup> Behind closed doors, British policymakers, unlike their German and French counterparts, were quite content with letting the conflict escalate believing that the combatants "would simply fight themselves out."<sup>51</sup> This position

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<sup>45</sup> Libal 1997, 39

<sup>46</sup> Montgomery 1991

<sup>47</sup> Rich 1993, 40

<sup>48</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 495

<sup>49</sup> Caplan 2005, 19

<sup>50</sup> Riding 1991d

<sup>51</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 196

isolated them as they remained the sole major European power to oppose any peacekeeping force. Division among Europeans continued in mid-September when Croatian forces seized the Yugoslav army's weapon caches on their territory.<sup>52</sup>

### A Controversial Arms Embargo

At the end of September, Yugoslav forces conducted air strikes near Zagreb, the Croatian capital, and successfully broke through Croats' barricades moving further against Osijek, Vukovar, and Slavonski Brod.<sup>53</sup> Because of this further step in the escalation of the violence, several countries, with Canada in the lead, brought the issue to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The objective was to build up support to send a United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force to Croatia.

The push for UN intervention was skillfully deflected by British and French diplomats at the UN. On September 25, state representatives at the UNSC adopted resolution 713 imposing an arms embargo on the entire Yugoslavia.<sup>54</sup> At the time of the resolution, in view of the developments on the ground, the US shifted their position to put the blame on Serbia.<sup>55</sup> Secretary of State Baker declared that Serbia and the Yugoslav Army bore "a special and, indeed, growing responsibility for the grim future which awaits the peoples of Yugoslavia if they do not stop the bloodshed and reverse the violent course now being pursued."<sup>56</sup>

Despite this declaration, the adopted resolution is very different from what states concerned with the situation had advocated. A prohibition on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to the entire Yugoslav territory, if successfully implemented, could only help the party in the conflict that was already the best equipped, and that was undoubtedly the JNA and Serbian forces.<sup>57</sup> Instead of halting the conflict, this measure ensured that it would continue with the Serbs leading the assault. Moreover, the resolution called upon "all States to refrain from any action which might contribute to increasing tension" which was a warning directed at Germany and other states pushing for recognition.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 219–20

<sup>53</sup> Tagliabue 1991c

<sup>54</sup> The New York Times 1991

<sup>55</sup> Friedman 1991

<sup>56</sup> The New York Times 1991

<sup>57</sup> Lukic 2003, 216

<sup>58</sup> United Nations Security Council 1991



### Failed Agreement and Further Devastation

On October 4, at the castle of Haarzuilens in the Netherlands, EC negotiators were successful in brokering an agreement between the warring parties. This agreement was the first to accept the principle of recognition as a solution to the conflict, as it stated that independence would be granted to the republics that wished it.<sup>59</sup>

The agreement fell apart because Serb leaders quickly withdrew their signature and declared that they could not support it anymore.<sup>60</sup> At the same time, Serb-Yugoslav forces pushed their attacks further in Croatian territory, especially on Vukovar and Dubrovnik. Serbian shelling in both cities led to a great number of civilian victims. The Western media also reported the destruction by Serbian forces of buildings in the Old City of Dubrovnik, as threatening “not only lives but an undefended cultural treasure.”<sup>61</sup>

The destruction wrought by the Serbian side and their decision to renege on the agreement showed Westerners that Serbia could not be trusted, that their rhetoric to defend Serb populations could not hold, and that they had ambitions of expanding through force. Lord Carrington expressed the idea vividly: “There are no Serbs in Dubrovnik. It has never been part of Serbia, it’s always been Croatia, and the attack is absolutely unwarranted.”<sup>62</sup> All transatlantic powers condemned the shelling of the Old City of Dubrovnik and put the blame for ceasefire violations on Yugoslav and Serb forces.<sup>63</sup>

The Dutch Foreign Minister declared on October 9 that further negotiations, the implementation of the agreement, and withdrawal of Yugoslav troops needed to happen within two months.<sup>64</sup> German policymakers clearly saw this last attempt as the final chance for Serbia to change course, or they would move ahead with their threat of recognition. However, they faced strong pressure not to do so, especially from the US. The US strongly pressed the Germans at the NATO meeting in Rome, on November 8, to avoid breaking the transatlantic consensus of no unilateral recognition.<sup>65</sup> On the same day as the NATO meeting,

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<sup>59</sup> Caplan 2005, 19–20

<sup>60</sup> Lukic 2003, 51

<sup>61</sup> The New York Times Editorial Board 1991

<sup>62</sup> The New York Times Editorial Board 1991

<sup>63</sup> Sudetic 1991d; Sudetic 1991e

<sup>64</sup> Caplan 2005, 20–21; Glaurdic 2011, 232

<sup>65</sup> J. A. Baker 1995, 638

EC Foreign Ministers declared that recognition “can only be envisaged in the framework of an overall settlement that includes adequate guarantees for the protection of human rights and rights of national and ethnic groups.”<sup>66</sup> There was thus still resistance to the German lead.

The city of Vukovar fell to the JNA on November 20. After 86 days of shelling, bombing, gunfights and sniper battles from building to building, the assault left a desolate city reduced to rubble.<sup>67</sup> A week after the fall of Vukovar, in a statement to the German Bundestag, the Chancellor and the Foreign Minister reiterated their support for multilateral European cooperation on the issue, but also added that recognition could not be endlessly delayed. Chancellor Kohl expressed his belief that a decision should be reached on the matter by Christmas.<sup>68</sup> This new deadline put time pressure on Germany’s partners, but it somehow only reiterated that the Dutch ultimatum was still relevant.

#### Striking a Deal on Recognition

The disagreements between European powers over recognition occurred at the same time as they were also negotiating the final details of the Treaty on the European Union. The German position on recognition was still opposed by many, including Lord Carrington who warned that it would “undoubtedly mean the breakup of the conference.”<sup>69</sup> US policymakers, as well as the UN Special Envoy Cyrus Vance, also warned against recognition.<sup>70</sup>

French Foreign Minister Dumas suggested to his German counterpart that they could draft together a set of conditions that the secessionist states would have to fulfil in order to be recognized by the EC. Their respective foreign ministries then began working together on drafting a text for the December 16 EC meeting.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, French policymakers launched an active diplomatic campaign to undercut the German position. On December 13, France and Britain introduced a resolution at the UNSC to warn that no country should take unilateral action regarding the conflict in Yugoslavia, a move aimed at blocking Germany’s anticipated

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<sup>66</sup> Libal 1997, 72

<sup>67</sup> Sudetic 1991f

<sup>68</sup> Libal 1997, 78

<sup>69</sup> Binder 1991

<sup>70</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 244–45

<sup>71</sup> Caplan 2005, 23–24

recognition.<sup>72</sup> France was thus both trying to shape German proposals by working on the draft proposal in the EC, and to block their policy for recognition at the UN. This double game infuriated the Germans: Genscher felt betrayed,<sup>73</sup> and called on the French and British to withdraw their initiative, which they did.<sup>74</sup>

EC foreign ministers met on December 15 and 16, and after a long and difficult meeting which ended in the early hours of December 17, they agreed that former Yugoslav republics would be recognized in mid-January, but only if they met certain conditions.<sup>75</sup> This agreement laid out conditions to recognize new state in Eastern Europe and formerly of the Soviet Union, and also discussed the states seeking recognition in former Yugoslavia. The conditions for recognition included respect for the provisions of the Charter of the UN, the Final Act of Helsinki and the Charter of Paris – which have provisions in favor of the rule of law, democracy and human rights – guarantees for ethnic and national minorities, respect for the inviolability of frontiers, acceptance with regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and commitment to settle peacefully by agreement issues regarding state succession and regional disputes.<sup>76</sup> The deal struck between the foreign ministers was that Germany would postpone recognition – which German leaders wanted to do before Christmas – in exchange for the European states moving closer to the German position, accepting a process of conditional recognition rather than continuing to delay any recognition.<sup>77</sup> This was a different conditional recognition as earlier in the crisis, because this time the conditions concerned the behavior and choices of the republics themselves, so that recognition could take place regardless of what Serbia or the Yugoslav army did.

The process entailed that after the republics who wanted independence applied at the EC, the Arbitration Commission for the Peace conference on Yugoslavia would then determine whether secessionist states met the conditions. It was understood that Chancellor Kohl could present the success of Maastricht and this deal – acceptance for conditional

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<sup>72</sup> Binder 1991

<sup>73</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 515

<sup>74</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 266–67

<sup>75</sup> Gow 1997, 63; Burg and Shoup 1999, 93

<sup>76</sup> Rich 1993, 43

<sup>77</sup> Tagliabue 1991e

recognition – so that advocates for recognition in his home country would wait a little longer.<sup>78</sup>

Although some EC countries were still reluctant to go forward with the breakup of Yugoslavia, their argument that it could make things worse by angering the Serbian side had lost most of its appeal after months of violent Serbian aggression in Croatia. Genscher argued convincingly that the current approach was not working and that something else needed to be tried. Three main justifications supported conditional recognition: the aim was to oppose Belgrade and hopefully deter it in pursuing its current trajectory, internationalize the conflict by making it an interstate conflict, and influence nascent states to adopt policies regarding democracy and the respect of minority rights.<sup>79</sup> Four countries applied to demand recognition as independent states in line with the EC process: Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia Herzegovina.<sup>80</sup>

#### Leading by Defection

On December 17, at the CDU congress, Chancellor Kohl doubled down and repeated his promise to recognize the countries before Christmas.<sup>81</sup> Germany did not wait for the Badinter Commission's opinion and recognized Slovenia and Croatia on December 23. Chancellor Kohl argued that Germany had benefitted from the protection of foreign democracies, and therefore could understand the demands of the republics.<sup>82</sup> He hoped that German recognition would force Serbia to stop its offensive lest it faces isolation on the international scene. In an attempt to appease EC partners with which a deal had been struck only a week ago, German leaders declared that this decision would be implemented only on January 15: on this day, the German consulates in Slovenia and Croatia would be upgraded to embassies.<sup>83</sup> The most important part of a decision to recognize is the announcement of the recognition itself, and this recognition was a clear break from the cooperation expected by allies. The entire process on conditionality made no sense now that Germany recognized the state before the

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<sup>78</sup> Védérine 1996, 619

<sup>79</sup> Caplan 2005, 25

<sup>80</sup> Sudetic 1991h

<sup>81</sup> Tagliabue 1991f; Caplan 2005, 47

<sup>82</sup> Kinzer 1991

<sup>83</sup> Kinzer 1991

Arbitration Commission could even pronounce itself, thus revealing that conditions did not really matter.

This surprising decision was made while German policymakers were confronted with intense opposition from the UK, France, the US and the UN.<sup>84</sup> The British and French permanent representatives at the UN, David Hannay and Jean-Bernard Mérimée, urged the UN Secretary general to take a stand on the issue.<sup>85</sup> In agreement, the UN Secretary General stated in a letter that recognition would prolong the fighting. Foreign Minister Genscher replied that “dithering would only encourage the warmongers.”<sup>86</sup>

As expected, Germany’s European partners saw this decision as a serious defection from cooperation. French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas asked “Where is the spirit of Maastricht?” and threatened Germany that it should not recognize Slovenia and Croatia, lest they “set Europe back twenty years.”<sup>87</sup> Hubert Védrine calls Germany’s move as placing its partners in front of a “fait accompli.”<sup>88</sup> A spokesman for the Dutch government expressed doubt that any other EC member would follow Germany after they broke with the agreement of the December 16 EC meeting.<sup>89</sup> Genscher seemed to realize the mistake when he declared that the Arbitration Commission’s opinions were only to be “an element of appreciation [and] not of decision” for recognition.<sup>90</sup> Of course, announcing recognition even before these opinions were written ridiculed the whole process.<sup>91</sup>

Recognition also occurred at a time when Germany had just reunified and was vulnerable to accusations of taking over Europe. Moreover, the country was also open to attacks because of its history in the Balkans. These attacks indeed occurred both after the EC meeting and the German move toward recognition, and reached a level of acrimony that surprised German policymakers themselves. British MPs compared Germany’s actions to what they had done in 1938.<sup>92</sup> Major Western newspapers were ripe with vitriolic anti-German rhetoric.

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<sup>84</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 94

<sup>85</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 266

<sup>86</sup> Tagliabue 1991d

<sup>87</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 483

<sup>88</sup> Védrine 1996, 608

<sup>89</sup> Tagliabue 1991f

<sup>90</sup> Caplan 2005, 39

<sup>91</sup> Gow 1997, 171

<sup>92</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 273–74

In London, commentators went beyond the accusation of Germany caving in to its Croatian minority, to accuse Germany of using its power to force their will on their EC partners. Titles in the newspaper at the time include “Chancellor Kohl Hijacks Brussels Policy on Slovenia and Croatia,”<sup>93</sup> “Reckless Recognition of Yugoslav Republics Will Not Help Croats,”<sup>94</sup> and “Bonn Flexes Its Muscles on Croatia’s Behalf.”<sup>95</sup> Germany had “steamrollered its 11 partners into immediate recognition”<sup>96</sup> employing “bulldozer tactics”<sup>97</sup> to force the EC’s hand in an “unusual display of new-style German brinkmanship.”<sup>98</sup> Germans not only “made a mockery of its proclaimed eagerness to subordinate national self-interest to Community interest,” an editorial in London’s *Times* went further and mused that “German recognition would probably be followed by that of Austria and Hungary, all nations that supported the wartime fascist regime in Croatia.”<sup>99</sup> According to them, this would give credibility to Serbian accusations that Germans were out to recreate their sphere of influence in the Balkans.

In Paris, the reaction in the press was barely better. French newspaper asked “should we be afraid of Germany?” It reminded audiences that the 20th century was almost a German century, and that only French, British, Russian and American opposition prevented that.<sup>100</sup> On the day of Germany’s recognition, Daniel Vernet argued that the *German question* was back, and he drew parallels with Bismarck and the Third Reich. Although he wrote that the importance of the memory of the Third Reich was exaggerated, he also presented Bonn’s “erratic policy” as placing the Community in front of a “fait accompli” revealing that “Germany does not accept anymore that European integration can be conceived as a guarantee against its potential power.”<sup>101</sup> Germany was also accused of being hypocritical for supporting a side in the Yugoslav conflict without the willingness to deploy troops directly.<sup>102</sup> About a year after the recognition, Alain Joxe would write in *Le Monde Diplomatique* that the acceleration of ethnic wars in Yugoslavia could be traced to the precise

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<sup>93</sup> Brock 1991

<sup>94</sup> The Times 1991

<sup>95</sup> Eisenhammer 1991

<sup>96</sup> Brock 1991

<sup>97</sup> Pick 1991

<sup>98</sup> Eisenhammer 1991

<sup>99</sup> The Times 1991

<sup>100</sup> Martinet 1992

<sup>101</sup> Vernet 1991

<sup>102</sup> Trean 1991

moment of Germany's recognition, a German "diktat" that had its roots in the same "right of blood" (droit du sang) which explains popular support for the genocide during World War II.<sup>103</sup>

The American tone was not as virulent, and American newspapers discussed analogies with Nazi Germany mostly as they reported the reactions from Europe. Readers of *The New York Times* were reminded that "Germans' assertiveness on the issue, coming a year after reunification, has evoked troubling historical associations, not least because Nazi Germany invaded and sliced up Yugoslavia during World War II."<sup>104</sup>

Germany's recognition also potentially jeopardized the Treaty on the European Union, which was agreed upon at Maastricht on December 9 and 10, but was not yet signed or ratified by member states. The German move threatened European construction, especially the new ambition of building a common foreign and security policy (CSFP). This rushed defection, potentially costly for Germany, is also puzzling because it occurred at a time when European partners seemed to be moving toward the German position, and were finally considering conditional recognition, which they had rejected earlier.<sup>105</sup>

Chancellor Kohl had to offer reassurances and make diplomatic efforts to mend ties with other European powers after the defection. For instance, he spoke of the necessity of Germany to engage with the world because of the size and economic might of the country since reunification, he insisted that Germany's energies would be focused on assisting the eastern part of the country, and he denied that the Federal Government of Germany was seeking a permanent seat at the UNSC.<sup>106</sup> Understanding that they went a step too far, German policymakers would take a much less active role in the years to come on issues related to former Yugoslavia.

### Following After All

In January, the Arbitration Commission ruled that only Slovenia and Macedonia satisfied the conditions for independence, and that Croatia did not meet these conditions, especially on

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<sup>103</sup> Joxe 1993

<sup>104</sup> Tagliabue 1991e

<sup>105</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 514

<sup>106</sup> Tagliabue 1992

the issue of minority rights.<sup>107</sup> Opinion 5 of the Arbitration Commission found Croatia lacking with regard to the status of minorities, who should be provided with “substantial autonomy” for “local government, local law enforcement and the judiciary, educational systems and other specific matters.”<sup>108</sup>

However, Croatia had already been recognized by Germany, and this decision by the Commission did not stop other European states from following the German lead. The EC merely demanded guarantees that Croatia would adopt reforms in the direction demanded by the Commission, and then on January 15, 1992, member states recognized Slovenia and Croatia. Austria and Switzerland also followed the German lead on the same day, a day that was hailed as a “triumph of German foreign policy.”<sup>109</sup> The Foreign Minister of Slovenia recognized German leadership when he declared that this was the result of “the wise policy of the German Government.”<sup>110</sup> Europeans moved to recognition despite the active US diplomacy still arguing against it. In the words of National Security Agency (NSA) Adviser Brent Scowcroft: “[w]e tried very hard to prevent the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia...”<sup>111</sup> The US State Department sent ambassadors to European capitals in an attempt to influence EC states not to follow Germany, to no avail.<sup>112</sup>

These events in January also coincided with the 15th ceasefire in Croatia, this time concluded by UN Special Envoy Cyrus Vance.<sup>113</sup> The agreement demanded that the Yugoslav army withdraw from the Croatian territory, and in exchange a UN peacekeeping force would move in to protect the Serbian areas. Despite the fact that the JNA shot down a helicopter killing 5 EC observers on January 7, the ceasefire generally held and led to an important decrease of the violence. In view of these developments, several actors who had opposed recognition came to embrace it. For instance, Lord Carrington declared that recognition “pressed intransigents to negotiate rather than to fight” and he declared that Milosevic had “obviously taken note” of this shift in European policy. Overall, Carrington saw a “more constructive attitude” in the negotiations for peace.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Woodward 1995, 190

<sup>108</sup> Rich 1993, 48

<sup>109</sup> Kinzer 1992

<sup>110</sup> Kinzer 1992

<sup>111</sup> Silber and Little 1997, 201

<sup>112</sup> J. A. Baker 1995, 639

<sup>113</sup> Sudetic 1992a

<sup>114</sup> Montgomery 1992



### Late US Followership and War in Bosnia Herzegovina

In early 1992, the US withheld recognition despite the fact that all EC member states, several other European countries, Canada, and Australia had all recognized the two breakaway republics.<sup>115</sup> American policymakers were displeased because they felt ignored, and US officials expressed their discontent in the media by referring to German moves as “strong-arm tactics.” They described Genscher’s approach as “we are right and the rest of you should follow us.”<sup>116</sup>

The fragile ceasefire in Croatia mostly held although there were often limited clashes between the two forces<sup>117</sup>. Rather than genuine peace, both sides were content for respite because the war had reached a stalemate.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, the Serbs were preparing for the next stage of the war in Bosnia and the deployment of a UN force consolidated their gains in Croatia.<sup>119</sup> In mid-February, the UNSC agreed on sending a peacekeeping force in order to support the ceasefire in Croatia.<sup>120</sup> The UN voted to deploy the force, UNPROFOR, on February 21, which had the mandate to monitor the cease-fire and take place between the belligerents to protect the Serb minority in Croatia in replacement of the JNA.<sup>121</sup>

Bosnia was ethnically fragmented with approximately 1.9 million Muslims, 750,000 Croats and 1.4 million Serbs.<sup>122</sup> Tensions significantly rose between Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims on one side, and Bosnian Croats and Bosnia Serbs on the other at the beginning of March. After a referendum boycotted by the Serb community, Bosnian President Izetbegovic declared the independence of the Republic on March 3.<sup>123</sup> As with the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, German policymakers were the first to publicly urge for recognizing Bosnia as soon as possible, which they did right after the referendum.<sup>124</sup>

The US decision to follow the European lead and recognize Slovenia and Croatia was tied to its decision to recognize Bosnia. This decision was taken by the Administration at the

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<sup>115</sup> Kinzer 1992

<sup>116</sup> Binder 1992a

<sup>117</sup> Sudetic 1992b

<sup>118</sup> Gow 1997, 62

<sup>119</sup> Lukic 2003, 210–11

<sup>120</sup> P. Lewis 1992a

<sup>121</sup> P. Lewis 1992b

<sup>122</sup> Sudetic 1992c

<sup>123</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 117

<sup>124</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 293

end of February 1992.<sup>125</sup> On March 4, US Secretary of State James Baker wrote a letter in which he urged the EC to recognize Bosnia.<sup>126</sup> Baker wrote

while there obviously is no external influence that can guarantee the stability and territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, we can best contribute to that objective by a collective recognition of that republic's independence, and warning against efforts from within and without to undermine its integrity.<sup>127</sup>

Baker went to Brussels and worked out a deal on March 10 with EC foreign ministers. They agreed that the US would recognize Slovenia and Croatia, and that both the EC and the US would recognize Bosnia Herzegovina if the parties in the country adopted “without delay, constitutional arrangements that will provide for peaceful and harmonious development of the republics within its existing borders.”<sup>128</sup> Recognition was difficult to oppose now that Slovenia and Croatia had created a precedent, and that the situation in Bosnia may have been worse and more complicated, but in many respects quite similar. As Douglas Hurd declared at the March 10 meeting “[w]e can't leave these republics in limbo because we have created the present situation.”<sup>129</sup>

An EC plan for Bosnia in mid-March failed to halt the preparations for war.<sup>130</sup> Clashes erupted in the city of Bosanski Brod at the end of March.<sup>131</sup> In the city of Bijeljina, on April 2, Serb paramilitary units shot directly at Muslim civilians.<sup>132</sup> As a response, President Izetbegovic ordered general mobilization, and the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) called on the Serbs to evacuate Sarajevo.<sup>133</sup> Forces fought violently in Bosnia's ethnically mixed capital of Sarajevo.<sup>134</sup>

When the EC granted recognition to Bosnia on April 6, and the United States to Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia on the next day, Bosnian and Serb forces were “on the brink of full-scale war.”<sup>135</sup> Serb forces in Sarajevo reportedly shot at civilians marching for peace,

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<sup>125</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 100

<sup>126</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 100

<sup>127</sup> J. A. Baker 1995, 641

<sup>128</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 101

<sup>129</sup> J. A. Baker 1995, 642

<sup>130</sup> Sudetic 1992c

<sup>131</sup> Sudetic 1992d

<sup>132</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 119

<sup>133</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 129

<sup>134</sup> Sudetic 1992e

<sup>135</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 119–20

and attacked police stations.<sup>136</sup> The fighting quickly escalated with bombardments by Serbian forces of the Muslim quarter of Sarajevo and the conflict spreading to the city of Mostar.<sup>137</sup>

Unfortunately, recognition did nothing to stop the conflict as it escalated dramatically in the days and weeks following recognition. Transatlantic decision makers were reluctant to engage their military forces on the ground in a way that could have halted the conflict as Bosnia descended into all-out war.<sup>138</sup> Within days the number of refugees could be counted in the hundreds of thousand, as Serbian forces employed ethnic cleansing tactics to scare the population away and claim entire regions of Bosnia.<sup>139</sup>

### **Liberal and Realist Explanations for Transatlantic Cooperation**

The tortuous and bizarre cooperation process over recognition of the states seceding from Yugoslavia has been the subject of many articles and books. Germany not only pushed for recognition, it obtained a deal with its partners for this recognition, then broke from the deal in favor of earlier unilateral recognition. The behavior of followers is just as puzzling: after their discontent with the German move, they eventually rallied to the German position and followed them, despite the fact that the leader had not respected the deal. US policymakers had continually warned that recognition would destabilize former Yugoslavia even more, and when the worst case of destabilization occurred in Bosnia, they completely changed their analysis, and decided that recognition might now foster stability instead.

In the next section, I review the main explanations in the scientific literature, beginning with liberal scholars, and then I briefly discuss realist explanations.

#### The Liberal Argument on Recognition

Scholars have often employed liberal arguments to explain leader-follower dynamics in this case, and their explanations have gone mostly unchallenged.

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<sup>136</sup> Sudetic 1992f

<sup>137</sup> Sudetic 1992g

<sup>138</sup> Gow 1994, 24

<sup>139</sup> Sudetic 1992h

### *Domestic Sources of German leadership*

Several scholars and policymakers themselves have argued that domestic factors were decisive in shaping German leadership. US Secretary of State James Baker shares the liberal analysis when he writes that Germany recognized Slovenia and Croatia after “caving in to domestic pressures.”<sup>140</sup> These pressures came from a number of sources.

First, a popular explanation is that there was a powerful Croat lobby.<sup>141</sup> According to this explanation, Croat immigrants, Croat foreign workers in Germany, and influential Catholic leaders who took up their cause influenced Bonn on the issue of recognition.<sup>142</sup> Both Slovenia and Croatia have traditionally German-speaking elites, and Croats were the most numerous and well-connected Balkan nation in Germany.<sup>143</sup> In his memoirs, Dutch diplomat and mediator Henry Wynaendts writes that Germany and Italy favored recognition because they were “pressed by an extremely strong lobby in favor of Croatia”.<sup>144</sup> According to Ronald Hatto, the Catholic church had strong ties to the CSU (*Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern*) party, the Bavarian branch of the CDU, which was part of the government coalition at the time of the crisis. The Church was thus in a good position to pressure Chancellor Helmut Kohl to recognize Slovenia and Croatia, both countries with Catholic majorities.<sup>145</sup>

Second, another source of domestic pressure came from the fear that a massive flow of refugees would arise from the conflicts. This fear actually materialized. By September 1992, Germany was by far the European country that had welcomed the largest number of refugees fleeing the war, approximately 220,000 in total.<sup>146</sup> German policymakers hoped that “preventive recognition” would compel Serbia to obey international law, stop the conflict, and prevent a flow of refugees from going to Germany.<sup>147</sup> Germany was a “powerful magnet” for refugees because of its ties to Croatia and the Catholic hierarchy, and because of this, Bonn’s “interests in peace was both generalized and stronger than its interest in any particular outcome to the Yugoslav conflict.”<sup>148</sup> Robert Gerald Livingston, then director of the

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<sup>140</sup> J. A. Baker 1995, 639

<sup>141</sup> Hoffmann 1996, 144

<sup>142</sup> Kinzer 1991; Kinzer 1992

<sup>143</sup> Maull 1995, 111

<sup>144</sup> Wynaendts 1993, 99–100

<sup>145</sup> Hatto 2006, 75

<sup>146</sup> C. C. Hodge 1998, 10

<sup>147</sup> Ullman 1996, 17–18

<sup>148</sup> Ullman 1996, 18

*American Institute for Contemporary German Studies*, argued that the emotional “fear that unwashed and unwanted immigrants are going to pour in” explain German behavior.<sup>149</sup>

Third, the most sophisticated liberal argument comes from Beverly Crawford. She argues that foreign policy culture and party fragmentation combined to forge a consensus among German elites for recognition. She also argues more specifically that the actual recognition and defection from the EC position stemmed from domestic pressures. According to her, the “unilateral move was caused by escalating fears of mutual betrayal leading to negotiation failures in a bargaining environment where Germany’s options were narrowed by domestic pressures.”<sup>150</sup> This is a typical liberal explanation: because of the consensus at home, German policymakers saw their win-set shrink so they moved ahead when they feared that the outcome of the negotiations – withholding Croatia’s recognition – would not be acceptable to their constituents. By the end of November 1991, the German Bundestag had adopted a resolution condemning Serbian aggression and surveys revealed that two thirds of Germans supported recognition.<sup>151</sup> In line with two-level games explanations, German policymakers decided that domestic factors mattered the most because no vital national security interest was threatened, and this shows how “domestic politics shape substantive preferences when higher level of uncertainty surrounds the issue.”<sup>152</sup>

Finally, another source of pressure came from the media, especially conservative newspaper close to the CDU. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Die Welt* were strongly pushing for recognition.<sup>153</sup> The initial media coverage in Germany focused on the suffering of the Croats and later the Bosniaks, with a bias against Serbia.<sup>154</sup> The liberal argument therefore shows how the Croat and Catholic lobbies, the fear of a massive flow of refugees and strong positions in the media combined to push German leaders to advocate for recognition, and then to defect and announce recognition earlier to make sure that they would not betray what they had promised to their constituency: a recognition of Croatia before Christmas.

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<sup>149</sup> Binder 1992a

<sup>150</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 515

<sup>151</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 512

<sup>152</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 518

<sup>153</sup> Maull 1995, 102

<sup>154</sup> Maull 1995, 121

*European Followers: Bargaining Recognition*

Because German leaders had very intense preferences with regard to recognition, Liberal Theory expects them to use these constraints as a strategic advantage in international negotiations and to be ready to bargain to obtain their preferred outcome. Liberal scholars and observers argue that this is exactly what they have done.

First, Michael Libal recalls in his book a meeting between Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterrand on November 15. Mid-November is a key moment because it is when the ultimatum to accept the Dutch plan was clearly failing and it occurs just before German policymakers made their promise of recognition before Christmas. According to Libal, Kohl attempted to convince the French President of the need for recognition, and he did so by emphasizing that he was constrained by domestic pressures.<sup>155</sup> Hubert Védrine recounts that Kohl responded to Mitterrand, who told him that recognition would be a mistake, “[w]ithout a doubt, but the pressure in my home country is very strong. I cannot hold any more. My party, my liberal allies, the Church, the press, without forgetting the 500 000 Croats who live in Germany, everyone is pushing.”<sup>156</sup> This is a clear example of trying to get the upper hand in a negotiation by emphasizing one’s constraints.

Second, some scholars argue that Kohl obtained British and French assent to the recognition of the two countries on December 15 and 16 by making concessions. Concessions were especially important for British policymakers as they were very reluctant to shift their stance against recognition. As a side payment, earlier during the negotiations on the EU, Kohl gave in to the United Kingdom demands on European integration, including opting out of the social charter and the European Monetary Union.<sup>157</sup> In exchange, he secured British policymakers’ approval in the EC council for recognition.

These two examples clearly show liberal mechanisms at work. Another argument put forward by liberal theorists is the “fear of disunity” argument. According to Bearce, British and French policymakers rallied to the German position because they wanted to avoid institutional breakdown at a crucial moment for European integration. European powers preferred unity on what they considered a bad policy than any disunity, because “[i]f the European states were unable to reach a multilateral bargain on the recognition question,

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<sup>155</sup> Libal 1997, 76

<sup>156</sup> Védrine 1996, 615–16

<sup>157</sup> Woodward 1995, 184; Bearce 2002, 485

hopes for the CFSP, negotiated as the second pillar of the 1991 Treaty on the European Union, would be deflated.”<sup>158</sup> Germany had been holding off recognition for the same reason, to try to reach consensus instead of announcing a unilateral policy that could show disunity in Europe.<sup>159</sup> However, German fears that disunity might be detrimental to European integration waned after the Maastricht summit, and German Foreign Minister Genscher recognized that recognition “was not the issue upon which European foreign policy cooperation would be made or broken...”<sup>160</sup> Bearce writes that France followed Germany after British policymakers did so – after German leaders made concessions to them on the social charter and the EMU – because it still feared institutional breakdown and wanted “to avoid being the sole defector.”<sup>161</sup>

To sum up liberal arguments for followership, Germany pressured allied by strategically emphasizing that it was constrained, offered side payments in concession to the British policymakers, and benefitted from the fear of disunity in the wake of the great moment of European construction that was the Maastricht summit.

#### *Limits and Problems of the Liberal Approach*

The timing of the German push for recognition and its defection cast doubt on liberal explanations. First, Croats had been trying to influence Bonn in recognizing the new state for a long time. According to Hodge, “despite public demonstrations held by Germany’s small but vocal Croatian community, [it] cannot be credited with forcing the government’s hand.”<sup>162</sup> Or, in the words of Maull: “If there really was a persistent pro-Croat bias, why did it not appear before July 1991?”<sup>163</sup> As Crawford recognizes, Croats had lobbied and organized public demonstrations as much as a year before the declaration of independence.<sup>164</sup> Yet, as I have shown, at the moment of this declaration German policymakers made strong declarations in favor of Yugoslav unity and refused to break from the transatlantic consensus.

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<sup>158</sup> Bearce 2002, 483–84

<sup>159</sup> On the impact of the need for consensus and unity, see also Jakobsen 1995

<sup>160</sup> Bearce 2002, 486

<sup>161</sup> Bearce 2002, 485–87

<sup>162</sup> C. C. Hodge 1998, 9

<sup>163</sup> Maull 1995, 114

<sup>164</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 502–3

Richard Caplan also points out that most migrant workers did not have the right to vote, and so their views did not have direct influence on possibilities of reelection.<sup>165</sup>

Second, to explain the German defection, Crawford writes that Foreign Minister Genscher felt betrayed when France and the United Kingdom went to the UN to block his policy of recognition, and that his stance on accepting conditionality for secession on December 15-16 was only a bluff. He bet that Germany could recognize the two countries and other European states would follow suit anyway.<sup>166</sup> If Crawford is right, and as we now know, Genscher's bet was successful, then it means that strong motivation to recognize the republics and anger at the delay tactics from Bonn's partners explains the deal and following defection, not domestic constraints. Even if non-recognition of Croatia was unacceptable to domestic constituencies, why break ranks instead of waiting and convincing Croatian policymakers to bring their institutions in line with EC standards, so that they then could be recognized?

There are also serious doubts about the liberal argument in explaining followership. According to Michael Libal, the trade-off between recognition and Maastricht is a myth, the two issues were discussed on separate occasions and Germany was not open to any such deals.<sup>167</sup> German Foreign Minister Genscher also writes in his memoirs that there was no willingness from Chancellor Kohl to link the issues of Maastricht with the Yugoslav crisis. According to Kohl, the negotiations for the European Union were complex enough as they were.<sup>168</sup> It does seem strange that Germany would provide substantive side payments to just one major European power and not the other. From a liberal point of view, they would be trading what their constituency wanted on Croatia for something that may foster public discontent related to the Maastricht Treaty, which seemed much more important to Germans than the fate of Slovenia and Croatia. Indeed, Chancellor Kohl was accused at the time of "surrender" at Maastricht.<sup>169</sup> The question would then become: if German leaders wanted recognition so much that they were willing to give such important concessions at Maastricht, which would then become a permanent part of the EU institutional architecture, why did they

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<sup>165</sup> Caplan 2005, 46

<sup>166</sup> B. Crawford 1996, 515-16

<sup>167</sup> Libal 1997, 182

<sup>168</sup> Genscher 1998, 509

<sup>169</sup> Gow 1997, 169



so strongly believe in recognition? Unless liberal explanations can answer this, the cost-benefit calculus of trading one thing for the other does not make sense from the German perspective.

The reason why economic interests and the interests of economic groups within Germany is rarely discussed – despite the fact that it would fit very well with liberal arguments – is that Germany actually had an economic stake in supporting Yugoslav unity. The Yugoslav state was greatly indebted to Germany, which means that if the state dissolved, Germans risked never getting paid.<sup>170</sup>

The Liberal approach is the most inconsistent when it plays the “fear of disunity” card. Bearce does not explain why France was unwilling to be “the sole defector” and oppose Germany at the same time as Germany – a country for which multilateralism and European integration was as important if not more so than France after its recent reunification – was willing to unilaterally recognize Slovenia and Croatia before the other EC members. Why would fear of disunity subside in Germany after Maastricht but not in France? We might instead expect France to be especially ready to oppose the German move as it was interpreted as a defection of the agreed-upon procedure between EC member states, and following the German position would be rewarding defection. For this argument to work, it is necessary to explain German leadership and the followership of European states with different and contradictory arguments, as they cannot both have acted to maintain unity in the wake of Maastricht.

Another limit of the liberal argument is the difficulty of explaining the shift in the US stance toward recognition. The US recognition of Croatia came late in April 1992, despite the early mobilization of Croatian Americans who convinced Robert Dole in the US Congress to support their cause.<sup>171</sup> The US Congress constantly put pressure on the American executive branch to change its stance. Senator Al Gore, for instance, made a passionate speech in favor of punishing Serbia, which he linked to “imperialism in all its arrogance.”<sup>172</sup> Interestingly, although US Secretary of State Baker characterized the German decision as “caving in” to domestic pressures, he argues that the US Administration was in a difficult position due to pressures from the Croatian-American Lobby. According to him, he told the President that

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<sup>170</sup> Maull 1995, 118

<sup>171</sup> Paquin 2010, 69

<sup>172</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 246

they should “take the public and the congressional heat” and resist these pressures.<sup>173</sup> Apparently, American policymakers were the only ones capable of heroically resisting domestic pressures. I agree with Paquin that no matter what domestic pressures existed for recognition, they were not decisive in the US policy shift.<sup>174</sup> Nor did I find any evidence of interaction mechanism that would explain how Europeans bargained to convince American policymakers to shift their position.

In brief, liberal theorists selected this case as the champion of liberal theory because it passed all the hoop tests: policymakers’ international positions were broadly in line with intense domestic constituencies, and the leader, Germany, had the most intense preferences due to the size and action of its Croat minority. I do not consider, however, that any unique evidence was found that could validate the Liberal approach above other theories. While there is clear evidence that Kohl emphasized domestic constraints in dealing with his French partners, French diplomats then tried to undercut Germany at the UN. The timing of this tactic also occurs one month before the EC deal, and two months before European partners finally rallied. This shows that German policymakers did attempt to gain leverage by emphasizing domestic constraints, not that it actually worked. Evidence about followers obtaining concession for their followership is similarly inconclusive. The fact that this linking of issue between Maastricht and Yugoslavia occurred at all is contested, and it seems odd that France would not also be compensated since French policymakers were part of the same Maastricht negotiations. The Croat “lobby” might have pressured German policymakers, but the decisive shift with Germans taking the lead did not coincide in time with the Croat mobilization and protests that took place.

#### Enter Realism: National Interests and Seeking Stability

*Legal battles are a lot easier to fight than Serbs.*

– Pierre Lellouche<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> J. A. Baker 1995, 639

<sup>174</sup> Paquin 2010, 69–70

<sup>175</sup> Lellouche 1993, 129

When focusing on foreign policymaking in London, Washington and Paris in the first two years of the Yugoslav conflicts, scholars have also developed realist explanations. Realism may not have much to say to explain leadership or followership, but it is the main approach that comes to mind in explaining inertia, lack of change, reluctance to act, and a preference for the status quo. The fact that these explanations flourished is perhaps unsurprising considering that foreign policymakers at the time, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom, often justified their stances based on a security-maximizing rhetoric around the realist concepts of national interests, stability, and the inherent conflictual nature of the Balkans. The British Foreign Minister even proudly declared “we have been the realists in this” suggesting that the UK had the only true realist policy with regard to Yugoslavia.<sup>176</sup> I present in this section a short synthesis of what realist scholars have argued to explain transatlantic foreign policies on recognition.

First, they argue that Yugoslavia was not important anymore because of the international context.<sup>177</sup> With the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) releasing its grip from East European countries and barely able to keep its own republics in line, Yugoslavia was not on anyone’s radar. The West had no vital interests anymore in inducing Yugoslavia to its side as an anti-Soviet bulwark, and policymakers only wished that it could remain stable and united. They mostly preferred a continuation of the united federation because they feared that its example would be detrimental to stability in and around the USSR. They thus wanted to avoid making trouble for Gorbachev by supporting secession.<sup>178</sup> Western policymakers (mis)perceived Milosevic in Belgrade as a Gorbachev of the Balkans, a man strong enough to implement reforms and maintain stability, and therefore avoided disrupting his centralizing plans.<sup>179</sup>

Second, transatlantic policymakers exhibited stability-seeking behavior: they sought as much as possible to avoid supporting secessionism because it would further destabilize the region. Western policymakers “saw the continuing existence of Yugoslavia not only as a regional guarantor of that stability, but also as particularly important parallel to what was

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<sup>176</sup> Hurd 2004, 516–17

<sup>177</sup> Paquin 2010, 55; Glaurdic 2011, 46–47

<sup>178</sup> Wood 1994, 132

<sup>179</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 41, 45

happening farther east.”<sup>180</sup> This is why they imposed an arm embargo favorable to the strongest party in the conflict, and the British and Americans opposed any military intervention which, according to them, would only escalate the conflict. Or in the words of the French President, anything beyond humanitarian actions would only “add war to war and solve nothing.”<sup>181</sup>

Finally, in order to explain the divergences among transatlantic powers, which had very different international positions for a long time and fought over what should be done, realists discuss the various geopolitical interests of the states involved. French policymakers wanted to protect French interests in the region and supported greater integration in the EU in order to counter the growing power of a reunited Germany. German policymakers, on their side, sought to increase its influence in Eastern Europe.<sup>182</sup> France was thus worried over Germany’s “zone of influence”.<sup>183</sup>

British foreign policy has been described as “pusillanimous realism,”<sup>184</sup> and “conservative pessimism.”<sup>185</sup> According to realist authors, it is perhaps best encompassed in Palmerston’s line spoken by Malcom Rifkind when he became Foreign Secretary: “the furtherance of British interests ought to be the sole object of a British Foreign Secretary.”<sup>186</sup> Some scholars argued that British policymakers had no interests in the Balkans and so lacked the political will to get involved in any way.<sup>187</sup> Other realist scholars contend that British policymakers had other interests which aligned with Serbia. They wanted to oppose any expansion of the EC’s common defense and security policy<sup>188</sup> and, like their French counterpart, prevent German hegemony on the continent. They supported a united Yugoslavia as “a bulwark against German hegemony” and “a foil to EC political and military integration.”<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 175

<sup>181</sup> Le Monde 1992

<sup>182</sup> Wood 1994, 130

<sup>183</sup> Wood 1994, 132

<sup>184</sup> Gow 1997

<sup>185</sup> Simms 2001, xi

<sup>186</sup> Simms 2001, 7

<sup>187</sup> Macleod 1996a, 87; Gow 1997

<sup>188</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 307–8

<sup>189</sup> C. Hodge 2006, 3

American policymakers were “defensive positionalists,” which means that they stressed the importance of regional stability during secessionist struggles.<sup>190</sup> They would recognize new states only when central states cannot guarantee the control of their international border, fail to negotiate with secessionist states, and secessionist states demonstrate their ability to maintain stability. The US Administration was thus very reluctant to support secessionist states as no one had the ability to bring stability back in the region. In the end, Washington shifted its stance when the January ceasefire and the UNPROFOR deployment in Croatia suggested prospects for stabilization if the republics became independent.<sup>191</sup>

### *Exit Realism*

To be fair, several realist scholars recognize the limits of their realist explanation, notably on the issue of German leadership, and how other factors need to be brought to bear on the question. Glaurdic, for instance, writes that Germany’s shift toward recognition “was rooted in the challenge that the Serbian aggression presented to the principled ideas of German foreign policy makers – ideas which helped shift the focus away from Germany’s real interests in favor of Yugoslavia’s preservation.”<sup>192</sup> This formulation is strange: Germany was thus the only exception, a state blind to its “real” interests. Paquin admits that the US recognized Croatia despite the fact that Zagreb did not have complete control over its own territory and could not guarantee minority rights, factors essential for future stability from the American point of view.<sup>193</sup> Furthermore, Bosnia was descending into war with increasingly frequent clashes in March at the same time as the US decided to recognize the republic, which is a clear case where the secessionist state did not have the power to maintain stability.

The main question that remains for realist approaches is: why did London, Paris and Washington change their international position against recognition at all? Serbia remained the most powerful actor in Yugoslavia, and it was unlikely to stop its territorial expansion without the West stepping in militarily. Although the USSR vanished at the end of 1991, core

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<sup>190</sup> Paquin 2010, 6

<sup>191</sup> Paquin 2010, 65

<sup>192</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 306

<sup>193</sup> Paquin 2010, 65

geopolitical interests remained the same. When French and British policymakers recognized Slovenia and Croatia, they still had to worry about German hegemony in the region. As I have shown, Western newspapers certainly did. Indeed, their worries might have been even greater after the dissolution of the USSR created a vacuum to the East. When the United States shifted its stance, it was already clear that the referendum and upcoming recognition of Bosnia did not consolidate a tendency toward stabilization.

Stability-seeking led to different positions and division between partners because stability meant something different for each transatlantic power. Germans argued that stability was best served by recognition. For them, stability meant applying international law and order, principles of self-determination, and the rejection of the conquest of territory by force. Stability was avoiding anything resembling Nazi-like behavior and upholding fundamental human rights. French policymakers understood stability as de-escalating the violence in the conflict and in terms of humanitarian relief. This is why they were in favor of a humanitarian intervention early on, and insisted that recognition be conditional on the respect of democratic norms. Policymakers in Washington applied a Cold War frame for stability: stability was containment, the guarantee that the conflict would not spill elsewhere. When the conflict clearly could not be contained anyway and was already spilling to Bosnia, they changed their approach. British policymakers were not concerned with stability as international principles, humanitarian relief, human rights, nor did they see it in terms of regional containment. They were thinking about the wider stability of Europe and thought that this required a strong and centralized Yugoslavia.<sup>194</sup> This is why they were ready to accept the JNA's role in restoring order,<sup>195</sup> pushed for the arm embargo, and resisted recognition. Perhaps the best quote to illustrate the British position on the need to stay out of the Balkans comes from Foreign Secretary Hurd:

I believe (...) the history of this century (...) shows what happens if you go down this line of the European Community having their clients and their favourites and supporting them financially and in other ways and this ends up in ruins. That, I think, was the story of the Balkans before the First World War.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Glaurdic 2013, 560; Glaurdic 2017, 10

<sup>195</sup> C. Hodge 2006, 9

<sup>196</sup> Simms 2001, 13

Stability for London was thus staying out as much as possible, because involving European states would lead to wider rifts across Europe on the example of World War I.

While both France and the United States argued that it might not be a good idea to recognize new states because it would further destabilize Yugoslavia and cause trouble for Gorbachev and East European countries, British policymakers argued the opposite. Foreign Office Minister Hogg suggested in the House Foreign Affairs Committee in November 1991, during the final days of the brutal assaults on Vukovar and Dubrovnik, that the current war in Yugoslavia was an example that had worked in favor of stability.<sup>197</sup> The reasoning was “the more painful the better,” so that such a violent separation would encourage others in central and Eastern Europe to work together rather than imitate Yugoslavs. This was the complete reverse of the argument that the French and Americans were making that suggested contagion rather than a cautionary tale. As far as war and violence were concerned, unlike the French and German policymakers, British policymakers were quite content with the current violence and willing to let things go down if it could scare other secessionist movements elsewhere.

Stability is a vague term that can be interpreted to support almost any position, and it was used in various guises during the Yugoslav wars. The foundation of realism is that it is a theory where rational actors behave to maximize their security, calculations which are based on their national interest and the material distribution of power in the international system. Curiously, realism might only work in this case if it is treated not as a structural theory with homogenizing effects on states’ behavior, but as an emotional belief that can hold widely different contents.

### **The Power of Convictions: Cognitive-Affective Leadership**

In this section, I provide an alternative story to liberal and realist accounts that focuses on convictions, ties to one’s identity, and numerous analogies shaping decision makers’ stances. How events unfolded in Croatia and the emotional reaction that they provoked are also essential to understand the leadership process.

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<sup>197</sup> Simms 2001, 11

### Moving Like A Single Ship: Germany's Lead

After the emotional milestone of reunification, German policymakers as well as most German citizens strongly believed in self-determination, and sought to defend Slovenes and Croats' rights to their own states. Serbia's aggressive behavior shocked them and only reinforced their conviction.

#### *Champions of Self-Determination*

Several scholars recognize the leading role of the principle of self-determination, reinforced by Germany's recent reunification, in orienting its foreign policy in the Balkans.<sup>198</sup> There is also ample evidence of this preoccupation in the speeches of the Chancellor, the Foreign Minister and members of their party. The main justification supporting the shift of the German position on July 1st, 1991, was the self-determination of all people. The Secretary General of the CDU explained this in clear terms: "If we Germans now think that everything may remain as it is in Europe, that we may pursue a policy of the status quo without recognising the right to self-determination of Croatia and Slovenia, we lose our moral and political credibility."<sup>199</sup>

However, self-determination itself is a very malleable principle. It could have been applied just as well to support the unity of Yugoslavia. It is curious that Germans flipped the argument that they used for their reunification to strongly argue for the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The reason for this specific use of self-determination is that Germans identified with Slovenes and Croats, and that they associated the Serbs with the horrors of Nazi Germany.

Indeed, German policymakers shifted their position only after the wars had begun, and the JNA and Serb forces attacked the secessionist republics. Bonn saw the actions of Serbian forces in Yugoslavia as a war of aggression and ethnic cleansing. This behavior "constituted the very antithesis of German post-war understanding of politics, but came quite close to how Germans imagined political life under the Nazis."<sup>200</sup> Self-determination was

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<sup>198</sup> Almond 1994, 237; Gow 1997, 49; Libal 1997, 105; Caplan 2005, 45; Glaurdic 2011, 160

<sup>199</sup> Maull 1995, 117

<sup>200</sup> Maull 1995, 111



thus understood as a shield to provide defense, by way of international legitimacy, against Serb aggression.<sup>201</sup>

This aggression was not just any violence, but an attack on what was considered a group with close ties to Germans. Germans were quickly and directly affected by the conflict, with German journalist Egon Scotland killed on July 26, probably by pro-Serb extremists.<sup>202</sup> Germans and Austrians also felt close ties to both Slovenia and Croatia. Both these countries had a Catholic history and traditionally German speak elites because of their past as part of the Austro-Hungarian empire.<sup>203</sup> These ties endured in many ways during the period prior to the conflict. As previously mentioned, several Croatians were foreign workers in Germany, and Germans knew several Croatian cities well, such as Dubrovnik, because they were preferred spots for tourism. The German public and policymakers were upset by such violence in their former holiday destinations.<sup>204</sup> These were geographically close and well-known places rather than exotic or remote locations.

The idea of self-determination, identification with Slovenes and Croats, and the emotions associated with the violence against them combined to drive German leadership to quickly give up their stance on Yugoslav unity as the war escalated in June and July of 1991. As the crisis escalated further in August, Chancellor Kohl appeared on television to deliver a clear message: “Those responsible, and I am speaking especially to the Serbian side, must know that there can be no economic aid for this country from the European community if the right to self-determination is crushed with tanks.”<sup>205</sup>

In many ways, this movement was not just a shift in the CDU or among the government elites, but in all Germany. Germans moved as one toward condemning Serbia and supporting recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. This view was dominant in all federal parties, the federal elites, in the Länder, and in public opinion writ large. Such widely shared emotional beliefs can be linked to traumatic and fundamental events in German political culture: the memory of Nazi Germany and its similarity to Serbian behavior, the recent and very real consequences of self-determination in the quest for unification, and strong ties to

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<sup>201</sup> Woodward 1995, 183

<sup>202</sup> Libal 1997, 25

<sup>203</sup> Létourneau and Hébert 1996, 66

<sup>204</sup> Almond 1994, 51

<sup>205</sup> Tagliabue 1991a

the republics, especially Croatia. The efforts of the Croat lobby and the Catholic church by themselves did not shift the German position, this position shifted when ideas were infused with emotions as images of the violence unleashed against friends and in familiar locations poured on the news.

*Show Me the Leader: Foreign Minister Genscher*

Because of the consensual view on the need to oppose Serbia and recognize the republics, it is very likely that if someone else had been the Foreign Minister at the time, even from a party of the opposition, he or she would have defended the same position on the international scene. For instance, the Bundestag unanimously adopted a resolution on November 15 identifying the Serbian leadership as responsible for the violence and urging the government to continue its efforts toward recognition.<sup>206</sup> Nevertheless, it is still interesting to look closer at who was the actual leader. Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher stands as both a typical German in this instance, but also a prototypical leader, an ideal representation of what many Germans felt and thought. He embodies both the “being one of us” and “being our champion” aspects of leadership.

As many authors have noted, Genscher’s efforts were crucial in the overall convergence on the policy of recognition.<sup>207</sup> Although she mostly sees the domestic factors as decisive, Susan Woodward concedes that “[p]erhaps the most important factor behind the momentum building under German policy was the personality and political position of Foreign Minister Genscher.”<sup>208</sup>

At age 16, Hans-Dietrich Genscher was conscripted in the army under Nazi Germany although he did not share the regime’s ideology. After the war, like many of his fellow Germans, he was confronted to increasing authoritarian political control in the Soviet area. So, he left Eastern Germany and moved to the part under the Western powers’ control. In Bonn, he then joined the Liberal Party (FDP).

These early experiences had a great impact on Genscher’s beliefs. He writes in his memoirs of the responsibility of the German people:

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<sup>206</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 251

<sup>207</sup> See Burg and Shoup 1999, 92; Conversi 2006, 63

<sup>208</sup> Woodward 1995, 185

I have always considered it my generation's responsibility to prevent a repetition of the events of the period 1933–1945 in Germany, committed by Germans. (...) We must prevent even a relapse into a new nationalism, since it would contain the seeds of every aspect of pathology: condescension and intolerance, contempt for human dignity, xenophobia, and self-centered nationalism at the expense of others.<sup>209</sup>

Genscher rose to the position of Foreign Minister in 1974 and occupied this position for many years. The small FDP party often held the balance of power between the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, so that it remained part of the governing coalition. In November 1989, with protesters unexpectedly crossing the border and taking apart the Berlin Wall, Genscher finally saw a possibility to realize what he had been hoping for years. Like many of his fellow Germans, Genscher dreamed of the reunification of his people. His guiding principle during the negotiation for reunification was the principle of the free self-determination of people, which he hoped would sweep away the Soviet legacy of authoritarian domination over East Germany into the dustbin of history. Before, during, and after the process of unification, Genscher would evoke this principle as the ultimate argument in favor of bringing Germans together.<sup>210</sup> Genscher not only justified his position on self-determination, but employed this principle to justify the type of unification that he wanted. For instance, he argued that truly free and sovereign people have the right to choose their alliances, and thus a unified Germany should be permitted to remain in NATO.<sup>211</sup>

The principle of self-determination was not only fresh in the mind of Genscher when the events of Yugoslavia began to go astray, this idea was also injected with powerful emotions. Genscher described how emotional he was when he gave a speech in the town of Halle, which he had left as a young man, and could only come back many years later as the reunification process was underway.<sup>212</sup> Genscher's story of leaving his hometown, being separated from his family for so long, and yearning for freedom and unity for his people was the story of a great many Germans who could relate to his struggle and emotions.

As the war began in Slovenia and then spread to Croatia, Genscher quickly diagnosed the Serbs with the pathology of intolerant nationalism that he had experienced under National Socialism. Of course, Genscher was also under pressure from members of other parties and

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<sup>209</sup> Genscher 1998, x

<sup>210</sup> Genscher 1998, 130, 296–99, 344, 370–72

<sup>211</sup> Genscher 1998, 371

<sup>212</sup> Genscher 1998, 351

the media to change his stance. When Genscher faced the Foreign Relations Committee of the Bundestag, members of all parties, including his own, criticized the initial EC and German position of supporting Yugoslavia's integrity.<sup>213</sup>

As CSCE chair and German Foreign Minister, on July 1<sup>st</sup> Genscher traveled to Yugoslavia to deliver the message to the federal authorities that violence should not be used against secessionist republics. According to accounts of his meeting with Milosevic in Belgrade, the Serbian President was "tough and uncooperative" during the talks with Genscher, and he was "not at all sensitive to the arguments [made by the German Foreign Minister]."<sup>214</sup> After delivering his message, Genscher wanted to travel to Ljubljana to speak with Slovenian leaders. However, he was prevented from doing so by the JNA and Serb forces who would not guarantee safe travel to the secessionist republic. Clearly angered at what he saw as a deliberate attempt to keep him away from the fighting, he wrote in his memoirs "[q]uite clearly the chairman of the CSCE Council of Ministers was to be prevented from visiting embattled Slovenia."<sup>215</sup> The trip convinced Genscher that Milosevic was waging a war of aggression and that he would use any means at his disposition, including force, to reach his goals.<sup>216</sup> This trip was a "disaster" for German-Serb relations, and destroyed what goodwill Genscher may have had for Belgrade.<sup>217</sup>

Susan Woodward recognizes Genscher's moral outrage, but she writes about Genscher that "his moral revulsion at the use of force in Slovenia coincided too well with his political interests, the economic interests of Germany, and the dominant line of FDP foreign policy."<sup>218</sup> According to her, Genscher wanted to make political capital for himself and his party by asserting diplomatic leadership over the issue, and was worried that the war would disrupt German trade and investments, as well as destabilize the country because of the flow of refugees.<sup>219</sup>

As far as economic interests are concerned, I have shown that the dissolution of Yugoslavia would surely disrupt German trade much more than unity, as well as risking that

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<sup>213</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 185

<sup>214</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 186

<sup>215</sup> Genscher 1998, 495

<sup>216</sup> Genscher 1998, 496

<sup>217</sup> Libal 1997, 16–17

<sup>218</sup> Woodward 1995, 185

<sup>219</sup> Woodward 1995, 185–86

the Yugoslav debt toward Germany would never be paid. As for the dominant line of the party, it was actually the dominant line of all major German parties at the time. The reason why Genscher's political interests coincided so well with German citizens is not "interest" but rather the fact that they shared the same emotional beliefs. Genscher's life experience, struggle for self-determination, liberty and reunification, as well as his identification with Slovenes and Croats and revulsion at Serb behavior were all widely shared in his country. Finally, on the issue of avoiding destabilization of the country because of the flow of refugees, it seems obvious that presenting Germans as the champions of the republics' independence would make it an even more powerful magnet for refugees if the violence escalated, as it did.

The accusation of self-interest is grasping at straws to try to deny that the Foreign Minister's moral outrage and emotional reactions could have been genuine. International leaders are unlikely to keep pushing for a position that is not shared by their partners again and again as Genscher did, using strong rhetoric and threats, and calling for recognition in every forum for months, just to satisfy some vague notion of personal interests. Moreover, Genscher was clearly at the end of his long career – he retired less than a year later at the age of 65 – and it is unlikely that he needed leadership on this issue to make his name. He was a prominent figure in Germany's small FDP party which often held the balance of power, but did not realistically offer him the opportunity of becoming Chancellor. Although strong convictions do not prevent the strategic use of emotions like outrage, the accusation of self-interested behavior seems particularly ill-suited in this example.

Like any good politician, Genscher did attempt to present himself in the best light possible. Because of the importance for Germany of being good European allies, he argued that he had respected the EC deal. He writes in his memoirs that there was no defection, that his colleagues were aware of the imminent German recognition and that he already knew that the Arbitration Commission would reach the same conclusion as the German government on Croatia (which it actually did not when its opinions came out later in January).<sup>220</sup> These claims do not hold. First, if there really was such a clear agreement, why did other EC partners react negatively to Germany's recognition? Second, it does not make sense for the EC to decide to ask the Badinter Commission to verify which secessionist republics satisfy the EC's

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<sup>220</sup> Genscher 1998, 514–15

conditions and also agree at the same time that Germany could announce recognition even before the Commission's opinion was released. Genscher's attempt at the time to explain that there was no disagreement by stating that the Commission's findings were only "an element of appreciation [and] not of decision" for recognition is not credible.<sup>221</sup> Advice or appreciation is not useful if you make the decision before it is given. Finally, as Genscher probably knew, despite his claim that surely the Commission would recognize Croatia's exemplary protections for minorities, the Commission actually reported that it failed to give the required guarantees. The German move thus served to pre-empt the Commission's opinion, and make recognition unavoidable.

Why did Genscher and Kohl risk alienating partners at a decisive moment for the construction of Europe? This does not seem like the kind of bet of careful policymakers attempting to maximize their interests, but rather the emotional action of leaders who are exhausted after months of appalling images from the war, frustrated with allies who pretended to cooperate when they actually attempted to undercut them at the UN, and willing to wait no more, being ready to do the right thing unilaterally if necessary. Like many Germans, after months of shocking TV footage and incoming dire news, Genscher was "appalled by the international passivity with regard to the revival of certain Nazi methods."<sup>222</sup>

In the following sections, I detail the explanation for French, British and American stances during the conflict, and what made them shift their initial reluctance to move ahead with recognition.

### French and British Followership

French and British policymakers' reluctance to recognize Slovenia and Croatia are grounded on identification with Serbia and emotional beliefs that framed the conflict as the resurgence of ancient hatreds. Despite these similarities, top decision makers drew on different experiences and analogies, so that France favored humanitarian interventions while British policymakers preferred to avoid any involvement.

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<sup>221</sup> Caplan 2005, 39

<sup>222</sup> Libal 1997, 118

*Nos amis serbes*

Both the Élysée and 10 Downing Street, as well as Whitehall and the Quai D'Orsay, saw the Serbs as an important historical ally. The Serbs had much sympathy in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century for their revolt against the Ottoman empire, and later for opposing the Central and Axis powers during the two World Wars.<sup>223</sup> However, my goal here is not to suggest that there were primordialist or historically determined ties between the French and British peoples, on the one hand, and the Serb people on the other. Rather, I wish to show how policymakers drew from emotional memories and specific historical interpretations to understand the conflict.

In France, President Mitterrand consistently avoided presenting Serbia as an aggressor, and allegedly declared to French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy “As long as I live, never, you hear me, never will France wage war against Serbia.”<sup>224</sup> The French President was ready to go as far as to reconsider the borders of Croatia to accommodate the Serb minority, and declared that he understood the feelings of Serbs who did not want to be in an independent Croat state.<sup>225</sup> In December 1991, after months of Serb aggression against Croatia, and when asked who was responsible for the war in the Balkans, he answered “let’s not waste time doing this.”<sup>226</sup>

The French President came under fire for his stance, and still defended his position. In an interview in 1994, he declared “I love the Serbs, yes, and so?”<sup>227</sup> To Bernard Kouchner, he explained his attachment to the Serbian cause: “I saw arrive in the German camps the most unhappy, the poorest, the most beaten of prisoners: they were the Serbs, the only ones to have resisted against Nazi divisions and to successfully liberate themselves.”<sup>228</sup> Mitterrand had fought and been made prisoner during the Second World War, and so he had powerful emotional memories of the Serbs as heroes of History to back his beliefs that the Serbs demands were legitimate. In many ways, he saw the Serbs as the Serbs saw themselves, as victims who were reproached by the international community “even before they could

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<sup>223</sup> Conversi 1996, 250–53; C. Hodge 2006, 3

<sup>224</sup> Hatto 2006, 79

<sup>225</sup> Tardy 1999, 199

<sup>226</sup> Trean 1991

<sup>227</sup> Canivez 1998, 74

<sup>228</sup> Canivez 1998, 74

exist.”<sup>229</sup> Ironically, as Patrice Canivez points out, this blinded Mitterrand to the fact that Serbian conquests were based on the same principles that the Nazis that he had fought had followed; the idea of bringing together all the members of an ethnic group in a larger and purified state.<sup>230</sup>

More broadly, the Serbian attempt to keep the country together and centralize it reflected French culture favoring centralized unitary states. When Yugoslav President Markovic visited Paris in May 1991, a document of the Quai D’Orsay emphasizing the “brotherhood of arms during the First and Second World War” of Yugoslavia and France mistakenly referred to Yugoslavia as a “unitary state” that is “rich in diversity and the partner waiting for Europe.”<sup>231</sup> France projected its identity on Serbia so strongly that it forgot that Yugoslavia was a federation. The lens through which Paris saw the crisis at the outset was a “étatiste-cum-Bonapartist attachment to the Yugoslav state and the Serbian cause”.<sup>232</sup>

Hubert Védrine, Mitterrand’s strategic adviser, defended the President of being a “serbophile.” He rather sees the Paris media and public intellectuals as having an anti-Serb bias: “Why Serbs more than the others, since all the leaders of the new Republics were communists?”<sup>233</sup> He writes that the public wanted to punish guilty actors rather than look for solutions. “Since the battles in Krajina, they [telespectators] only see a Serb aggressor and a Croat victim. For them, the choice is clear.”<sup>234</sup> Védrine seems completely oblivious to the fact that the Serbs could be seen as the main aggressor, even though they had superior military force, and were laying waste to cities like Dubrovnik which were outside of the Serb-populated areas.

France’s partners across the Channel publicly adopted a rhetoric of interests: British Foreign Minister Hurd declared that “[w]e had no strategic interest in the Balkans, no commercial interests, no selfish interest at all. We simply wished that quiet should return.”<sup>235</sup> However, British policymakers also adopted positions that favored the Serbs, like the French they refused to attribute blame in the conflict, but also pushed for policies favorable to the

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<sup>229</sup> Canivez 1998, 76

<sup>230</sup> Canivez 1998, 86

<sup>231</sup> Stark 1992, 339–40

<sup>232</sup> Gow 1997, 158

<sup>233</sup> Védrine 1996, 603

<sup>234</sup> Védrine 1996, 614

<sup>235</sup> Glaurdic 2017, 8–9



Serbs like the UN arms embargo. I have also discussed how British policymakers emphasized that “all sides”, including Milosevic, had to give the green light for an interposition force, and that they saw a “role” for the JNA in bringing order back.<sup>236</sup>

During the Second World War, although the British government eventually backed Tito’s partisan in resisting German occupation, the less successful monarch King Peter II – who was on the pro-Chetnik side – went in exile to London, where “a strong pro-Chetnik diaspora congregated around his person and from there exerted a certain influence.”<sup>237</sup> Combined with other British historical currents that were strongly pro-Serb, notably due to Rebecca West’s best-selling pro-Serb and anti-Croat and Slovene book *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*,<sup>238</sup> there was a sound basis for the resonance of Belgrade’s propaganda when the conflict broke out in Yugoslavia.

First, the Foreign Office (FCO) at the time received its information on the country mostly from the Serb side in Belgrade. The information was incomplete and truncated in favor of the Serbs because this is where the British embassy was, and most officials in the FCO had ties to Serbian officials, but not to representatives from the other communities.<sup>239</sup>

Second, the conservative circles in power took advice from sources of information that were close to the Serb nationalists. Daniele Conversi has detailed how advisers and journalists close to the Serbian cause had privileged ties and exchanged information during the conflict with the Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd and the Defence Minister Malcolm Rifkind.<sup>240</sup> This was also the case for Lord Carrington.<sup>241</sup> The Serbian minority in Britain and its pro-Serbian allies was not a constituency that could decisively shift an election result, nor did they have a superiority in resources. Rather than a sinister Serbian lobby conspiracy, it is more plausible that British decision makers listened to the pro-Serb arguments and chose such people as advisers because they also shared the same “serbophile” beliefs. As diplomat Sir Reginald Hibbert described it, officials in the FCO had a “general, inherited, belief ... that Serbia held the key to stability in the Balkans.”<sup>242</sup> This is also why they were content to get

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<sup>236</sup> C. Hodge 2006, 9

<sup>237</sup> Conversi 1996, 254

<sup>238</sup> Conversi 1996, 252

<sup>239</sup> Conversi 1996, 261

<sup>240</sup> Conversi 1996, 258–60

<sup>241</sup> Conversi 1996, 260

<sup>242</sup> Simms 2006

their information directly from Belgrade. French and British decision makers also shared the same reading of the conflict as the resurgence of ancient hatreds.

### *Ancient Hatreds*

*The black shadow of the past will cover our hopes.*

– President François Mitterrand<sup>243</sup>

At the end of November 1991, after the massive destruction of Dubrovnik and Vukovar, Mitterrand declared in an interview to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*:

What I know, is that the history of Serbia and Croatia has been for a long time full of such drama. In particular during the Second World War where many Serbs died in Croat camps. As you know, Croatia was part of the Nazi block, not Serbia. After the death of Tito, the latent conflict between Serbs and Croats was bound to erupt.<sup>244</sup>

The idea behind this quote, other than reminding audiences that Serbia had been on the right side of history, was that Tito's communist rule had temporarily held Yugoslavia together, an artificial creation after the First World War, and that now that Tito was gone and communism discredited, ancient and "latent" conflicts would bubble to the surface. In the words of the French President "We are now in front of a product of History, which meant that for centuries these populations fought each other."<sup>245</sup> Foreign Minister Roland Dumas at the time also emphasized the fear of the "Europe of the tribes" in his statements, suggesting that primordial hatreds had taken over in Yugoslavia.<sup>246</sup> Even after recognizing the right to self-determination, Mitterrand added that the right to independence should not be confused with "the anarchy of the tribes of old."<sup>247</sup> European initiatives had a role in taming the passions of these "historical antinomies."<sup>248</sup> Other officials in French state decision circles shared this interpretation. Hubert Védrine writes in his book that thinking about war "had been for

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<sup>243</sup> Cited in Vernet 1998, 40

<sup>244</sup> Wood 1994, 132

<sup>245</sup> Canivez 1998, 61

<sup>246</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 180

<sup>247</sup> Mitterrand 1991b

<sup>248</sup> Mitterrand 1991a; Trean 1991

centuries the mentality of the peoples or nations of this region, obsessed by the weight of the past and the spirit of revenge...”<sup>249</sup>

In the words of British Minister of State Douglas Hogg, the dispute was “largely ethnic and historic.”<sup>250</sup> Several British policymakers thus read the situation with the same lens as their colleagues across the Channel. This led to an equivalency between the actions of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, or as Lord Carrington himself put it “all impossible people (...) as bad as each other, and there are just more Serbs.”<sup>251</sup> British policymakers were not even enthusiastic about the EC playing any role, even in negotiations, because “You cannot negotiate anything without the Yugoslavs who are determined to kill each other. We have somehow to persuade them that Europeans do not behave like that.”<sup>252</sup> Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd defends himself in his *Memoirs* that he “never believed that those who fought the wars in Croatia and Bosnia were historically bound to hate and kill one another.”<sup>253</sup> However, he actually painted the ethnic conflict in the region in similar terms during the crisis, suggesting for instance that local actors were focused on “the passions of politics”<sup>254</sup> and that Yugoslavia was created “to solve a problem of different people living in the same part of the Balkans with a long history of peoples fighting each other.”<sup>255</sup>

As Conversi has convincingly shown, the ancient hatreds frame led to moral relativism and equidistance, where all sides were to blame in a “civil war,” a stance that protected the Serbs and supported non-interventionism.<sup>256</sup> This rhetoric was based on racist assumptions and falsehoods pinning the civilized Europeans against the emotionally immature and barbaric tribes of the Balkans. This thesis in its extreme form would later be put in print in Robert Kaplan’s book *Balkan Ghosts*.<sup>257</sup> This reasoning has been amply criticized by authors who have shown the rich history of tolerance in the Balkans, the fluidity and complexity of ethnic identities, the use of violence by modern politicians to create the conflict in ethnic terms, and that the only historical instance of widespread Serbo-Croat

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<sup>249</sup> Védrine 1996, 602

<sup>250</sup> Gow 1997, 175

<sup>251</sup> Glaurdic 2017, 10

<sup>252</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 199

<sup>253</sup> Hurd 2004, 493

<sup>254</sup> Hurd 1991a

<sup>255</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 175–76

<sup>256</sup> Conversi 1996, 245

<sup>257</sup> Kaplan 1994

violence was perpetrated by the Ustase puppet regime imposed by Nazi Germany after their invasion of Yugoslavia during the Second World War.<sup>258</sup> Claims that there had been centuries of wars between Serbs and Croats are pure fiction.

Unlike the French, British policymakers also drew from an analogy that hit close to home and made them reluctant to involve British forces in any way in the Yugoslav conflicts.

*Just More Troubles: The Northern Ireland Analogy*

Northern Ireland had been the theater of a violent conflict between Catholic Irish nationalists and Protestant unionists since the end of the 1960s. For decades, the British army occupied the region and was the target of guerrilla-style attacks by the Irish Republicans. The conflict affectively marked both the public at large and policymakers. The Northern Ireland analogy was applied to the wars in Yugoslavia, as ethnic conflicts that would not be solved short of a long, costly, and unpopular intervention.<sup>259</sup>

Most British policymakers at the time had their formative years during the crisis of Suez and Vietnam, which gave them clear examples of how foreign intervention can go wrong. But it was the Northern Ireland case that was the closest to home and most prescient in their minds. Because the Prime Minister at the time, John Major, had little experience in foreign affairs, he largely deferred to his Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, who was a recognized authority on foreign matters, to handle Yugoslavia.

After a career in the diplomatic service, Douglas Hurd became chief of the political office of Prime Minister Edward Heath from 1968 to 1973, and was then elected as a conservative Member of Parliament (MP) in 1974. He would later in the 1980s become Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and was involved in negotiating the Anglo-Irish Agreement.<sup>260</sup> When he was MP in 1975, he published a novel titled *Shoot to Kill* in which the main protagonist was a young Conservative MP exploiting dissent over Ireland to launch a popular crusade to “bring the boys home.”<sup>261</sup> Hurd had seen something similar occur in 1973 after the death of the first British soldier in Northern Ireland, when parents of a serving

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<sup>258</sup> See H. R. J. Cooper 1993; Malcolm 1993; Gagnon 2004

<sup>259</sup> Macleod 1996a, 87; Gow 1997, 176

<sup>260</sup> Dixon 2000, 114

<sup>261</sup> Dixon 2000, 110

soldier launched a petition to withdraw the troops. In one year, the petition gathered 120,000 signatures.<sup>262</sup>

When the conflict erupted in Slovenia and then moved to Croatia, Northern Ireland had an important place in the mind of the Foreign Secretary. Arguing against an interposition force, Hurd declared during the EC emergency meeting at The Hague, in September 1991, “We have experience of fighting from village to village and street to street. We have been in Northern Ireland for 22 years.”<sup>263</sup> Hurd says in the book *The Search for Peace*:

During the years of turmoil in Bosnia I was often reminded of a big sheet which used to hang in my office in Stormont Castle when I was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in 1984-1985. It was a street plan of the city of Belfast mapped out in a confusion of Orange and Green. It looked like one of those modern paintings which consist of two pots of paint thrown at a canvas ... No redrawing of the map would produce a neat line combining geography and politics, with each community living in tribal purity within its own boundaries.<sup>264</sup>

Thus, the Ireland analogy was literally hanging in his mind in the form of this map, and the idea suggested that there could be no solution and only negative consequences of the UK for getting involved in the matter. Hurd turned to fiction to express his views (and emotions) again in 1993, when he published a short story in *The Observer* in which he imagines a movement in the UK for the withdrawal of British troops after they had suffered casualties in Yugoslavia.<sup>265</sup>

Hurd would often distance himself from the Kuwait analogy, showing that rather than a “simple act of aggression,” Yugoslavia was more complicated and concerned “the unwillingness or inability of the different communities inside Bosnia to live together.”<sup>266</sup> These ideas not only warned against any involvement, even if it was only recognition, but also denied that any one of the belligerents could be cast as responsible for the wars. During the crisis, Hurd consistently refused to identify Serbia as the aggressor, and he would defend the arm embargo by arguing that those who wanted to lift it wanted a “level killing field” while he rather wanted an end to the killing.<sup>267</sup> Of course, in the meantime, the embargo

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<sup>262</sup> Dixon 2000, 112

<sup>263</sup> Simms 2001, 10

<sup>264</sup> Cited in Simms 2001, 10

<sup>265</sup> Dixon 2000, 115

<sup>266</sup> Simms 2001, 11

<sup>267</sup> Hurd 2004, 508

meant an “unlevel” killing field. The ideas of ethnic hatred, the bias favorable to the Serbs, and analogy of Northern Ireland fused to make the conflict an intractable, unresolvable *mess* that had to be avoided at all cost.

Despite the fact that Hurd was the leader of British foreign policy on these issues, other policymakers at the time had similar experiences. For instance, Lord Carrington was Defense Secretary from 1970 to 1974, when the “Troubles” grew in intensity and the British army’s role became controversial. British Minister for the Armed Forces Archie Hamilton may also have had Ulster in mind when he declared that a WEU force in the region would mean the EC being “sucked into a quagmire.”<sup>268</sup>

It is possible that British policymakers also identified with the need to “keep the country together” that they had felt with regard to Northern Ireland, which explains why they thought that Belgrade had the right to use any means to secure its territorial integrity. British Foreign Secretary Hurd maintained his stance despite strong opposition in the House of Commons against their approach to the conflict. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Scottish National Party, itself a secessionist party, was particularly vocal against supporting Belgrade, but Liberal Democrats and Labour MPs also objected to this position.<sup>269</sup> Other prominent British personalities, such as former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and philosopher Karl Popper, voiced strong opposition to the government’s position and argued that the Serbs were the aggressors.<sup>270</sup> There was therefore no consensus on the government’s position, it was the specific experiences, emotional beliefs and preferred analogies of the policymakers at the head of the British government at the time that oriented their foreign policy. A different party in power, or a different head of state at the time, would likely have had a different view.

### *Suspicion of Germany and Multilateral Grandstanding*

Both British and French policymakers, because they reasoned in part with analogies to the World Wars, were suspicious of German hegemony. Mitterrand deplored in June 1991 that there was a reconstitution of “the political map before 1914 or 1919”, an “unacceptable scenario.”<sup>271</sup> Mitterrand also told the British Foreign Secretary that it was “fourteen all over

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<sup>268</sup> C. Hodge 2006, 11

<sup>269</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 189

<sup>270</sup> Conversi 1996, 261–62

<sup>271</sup> Vernet 1998, 39

again” referring to 1914 and the need for their states to check German ambitions.<sup>272</sup> The French President was comfortable in public to state that “Germany considers itself the legitimate heir to the Austro-hungarian Empire, and thus continues the old Austrian rancor against the Serbs.”<sup>273</sup> He repeatedly drew parallels between Germany’s behavior and its “instinctive sympathies” from the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>274</sup> According to François Sheer, then General Secretary of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Quai D’Orsay saw German policies as an “unconscious revenge for the situation immediately after the First World War”, a kind of *Shadenfreude* as the failure of Yugoslavia.<sup>275</sup>

Foreign Secretary Hurd emphasized many times the warning that “[a]t the beginning of this century the Western European powers were rivals in the Balkans; they supported different horses and their rivalry led to war.”<sup>276</sup> He also reasoned by analogy to these earlier wars, and stated that the “underlying German sympathy for Croatia went back to the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and less reputedly to the help which ruthless Croat nationalists had given to the Axis in the Second World War.”<sup>277</sup> The key policymakers in London and Paris therefore had a strong suspicion of Germany that was not far from the virulent comments in their respective press.

Despite their suspicion of Germany, or maybe because of it, French policymakers valued the construction of a common European foreign policy at Maastricht and emphasized multilateralism. They wanted to develop the nascent EU’s capability, including in matters of security and defense, which is why they pushed to build up the WEU as a possible military arm of Europe, rather than ask NATO to act. France was not so much anti-American, but wanted to show itself as the leader of a strengthened Europe. The French are often specifically associated with a foreign policy of prestige or grandeur, where they seek to preserve their rank as a great power on the international scene.<sup>278</sup> In the words of Tardy, France is “obsessed with its rank and has an extroverted conception of its security.”<sup>279</sup> Using the Yugoslav crisis to develop WEU capabilities, going to the UNSC where they had veto

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<sup>272</sup> Hurd 2004, 495

<sup>273</sup> Védérine 1996, 625

<sup>274</sup> Mitterrand 1992

<sup>275</sup> Sheer 1998, 94

<sup>276</sup> Hurd 1991b

<sup>277</sup> Hurd 2004, 496

<sup>278</sup> Macleod 1996b, 48

<sup>279</sup> Tardy 1999, xxiii

power, and suggesting a French-led interposition force were all means for France to achieve this goal. Later in the crisis, when the French foreign minister offered an opportunity for the Quai D'Orsay to work with their colleagues at the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a set of conditions for recognition, this was again a way for France to take the lead. French policymakers had given up on a united Yugoslavia, but they could still argue that they were the ones who had pushed for the conditions associated with recognition and agreed by the EC in Brussels in December 1991.

Every French initiative appears as a bid for leadership – and showmanship – rather than a real engagement stemming from deep convictions. Because an interposition force required the acceptance of all the parties to the conflict, and French policymakers knew that the Serbs would never agree, it was an empty gesture. When Mitterrand agreed that self-determination was important and took a step toward recognition, he also immediately began to question the current borders of the Yugoslav republics, especially in Krajina.<sup>280</sup> This was certainly not a move favorable to regional stability: it opened the way for further secession and border change across the country, and emboldened the Serbs in their ambitions to control as much territory as possible. Finally, neither France nor the wider EC followed the conditional guidelines proudly established by the French: Croatia did not meet the requirements and was recognized, Macedonia met the requirements and was not recognized because of the fierce opposition of Greece. The entire process of conditional recognition was also ridiculed by Germany's earlier recognition, even before the Arbitration Commission had revealed its opinion. The real drivers of French policy were not humanitarianism, willingness to stabilize the region, nor was it concerned with norms of human and minority rights. French policymakers wanted to appear as the leader while doing as little as possible.

Both French and British policymakers identified with the Serbs, saw the conflict through the frame of ancient hatreds, and as a result, first wanted to hold Yugoslavia together despite the JNA and Serbia's aggression, and later sought to delay recognition for as long as possible. The measures that they advocated were either empty gestures, like the interposition force, or moves that actually reinforced the Serbs, as the arms embargo did in September. From October and especially November 1991, a torrent of new information continually eroded the Franco-British stance against recognition.

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<sup>280</sup> Stark 1992, 345



*The Road to Recognition: Gaining Momentum*

*The destruction of Vukovar and the bombardments of Dubrovnik helped the recognition of Croatia more than the joint efforts of Kohl and Genscher.*

– Mihailo Cernobnja, former Serbian Minister<sup>281</sup>

New developments from October to December reinforced the German position and undermined the British-French one. Although there was not a clear-cut event that provoked the shift, it was an accumulation and steady erosion of the non-recognition stance that eventually made it fall apart.

Already in October, the fierce Serbian attack undermined the non-recognition consensus and strengthened German efforts. Several signs in late October and November illustrate the outrage and outgrouping of Serbia in the West. A NATO statement at the time directly condemned the attacks by Yugoslav and Serbian forces, calling them “out of all proportion to any provocation, cease-fire or requirement to protect Serbian communities or army garrisons.”<sup>282</sup> As another example of the shifting positions, a British FCO memorandum condemned the “cynical aggression against Dubrovnik in October and the obstructive tactics employed by Serbia at the October discussions.”<sup>283</sup> In the words of Richard Caplan, recognition was “gathering momentum” as a result of the “excessive force” employed by Belgrade.<sup>284</sup> With the sanctions being yet another measure which failed to abate the violence, “[t]he train towards recognition has already started to roll,” as Foreign Minister Genscher said at the time.<sup>285</sup> Without explicitly condemning the Serbs, the British Foreign Minister declared in the House of Common that the siege and attacks on Dubrovnik “can be justified by no political argument.”<sup>286</sup>

On November 18, images of the destruction of Vukovar and description of Serb tactics poured on the news in all European countries. The world was especially shocked when

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<sup>281</sup> Quoted in Canivez 1998, 69

<sup>282</sup> Riding 1991e

<sup>283</sup> Caplan 2005, 22

<sup>284</sup> Caplan 2005, 22

<sup>285</sup> Riding 1991e

<sup>286</sup> Hurd 1991a

two days later, Serb forces summarily executed all civilians and former defenders who were at the city's hospital.<sup>287</sup> The consequences of these developments were to make open support for the Serbs very difficult, make the Croatian struggle for independence more sympathetic to audiences and policymakers, and undermine the argument that worse would happen in the case of recognition. According to Glaurdic, the mood shifted in the EC shortly after these reports and German policymakers actively worked to take advantage of these circumstances.<sup>288</sup> The Federal Republic received Bosnia's President and Croatia's foreign minister in Bonn, and Chancellor Kohl reached an agreement with Christian-Democratic leaders of Belgium, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands that they would also recognize the republics before Christmas.<sup>289</sup> Hubert Védrine speaks of an "emotional wave" submerging German public opinion, and he writes that European partners had to accept recognition because "their public opinions [were] revolted by images of the bloody fighting of Dubrovnik and Vukovar."<sup>290</sup>

A confidential report at the beginning of December by the EC monitors in Croatia strengthened once again the German stance in the transatlantic community. The report's impact was enhanced by the fact that it was leaked in the press. It blamed the JNA as a "cowardly" army who only fights for itself and uses its warships to fire "on a defenseless city from a safe distance," referring to the siege of Dubrovnik.<sup>291</sup>

Despite these developments, France and the United Kingdom were still trying to find ways to delay recognition. The French President made his declaration that Croatia had belonged to the Nazi bloc, and both France and the UK attempted to undermine Genscher's plan by going to the UN. However, reports from behind the scenes show that their resistance was losing steam, with sources from the British government admitting that recognition now appeared "unstoppable."<sup>292</sup>

On December 7, the Arbitration Commission released its first opinion which further reinforced the German argument: it declared that Yugoslavia was a state in the process of

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<sup>287</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 255

<sup>288</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 256

<sup>289</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 257–58

<sup>290</sup> Védrine 1996, 598–99, 614

<sup>291</sup> Sudetic 1991g

<sup>292</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 258–59

dissolution.<sup>293</sup> It thus ruled against Belgrade's arguments and fell in line with Germany's analysis of the situation, to the surprise of French policymakers.

From October to December, a cascade of events and new information all flowed in the same direction and eroded the Franco-British stance. Gow writes that the French stance was "downgraded as the conflict continued and Belgrade's culpability in it" became clear.<sup>294</sup> British policymakers were in an uncomfortable position because they were the only major player to have rejected the WEU interposition force in September. They both risked being increasingly isolated in the EC and accused of being responsible for the October and November bloodshed.<sup>295</sup> Glaurdic also argues that the JNA's brutality "convinced the bulk of the international community that the only path to a resolution of the crisis lay in the recognition of the Yugoslav republics as independent states."<sup>296</sup> In the British House of Commons, public concerns were reverberated and amplified in passionate speeches criticizing the government's position. Conservative MP Patrick Cormack, for instance, rose on December 12 to express his "mounting anger" at the "disregard for life" and called on the government to "stop acting as an honest broker between victim and aggressor" in a case where "the responsibility for the carnage and destruction is too overwhelming to be ignored."<sup>297</sup>

### *Striking the Deal*

When the EC foreign ministers met on December 15-17 in Brussels, French and British as well as the Dutch foreign ministers hoped to secure further delays for recognition as their best possible outcome, but now that most other EC members had rallied to the German position, this proved difficult. The French solution was to advocate for conditional recognition associated with human and minority rights conditions. The Germans had accepted this process which was the initiative of the French Foreign Minister, but they would not agree to further delay. German, Italian and Danish foreign ministers argued that the two-month ultimatum was over, the time for delays had passed, they reminded their colleagues

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<sup>293</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 260

<sup>294</sup> Gow 1997, 159-60

<sup>295</sup> C. Hodge 2006, 11

<sup>296</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 249

<sup>297</sup> Cited in Ljubic 2010, 71

that the Badinter Commission had recognized that Yugoslavia was dissolving, and that the argument that recognition would make it worse was absurd after the horrors unleashed by the JNA and Serb forces.

Germany's final push and defection, spearheaded by Genscher and Kohl, was motivated by a complex blend of intense feelings: disappointment that their allies had attempted to undercut their diplomatic efforts, mistrust toward France and the UK, anticipating that they might find ways to argue for further delays, and outrage at the behavior of the Serb-JNA forces on the ground. Germany, and several countries close to it like Italy, thus chose to make a stand before Christmas, as they had promised. In the interval between this recognition and the January 15 date that had been set for the EC to decide on recognition, further developments made recognition unavoidable.

#### *Apparent Peace and Outrage*

At the beginning of January, the ceasefire negotiated by UN envoy Vance seemed to hold for the first time. As a result, it was not possible anymore to associate hasty German recognition with a worsening of hostilities. And then, on January 8, 1992, a MiG plane of the JNA shot down a helicopter of the EC monitoring mission, killing five Europeans. The direct attack on EC monitors, although probably accidental, directly affected the ingroup and outraged EC policymakers, which made the opposition to recognition nearly impossible.<sup>298</sup> With no arguments left and shared outrage, reluctant followers in London and Paris agreed to recognize the new republics.

Recognition was still a difficult choice to make, it was seen as a defeat and a bad decision. British and French policymakers attempted to downplay their decision, notably by declaring that they would wait to establish full diplomatic relations with the secessionist republics. Védérine described recognition as “one of the most painful choice for France during these years” that left the French diplomacy “depressed, as we could say, it seemed for a moment to give up.”<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Woodward 1995, 136

<sup>299</sup> Védérine 1996, 620

## US Followership: The Vietnam Syndrome

In November, when President Bush went to the Netherlands and announced sanctions against Yugoslavia, he attributed the “civil war” to nationalism, “old, stale prejudices” that “teaches people intolerance and suspicion.”<sup>300</sup> The Bush Administration chipped in on the ancient hatreds rhetoric. They shared their allies’ view that all the communities were equally responsible and, as the President would later declare regarding Bosnia, this was a “convoluted conflict that grows out of age-old animosities [and] century-old feuds.”<sup>301</sup>

Even though President Bush referenced the Holocaust to speak about the Serbs’ actions during the conflict, another conflict was at the forefront of his mind:

Before I’d commit American troops to battle, I want to know what’s the beginning, what’s the objective and how the objective is going to be achieved and what’s the end and I learned and I’m old enough to remember Vietnam, I’m old enough to remember World War Two having participated in it.<sup>302</sup>

There were therefore two main analogies that could be applied to the conflict and suggested different courses of action. In August 1990, Saddam Hussein’s Iraq launched an invasion of Kuwait. The dictator wanted to avoid paying the debts he had incurred toward the smaller neighboring state and obtain an easy victory after the war with Iran did not turn as he had hoped. The Bush Administration denounced Hussein as the new Hitler and made the analogy of the current situation with appeasement at Munich. The President himself had participated in the Second World War and made the analogy between Hussein and Hitler.<sup>303</sup> This frame emboldened US policymakers. The President mobilized his diplomatic networks to bring together a broad coalition and intervene directly in order to strike Iraqi forces and push them out of Kuwait. According to American policymakers, the operation signaled the beginning of a new era where wars of conquest would be no more tolerated.

When Yugoslavia began to fall apart in the summer of 1991, the Vietnam analogy quickly won over the World War II and Gulf War analogies. In the Gulf War, the villain was clear and could be demonized as he was a widely hated dictator responsible for going to war against Iran and ordering genocide against the Iraqi Kurds, a swift strike and intervention

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<sup>300</sup> Greenhouse 1991a

<sup>301</sup> Power 2002, 282

<sup>302</sup> Almond 1994, 254–55

<sup>303</sup> Yetiv 2011, 61–77

could chase the Iraqis away, and the simple situation gave a robust international consensus to back the US lead. Things were very different in Yugoslavia. The villains were less obvious, populations were mixed on Yugoslav territory (the President saw the problem as a “civil war”), and the solution implied not only a strong initial strike, but perhaps months or years of troops on the ground to separate belligerents. The fact that this was a country internally divided rather than an external invasion, and that most political leaders in the country were former communist leaders surely worked to prime the Vietnam analogy. According to Hatto, it was the word “quagmire,” classical Vietnam vocabulary, that was used by US officials to discuss the situation in the Balkans should the US intervene.<sup>304</sup>

In the Administration, General Colin Powell, who had received a Bronze Star and Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam, and was now Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, strongly advocated against any involvement based on his experience in Vietnam. He argued against a mission with “unclear purposes” to intervene in a conflict “with deep ethnic and religious roots that go back a thousand years.”<sup>305</sup>

Most members of the Bush Administration did not identify with any of the protagonists and felt the conflict to be remote. A few members of the Administration had ties to Serbia. Lawrence Eagleburger, US Deputy Secretary of State and advisor to the Secretary of State on matters related to Yugoslavia, had been US Ambassador in Belgrade. Eagleburger had established a good relationship with Milosevic and had important business ties to Serbia.<sup>306</sup> Brent Scowcroft, the President’s advisor on the National Security Council, also had ties to Serbia.<sup>307</sup> For the most part, especially for the President and the Secretary of State, they did not identify with any of the belligerents in the conflict. This explains why US policymakers condemned Serbia’s aggression earlier in the crisis, but were also unmotivated in doing more to stop the hostilities.

The US Administration had “scant sympathy for Slovene and Croat separatists” and “feared that any involvement of U.S. ground forces (...) would lead to a creeping, eventually massive U.S. engagement”.<sup>308</sup> The Administration was happy to let Europeans handle the

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<sup>304</sup> Hatto 2006, 43

<sup>305</sup> Power 2002, 285

<sup>306</sup> Gow 1997, 205

<sup>307</sup> Gow 1997, 205

<sup>308</sup> Gompert 1996, 124, 131

matter and stay away from a situation where “no good policy options existed”.<sup>309</sup> Or in the words of Secretary of State Baker, “We don’t have a dog in this fight.”<sup>310</sup> When Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence, although they did so at a moment when the Yugoslav institutions had stopped working and negotiations had no chance of moving forward, the US accused the secessionist republics of being responsible for the instability and war. The leaders of both republics had promised Baker, during his June 1991 trip, that they would not make any unilateral move toward secession. The Secretary of State felt betrayed when they declared independence only a few days later, and he thus placed them just as much in the outgroup as he did with the Serbs. It took several months and a stark increase in Serbian aggression before Baker began to speak about Serbia as the main responsible for the war.

#### *From Coincidence to Causal Attribution*

When the US Administration shifted its position in March 1992 and agreed to follow the EC’s recognition of Bosnia with recognition of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia, information filtered in the media about the Secretary of States’ emotions. Although the official explanation for the long delay in supporting recognition was that the US preferred to wait for the UN force to deploy, a US official told the media that Baker did not want to reward the Croats and the Slovenes. The official said, referring to Baker, “[i]t still burns him that they promised him to take no unilateral steps when he went there and five days later turned around and declared secession, that they lied to him.”<sup>311</sup>

Despite these emotions, American policymakers adjusted their beliefs and now thought that recognition would have a positive impact on the conflict. The fact that EC recognition coincided with the success of the UN-negotiated ceasefire, the first real de-escalation of the conflict in Croatia, convinced American policymakers that recognition could have the effect that German leaders said it would have. The US President announced that his intent with recognition was to “help negotiations among the warring parties that are continuing under the auspices of the European Community.”<sup>312</sup> The US Administration felt that recognition could help the peace process. The White House spokeswoman said that

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<sup>309</sup> Gow 1997, 204

<sup>310</sup> Silber and Little 1997, 201

<sup>311</sup> Binder 1992b

<sup>312</sup> Binder 1992c

recognition “can contribute to the peace process.”<sup>313</sup> Another US official seemed optimistic, and declared, “[w]e think that it’s critical that you move with us with regard to Bosnia, because if we don’t, we may have stopped a war in one location, we may now see a war, perhaps an even worse war, in the other. So, we think we’ve accomplished that as well.”<sup>314</sup>

The Bush Administration confused true cessation of hostilities with a stalemate and preparation for war on another front in Bosnia. Contrary to what they had argued for months, they now saw recognition “as a way to reinforce stability.”<sup>315</sup> Following the “success” in Slovenia and Croatia of abating the war after the European recognition, American policymakers reasoned by analogy and believed that recognizing Bosnia would similarly prevent Serb aggression and stabilize the region.<sup>316</sup> According to Burg and Shoup, “the U.S. policy toward Bosnia was influenced by the apparent success of the German strategy toward Croatia.”<sup>317</sup>

One of the key advocates for the recognition of Bosnia was US Ambassador Warren Zimmerman. With the secession of Slovenia and Croatia, he argued that Bosnia would face the threat of further aggression from Milosevic alone.<sup>318</sup> The US Administration changed its position, seeing that Serbian aggression would not be stopped by withholding recognition, and rallying to their European counterparts on seeing stability – especially to preserve the boundaries of Bosnia intact – as more likely by recognition rather than continuing non-recognition.<sup>319</sup>

The US national interest or disinterest with Yugoslavia did not change in March 1992. What changed was the perception that stability was best served by withholding recognition because of the ceasefire and UNPROFOR deployment in February, and a dampening of the emotions against the secessionist republics now that Milosevic was clearly identified as the villain of the story.

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<sup>313</sup> Binder 1992c

<sup>314</sup> Binder 1992c

<sup>315</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 293

<sup>316</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 123

<sup>317</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 123

<sup>318</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 100

<sup>319</sup> Paquin 2010, 62–66



### *Summary of the Cognitive-Affective Argument*

Western policymakers' analysis was very permeable to information of how events unraveled on the ground, as they all eventually shifted their stance, but that did not make them good at predicting the near future. Germans believed and hoped that recognition would influence the conflict and reduce its intensity, but their partners disagreed and thought it would only provoke the Serbs. On both sides of the stability divide, the reasoning on what would provide or disrupt stability further was not grounded on an objective analysis of the situation, but a subjective emotional reaction. Countries which felt stronger attachment to the Serbs, or were not particularly attached to a specific protagonist in the Balkans, found that recognition would destabilize things further, despite the fact that full-blown war was already underway. Countries which felt stronger attachment to the Slovenes and Croats – like Germany, Italy and Austria – were convinced that recognition would abate the conflict, despite having no intention of backing recognition with anything substantial to deter the Serbs. Both analyses were more akin to emotional wishful thinking than a sound understanding of the likely ways events would go. As Bosnia descended into war, transatlantic policymakers granted it recognition, inferring from the events in Croatia that it really could halt the conflict. The first clashes in Bosanski Boro had occurred two weeks before, and the first instance of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia about a week before the US and EC recognition.<sup>320</sup> The JNA allied with Bosnian Serbs had been preparing this war for more than a year, and it could not be stopped solely by a very late recognition of Bosnia's independence.

Overall, Cognitive-Affective Theory performs very well in explaining the transatlantic recognition of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia. It jumps through all the hoop tests: policymakers were driven by their emotional beliefs, the most intense policymakers took the lead earlier, and other policymakers shifted when only the German position could fit with Western core beliefs of self-determination, human rights, and opposing a war of conquest.

Perhaps even more surprising, all the smoking-gun tests fired in this case. First, several aspects of the situation primed different framings for policymakers depending on the most salient political experience to them. Serb behavior primed Nazism and Soviet communism for German policymakers, the possible EC involvement primed World War I and II analogies for French and British policymakers, the ethnic aspect of the conflict primed

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<sup>320</sup> Glaurdic 2011, 297

Northern Ireland in the minds of British decision makers, and the separation of a country with former communist leaders reminded Americans of their intervention in Vietnam. I have shown how this explains the different responses in the transatlantic community, and the justifications that they used to support their positions.

Second, German leaders clearly emphasized “our” values against the cruelty of Serb actions, in doing so, they sought to boost their prototypicality by evoking ingroup ideals against outgroup differences. It worked when their argument was reinforced by developments on the ground, and gained US followership when American policymakers dropped their last argument that stability could only be achieved by Yugoslav unity. In this case, neither preferences, goals, nor beliefs on the principles changed, but the beliefs about the means that should be used to realize these goals shifted for American policymakers.

Third, European followers’ shift toward the leader’s position is inconclusive because they did not occur at the exact time as emotionally resonant events in October and November. The result of this momentum only came about in January. However, the gun is clearly smoking in the hands of German policymakers. After supporting Yugoslav unity, German policymakers abruptly changed their international position and began a sustained campaign to lead on the issue exactly at the same time as violence escalated in Croatia. It is highly unlikely that this shift was pure coincidence.

Fourth, there is strong evidence that societies were driven by emotional beliefs and putting significant pressure on French and British policymakers. Remember that Hubert Védrine considered the public’s emotion an important factor in the decision, and that MPs were making emotional calls in the House of Commons for the government to change its position. This is another unique prediction of CAT. This suggests that domestic constituencies can shape the policymakers’ positions, but it does so when powerful emotions resonate with the public, not when people attempt to transfer their preferences at the state level.

These four unique tests should strongly reinforce our confidence in Cognitive-Affective Theory relative to Liberal Theory. Liberal Theory has no explanation for why each transatlantic state’s top policymakers understood the same situation so differently. It also cannot explain why Germany’s strategy failed for so long but eventually succeeded in establishing position leadership. It has no argument to explain why at that time, at the end of

June and July 1991, all German political parties and policymakers in office shifted their stance. They did so despite the fact that no other transatlantic power shared their new perspective. Finally, it does not explain why domestic constituencies felt strong emotions, which made it impossible for policymakers to go against the affective wave, especially after five monitors had been killed in January.

## **Conclusion**

Transatlantic coordination during the wars in the Balkans leading to the recognition of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia reveal a very complex cooperation pattern. In the midst of all this turmoil, noise and uncertainty, the policymakers who established their lead did so by consistently pushing in the same direction for months, arguing with strong convictions that their stance was the right one, and in the end moving forward before the agreed-upon date to mark their point that they had waited long enough. The cooperation process was a complex mix of tension, disappointment, mistrust, and anger between partners, and yet there was also a shared sense of community, of the necessity to not fall too far apart. Although the fierce conflict made the dissolution of Yugoslavia unstoppable and eventual recognition unavoidable, recognition before the end of the wars and a peace settlement was made possible by German leadership.

Resistance by the three transatlantic powers, grounded on beliefs of ancient ethnic hatreds and comparisons to the World Wars, Northern Ireland and Vietnam, was gradually weakened as the Serbian offensive became bolder and images of destruction entered in their citizens' homes. With the Serbs shelling cities and refusing the EC agreement in October 1991, the wind shifted decisively. German convictions that Serbia was responsible, that self-determination could not be denied to the secessionist republics, and that recognition could stop the war by internationalizing the conflict became, after developments in the crisis, the prototypical position not only of Germany, but of the entire transatlantic community. German leadership re-unified the community that had defended Yugoslavia's integrity into recognizing Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia.

The EC recognition and the ceasefire in mid-January convinced the US that recognition could play a stabilizing role, which they then tried to apply unsuccessfully in Bosnia by recognizing the three secessionist republics. Recognition itself had never been the

reason for the decrease of hostilities in Croatia. This mistake illustrates how policymakers are constantly trying to do the very difficult job of interpreting incoming information from the situation to adjust their international positions when there is little time, information is controversial and contested, and making causal inference on how events are linked to one another is complicated. They sometimes dismiss relevant information, or in this case, overcompensate in the other direction by adjusting too far when a position seems to have been wrong. This adjustment appeared all the more as the right decision to American policymakers because it was the consensual position of their European allies.

Such overcompensation is exactly what psychologists who have studied priming would expect. In the mechanism of correction, discussed in the previous chapter, actors correct their impressions when they found that it was biased, but they overcorrect in the other direction. US policymakers inferred that they had been wrong about stability and recognition, and decided not only to recognize Slovenia and Croatia, but that the recognition of Bosnia could bring the same positive effects. Psychological mechanisms explain many other such relevant aspects of the crisis that I did not include in testing the two explanations, but are consistent with Cognitive-Affective Theory. One of the most striking is how not only international prototypicality, but also national prototypicality was at play. How Genscher was a prototypical German leader, which enhanced his national leadership despite the fact that he was not a member of the party with the most seats in the governing coalition, and was not Chancellor but only Foreign Minister.

## **Chapter 4 – The Showman Peacemaker: Sarkozy’s Peace Mediation in the Russo-Georgian War**

*France is back in Europe.*

– President of France Nicolas Sarkozy<sup>1</sup>

The five-day war between Russia and Georgia in 2008 was not just an internationalized regional conflict, but the first major confrontation between the Western capitals and Moscow since the end of the Cold War, and the first instance of an outbreak of major ethnic violence on the European periphery since the Kosovo war. The shuttle diplomacy spearheaded by French President Nicolas Sarkozy successfully negotiated a ceasefire to limit the conflict, replaced the Russian controlled buffer zone by EU observers, and set the stage for the subsequent attempts at rebuilding bridges with Russia in the years to come. No one else during the conflict was willing or able to accept the risks taken by the French leaders, who put their credibility on the line to deal with Medvedev and Putin. Sarkozy and his Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner walked a tightrope: they had to carefully manage the divisions between Western and Eastern Europe on how to handle Russia, and craft a policy that would receive the support of powers very critical of Russia (the US and the UK), and those who sought to engage with it (Germany, as well as other minor powers like Italy). French leadership was ultimately successful as the EU Council and policymakers in Washington supported the President’s peace plan.

In this chapter, I first discuss the issue of peace mediation and conflict management in light of leadership dynamics. Then I summarize the events surrounding the 2008 War with an emphasis on transatlantic responses to its developments. Finally, I contrast liberal and cognitive-affective explanations to account for the behavior of leaders and followers during the crisis. I argue that multilateralist, Atlanticist and pro-EU beliefs motivated French decision makers, and that their good relationships with everyone allowed their leadership to succeed. Because no transatlantic power could impose its view or would risk direct military intervention, supporting the French peace efforts became their best choice.

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<sup>1</sup> Le Gloannec 2008, 15

## **Mediating Peace**

With their dozens of failed ceasefires and deadlocked rounds of negotiation, the accusations of failed leadership and cluelessness, the wars in Yugoslavia provide a stark example of why third parties negotiating peace do a job that is difficult, costly in time and energy, and often underappreciated. And yet, diplomats and policymakers become deeply involved in such endeavors, hopping from one airplane to the next, stepping into or near conflict zones to negotiate although they are overburdened and sleep deprived, far away from their families, to have difficult talks with the parties involved. They do so, foremost, because they have the conviction that their work matters and that there is a possibility to end hostilities. In the words of former President of Finland Martti Ahtisaari, involvement in conflict resolution “can mediate between the parties, offer assistance to ease the suffering of ordinary people and they can provide incentives to solidify peace.”<sup>2</sup> The Nobel Peace Prize laureate adds that, unfortunately, he has also seen how “prevarication, lack of unity, late action, and even inaction by the international community, including the EU, made conflicts deadlier and longer than they could have been.”<sup>3</sup> Or, in other words, failed leadership and failure to cooperate have significant consequences for conflict resolution efforts and the people affected by the conflict. This is true for the 2008 Russo-Georgian war, when approximately 850 people lost their lives and 138,000 people fled from their homes,<sup>4</sup> numbers that could have been much higher if a ceasefire had not been so swiftly accepted by the parties.

More specifically on the importance of the peace negotiation during the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, this was a crucial moment for relations between the EU and NATO on the one hand, and Russia on the other. The crisis itself was closely related to the issue of Western involvement in Kosovo, and the eastward expansion of the EU and NATO, especially the prospect of Georgia and Ukraine’s NATO membership. The Russian intervention represented the first wide-scale foreign military intervention directed from the Kremlin since the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and a break with the rules of the Helsinki order in place since 1975 forbidding border changes in Europe.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Popescu 2011, xii

<sup>3</sup> Popescu 2011, xii

<sup>4</sup> De Waal 2010, 216–17

<sup>5</sup> Blank 2009, 426; Asmus 2010, 4

With Georgia being a close US ally who was participating in the Iraq war alongside American and British forces, this crisis also had potential for worsening transatlantic tensions in the wake of disagreements over the 2003 Iraq invasion. Finally, observers also presented the response to this conflict as a critical test both for the French leadership and for the EU's ambition of a common foreign and security policy (CFSP).<sup>6</sup> The crisis provided "an opportunity for the EU to engage further in the area as a security actor" and this involvement eventually led, after the UN and OSCE's missions departure in 2009, the EU to be the only international actor in the field in Georgia.<sup>7</sup> In the next section, I take a deeper look at how the events unfolded with emphasis on who led the transatlantic response.

### **The 2008 War**

There is still much controversy over the 2008 war; commentators and analysts have argued incessantly about who is responsible for the conflict, and in particular who triggered the war itself. The goal of this section is not to settle this debate, nor is it to attribute blame. I focus instead on the response of transatlantic powers, their narratives, and their actions regarding the conflict.

### Regional Origins of the Conflict

The region south of the Caucasus is extraordinarily diverse, with peoples divided by the highest mountain range in Europe and situated, throughout history, at the confines of the Russian, Ottoman and Persian empires. In this extraordinarily diverse region, Georgians, South Ossetian and Abkhaz are all ethnic groups with their own distinct language and culture. Historically, the myths at the core of Georgians' identity goes a long way back to a Golden age, notably when King David the Builder defeated the Turk Seljuk army at the battle of Didgori in 1121.<sup>8</sup> For their part, Ossetians, who are related to Iranians, speak their own distinct language and are also mostly Orthodox Christian.<sup>9</sup> They are related to Ossetians of North Ossetia, a region which is part of Russia's territory, although both groups speak

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<sup>6</sup> Barry and Biflesky 2008

<sup>7</sup> Freire and Simao 2013, 469–70

<sup>8</sup> De Waal 2010, 33

<sup>9</sup> De Waal 2010, 135

“markedly different dialects of Ossetian.”<sup>10</sup> The Abkhaz are another distinct ethnic group speaking their own language who live mainly along the Black Sea coast. Their people are divided between Christianity and Sunni Islam. Despite these distinctions, it should not be forgotten that identities are fluid and complex. All these groups and the previous groups who were their ancestors interacted significantly in their history, and the high rates of interethnic marriages mean that they share common ancestors and cultural roots.<sup>11</sup>

Modern conflicts in Georgia find their main origin in the Soviet era. From 1918 to 1921, South Ossetians, mostly peasants, rose against Georgians, many of whom were landowners. South Ossetians sided with the Bolsheviks and obtained help from the Red Army in their struggle against Georgia, while Tbilisi had Menshevik leaders. A similar Abkhaz uprising occurred at the same time, with Abkhaz attempting to seize Abkhazia’s capital city, Sukhumi.<sup>12</sup> This period of ethnic clashes and secessionist struggles eventually receded when the Bolsheviks consolidated their domination.

After having been integrated into the Transcaucasian Federated Soviet Socialist Republic in 1922, in 1936 Georgia recovered its status as an “independent” state within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).<sup>13</sup> According to this arrangement, Abkhazia was an autonomous republic in Georgia, while South Ossetia was an autonomous province (*oblast*), an entity with a lower status. Soviet power held tight control over Stalin’s home country.

However, as the USSR lost its control over its republics in 1989-1990, a nationalist movement in Georgia gained in strength to claim the countries’ independence. In the elections of October 1990, Zviad Gamsakhurdia’s Roundtable/Free Georgia coalition won 155 of the 250 seats in the Supreme Council.<sup>14</sup> Gamsakhurdia immediately moved to abolish South Ossetia’s autonomous status, and he had campaigned for an electoral law that would exclude parties not represented throughout Georgia, which would have excluded ethnic Abkhazian and Ossetian parties.<sup>15</sup> On March 31, 1991, in a referendum on independence, 90

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<sup>10</sup> De Waal 2010, 8

<sup>11</sup> See Souleimanov 2013, 118–19

<sup>12</sup> Souleimanov 2013, 112–14

<sup>13</sup> Goltz 2009, 13

<sup>14</sup> Goltz 2009, 16

<sup>15</sup> De Waal 2010, 132–34



percent of the people who voted demanded to leave the USSR.<sup>16</sup> Gamsakhurdia declared full independence from the Soviet Union in April 1991, and became the first President of Georgia in May of the same year. His nationalist rhetoric “Georgia for Georgians” rejected the recognition of ethnic minorities in the country.<sup>17</sup> He unequivocally declared that Ossetians were “the direct agents of the Kremlin and terrorists.”<sup>18</sup> Unsurprisingly, the non-Georgian populations of both South Ossetia and Abkhazia massively boycotted the referendum and the following election.<sup>19</sup>

In South Ossetia, about half of the population was ethnic Ossetian and half was Georgian, while a great number of Ossetians also lived outside of the province.<sup>20</sup> Ossetian authorities controlled the local government, and in September 1991, antagonized by Gamsakhurdia’s move to erase their autonomy and forbid their language, they declared the creation of a South Ossetian Soviet Democratic Republic, thus seceding from Georgia.<sup>21</sup> This declaration led to war between Ossetian and Georgian forces for the control of the region.

The war spiralled into a civil war for the control of Tbilisi itself, Georgia’s capital, and eventually Gamsakhurdia was forced to flee into exile after losing to his rivals. The militias that had expelled Gamsakhurdia chose Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Soviet Foreign Minister, to become the new president. After additional months of war, Shevardnadze signed a ceasefire agreement with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, according to which a joint Russian-Georgian-Ossetian peacekeeping operation would be set up to patrol the area and prevent the conflict to reignite.<sup>22</sup> At the end of 1992, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, later to become the OSCE) also deployed observers to South Ossetia to monitor the ceasefire.<sup>23</sup>

Abkhazia’s territory, along the coast of the Black Sea, was more populous and wealthier than South Ossetia. At the time of Georgia’s independence from the USSR, ethnic Abkhaz were only 17 percent in the province of Abkhazia, with Georgians being the largest

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<sup>16</sup> Goltz 2009, 17

<sup>17</sup> Goltz 2009, 16, 19

<sup>18</sup> Souleimanov 2013, 116

<sup>19</sup> Souleimanov 2013, 92

<sup>20</sup> Goltz 2009, 18

<sup>21</sup> De Waal 2010, 139

<sup>22</sup> Goradze 2009, 31; De Waal 2010, 143–44

<sup>23</sup> De Waal 2010, 144

ethnic group.<sup>24</sup> The reason was that several Abkhaz were deported by the Russian empire, and were later victims of Stalin's "Georgianization" policies.<sup>25</sup> Unlike in South Ossetia, Gamsakhurdia had attempted to make deals with Abkhaz leaders. However, after Gamsakhurdia was forced to flee, the new Georgian authorities rejected Abkhazia's autonomy, which quickly led to war. After the kidnapping of Georgia's Minister of interior, Georgian warlord Tengiz Kitovani's National Guard crossed into Abkhaz territory, killing and looting on their path all the way to Sukhumi.<sup>26</sup> The occupation of Sukhumi unleashed terror on its people through widespread looting, killing, and rape.<sup>27</sup> The conflict escalated to full scale war, with Circassian and Chechen volunteers from the North Caucasus and Russian mercenaries fighting on the Abkhaz side.<sup>28</sup> Like the Ossetians, the Abkhaz won the conflict and pushed back Georgian forces mostly with the help of Russian weapons and "volunteers."<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Russia imposed an embargo on deliveries of arms, oil, and gas to Georgia, provoking an economic disaster for Georgians.<sup>30</sup>

Georgia's defeat in the war led to another civil war, with Zviadists, former President Gamsakhurdia's supporters, attempting to retake control of the state. Shevardnadze accepted Russia's help to re-establish order, but at the cost of accepting Moscow's terms: Georgia joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty, and agreed to the deployment of four Russian military bases on Georgian territory. In April 1994, Georgia and Abkhazia signed the Moscow Peace Agreement, which officially ended the war and agreed to the deployment of Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia.<sup>31</sup> Although the CIS peacekeeping force was presented as a coalition, in fact it only constituted of Russian troops, and the 250,000 Georgian refugees who had fled Abkhazia were not allowed to return home.<sup>32</sup> Since 1993, UN observers were on the ground to monitor the ceasefire under the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), and they continued their work after the peace agreement.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Goltz 2009, 21–22

<sup>25</sup> De Waal 2010, 149–51

<sup>26</sup> Goltz 2009, 23–24

<sup>27</sup> De Waal 2010, 162

<sup>28</sup> Goltz 2009, 24–25

<sup>29</sup> De Waal 2010, 160

<sup>30</sup> Nalbandov 2009, 87

<sup>31</sup> Goradze 2009, 35

<sup>32</sup> Nalbandov 2009, 93, 101

<sup>33</sup> Nalbandov 2009, 88–89; Tagliavini Report 2009, 14

The resulting situation, often referred to as “frozen conflicts” was that of two provinces which were partially independent from Georgia’s central authorities, with Russian “peacekeepers” and international observers watching over the ceasefire. In October 1999, the Abkhaz leaders called for a referendum on the independence of Abkhazia as an independent country, in which the independence option received 97 percent of support.<sup>34</sup>

### Building-up to the War

*Russia has long been told to simply accept the facts. Here’s the independence of Kosovo for you. Here’s the abrogation of the Antiballistic Missile Treaty, and the American decision to place missile defenses in neighboring countries. Here’s the unending expansion of NATO. All of these moves have been set against the backdrop of sweet talk about partnership. Why would anyone put up with such a charade?*

– Mikhail Gorbachev<sup>35</sup>

In the years prior to the conflict, both Russia and Georgia took steps that brought them closer to war. Despite important local and regional dynamics at play, the conflict became gradually instrumentalized in the growing tensions and rivalry between Russia and the West.

After the “Rose Revolution” that brought him to power, Georgian President Saakashvili proclaimed that he would unify Georgia in order to gain votes. The new President drastically increased Georgia’s defense budget, from no more than US\$50 million in 2003 to more than a billion for 2008.<sup>36</sup> In 2004, Georgian authorities closed the Ergneti Market, destroying a key location for Georgian-Ossetian relations, and bringing Ossetians and Georgians to the brink of war.<sup>37</sup> In 2006, Georgian troops entered the Kodori Gorge on the territory of Abkhazia and established a pro-Georgian government there.<sup>38</sup> The Abkhaz considered this takeover a violation of the 1994 Peace Agreement.<sup>39</sup> Georgian authorities combined offers of greater autonomy for the secessionist entities with threats to use military force, which increased mistrust between the parties. For instance, Georgian Defense Minister

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<sup>34</sup> De Waal 2010, 166

<sup>35</sup> Gorbachev 2008

<sup>36</sup> Cheterian 2009, 158

<sup>37</sup> De Waal 2010, 202

<sup>38</sup> Cheterian 2009, 158

<sup>39</sup> De Waal 2010, 205

Irakli Okruashvili threatened to reintegrate South Ossetia by force, and proclaimed that he would celebrate new years' eve in Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia.<sup>40</sup>

From their side, Russia massively distributed Russian passports to residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>41</sup> They also ramped up their assistance to the two entities, both economically and with deliveries of arms. In 2006, Russia imposed a total ban on imports of Georgian wine, and in September, after a spy scandal in which four Russian spies were expelled by Georgia, Russia imposed a full embargo on transport, trade and even postage links to Georgia.<sup>42</sup>

Two key events in the deterioration of the wider West-Russia relationship had an important role on events in Georgia: the issue of Kosovo and the possibility of Georgia's NATO membership. In February 2008, the United States, Canada and several of their European allies recognized the independence of Kosovo. This recognition was not agreed upon with Moscow. Russian leaders strongly condemned it and specifically related the decision to Georgia, noting that if Kosovo was recognized, then there would be no reason to refuse the same status for Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>43</sup>

At the April 2008 NATO Bucharest summit, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and several Eastern European countries advocated for a Membership Action Plan (MAP) for Georgia and Ukraine.<sup>44</sup> The MAP was understood as a step to prepare countries before their accession to full membership. Most Western European countries, in a group led by Germany, opposed the move. However, pressured by East European states' representatives, NATO agreed to issue a statement after the summit to proclaim that "NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO."<sup>45</sup> This statement infuriated Moscow, which saw this expansion as a red line affecting its vital national interests.<sup>46</sup> Only minutes after the Bucharest Summit communiqué, the Russian President

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<sup>40</sup> Nilsson 2009, 94

<sup>41</sup> Cornell 2008, 309

<sup>42</sup> Cornell 2008, 310

<sup>43</sup> Cooley 2008, 343

<sup>44</sup> Asmus 2010, 131

<sup>45</sup> De Waal 2010, 208–9

<sup>46</sup> Cooley 2008, 343

declared “[w]e will provide effective assistance to South Ossetia and Abkhazia in return for NATO’s decision.”<sup>47</sup>

After Kosovo and the Bucharest Summit, Russia took measures aimed at destabilizing Georgia. The goal was at least to prevent Georgia from joining NATO, and at most to completely oust Saakashvili from power. Already in April, the Russian military repaired the Abkhaz railroad, a clear sign that it intended to use it, as the Russian army mostly travels by rail.<sup>48</sup> President Putin signed a decree to open offices in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and he dispatched “several hundred paratroopers as well as heavy artillery into Abkhazia.”<sup>49</sup> In July 2008, Russia conducted a military exercise named Kavkaz-2008 (Caucasus 2008), simulating a Russian intervention in Georgia.<sup>50</sup> This exercise, in which 8,000 servicemen participated, clearly identified Georgia as the probable enemy.<sup>51</sup> Tensions escalated to full-blown war less than a month later.

### The Five-day War

*You should understand (...) that the crocodile is hungry. Well, from the point of view of someone who wants to keep their own leg, that’s hard to accept.*

– President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili<sup>52</sup>

At the beginning of August, a bomb attack killed five Georgian peacekeepers, which led to fighting in Tskhinvali, South Ossetia’s capital.<sup>53</sup> After nearly a week of tension and skirmishes, Saakashvili declared a ceasefire on August 7, only to change his mind a few hours later and launch a full-scale attack supported by artillery and rockets on Tskhinvali.<sup>54</sup> Georgian policymakers argued at the time that several Russian troops had already crossed the Roki tunnel and that the move toward Tskhinvali was only self-defense, while Moscow instead claimed that Russian troops moved in only on the next day to defend South Ossetians, as well as their own peacekeepers in Tskhinvali, against Georgian forces. Russia accused

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<sup>47</sup> Illarionov 2009, 68

<sup>48</sup> Cheterian 2009, 164

<sup>49</sup> Cornell 2008, 310

<sup>50</sup> Cheterian 2009, 164

<sup>51</sup> Illarionov 2009, 71

<sup>52</sup> Traub 2008

<sup>53</sup> Cheterian 2009, 159

<sup>54</sup> Cheterian 2009, 159

Georgian forces of genocide against Tskhinvali's Ossetian population, declaring that more than 2000 civilians were killed.<sup>55</sup> Although the number of 2000 killed is almost certainly false and much exaggerated, the Commission set up by the European Union to investigate the conflict, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG), writes in its report that it "is not in a position to consider as sufficiently substantiated the Georgian claim concerning a large-scale Russian military incursion into South Ossetia before 8 August 2008."<sup>56</sup>

Although Georgia was playing a dangerous game, it is possible that Saakashvili thought that Russia would not use large-scale force just to save South Ossetia. Georgians also passionately recall with shame how their forefathers had not fought the Bolsheviks in 1921, and, as Mouritzen and Wivel discuss, Carl Gustav Mannerheim, the Finish commander-in-chief who led the resistance to the Soviet Union's invasion, was Saakashvili's role model.<sup>57</sup>

The retaliation of Russian forces, with Russian tanks crossing the Roki tunnel and engaging Georgian forces, and air strikes against Georgian supply lines, forced the Georgian troops to retreat on August 10.<sup>58</sup> Russian forces, however, did not stop there. They bombarded Georgian military targets in Gori, Vaziani, Senaki, and Poti, destroying Georgian radars, communication systems, and anti-aircraft defences.<sup>59</sup> They then supported the assault of Abkhazian forces in retaking the Kodori Gorge. Russian troops advanced to Zugdidi and all the way to Gori, cutting Georgia in half by controlling the main highway and railroad to the west of Tbilisi.<sup>60</sup>

### The Transatlantic Response

Transatlantic powers initially reacted differently when the conflict broke out. A group sometimes qualified as the hawks included the US and the UK, which strongly condemned Russia's actions from the outset. President Bush qualified the Russian response as "disproportionate"<sup>61</sup> and unequivocally condemned Russia:

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<sup>55</sup> Cheterian 2009, 160

<sup>56</sup> Tagliavini Report 2009, 20

<sup>57</sup> Mouritzen and Wivel 2012, 74–75

<sup>58</sup> Cheterian 2009, 159

<sup>59</sup> Cheterian 2009, 160

<sup>60</sup> Cheterian 2009, 160; De Waal 2010, 214

<sup>61</sup> Bush 2008a

Bullying and intimidation are not acceptable ways to conduct foreign policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Only Russia can decide whether it will now put itself back on the path of responsible nations, or continue to pursue a policy that promises only confrontation and isolation.<sup>62</sup>

British policymakers employed a rhetoric that is difficult to distinguish from the American one, condemning Russia's "blatant aggression" and arguing that "[t]his is simply not the way in which international relations can be run in the 21st century."<sup>63</sup> British Foreign Secretary Miliband condemned Russian "adventurism" and reiterated his wish for Georgia to become a member of NATO.<sup>64</sup>

There was a small nuance between the American and British position: while Americans threatened to isolate Russia, British policymakers were reluctant to speak of isolation, and instead argued for continuing to engage Russia, but through "hard-headed engagement," an odd expression with unclear meaning. The main part of this engagement concept was the British policymakers' idea to create a common energy policy so that Russia would negotiate with the 27 EU member states rather than separately with each country, thus giving more leverage to the EU.<sup>65</sup> The Baltic states and Poland were even more hawkish and fervently anti-Russia in their rhetoric than the US and the UK, and immediately qualified Russia's actions as imperialist and revisionist.<sup>66</sup>

Germany and France deployed a different rhetoric, first refusing to condemn or allocate blames. French Foreign Minister Kouchner, for instance, when asked if he condemned the Russian operation, responded "I condemn the war, I will not distribute labels: provocations, responses to provocations... it is always like this in wars, unfortunately, civilians are always, as we have seen here, suffering the consequences."<sup>67</sup> Clearly in disagreement and annoyed by the position taken by the Baltic States and Poland, Kouchner refused to speak of Russian imperialism by answering "[t]here is no use in insulting people."<sup>68</sup> Kouchner spoke of the urgency to stop the barbarity of war as though it was an abstract force, and emphasized "No, we will not say who are the good and the bad guys."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Bush 2008c

<sup>63</sup> The Guardian 2008b

<sup>64</sup> Miliband 2008

<sup>65</sup> Miliband 2008

<sup>66</sup> Lasas 2012, 1064–65

<sup>67</sup> Kouchner 2008a

<sup>68</sup> Kouchner 2008a

<sup>69</sup> Kouchner 2008c

Or, in the words of Nicolas Sarkozy, “When the house burns, the priority is to extinguish the fire.”<sup>70</sup> German Foreign Minister Steinmeier also avoided condemnation: “I don’t think it’s my task right now to write a chronology of the escalation in order to blame one side or the other. What is certain is that the conflict has a long history and cannot be attributed only to recent events.”<sup>71</sup> They were “provocations on both sides.”<sup>72</sup> Steinmeier expressed that the only way to stabilize the Caucasus was “with the Russians, not against the Russians”.<sup>73</sup> He argued in favor of maintaining Russia’s presence in international organizations such as the G8 and consultations in NATO, because these decisions to include Russia “were taken to make Russia a responsible actor. It would not be useful to go backward.”<sup>74</sup>

A few days later, as the crisis developed, equivocating the blame became the main rhetorical strategy. There were both “great judgment mistakes” from Georgians and “a disproportionate retaliation” from the Russians.<sup>75</sup> German and French policymakers also sometimes employed the “Russian trap” idea according to which Georgian troops had attacked first, but in the context of provocations deliberately set by Russia to lure them in.<sup>76</sup>

### Sarkozy Takes the Lead

As the crisis erupted, President Sarkozy immediately approached Russian Prime Minister Putin on August 8. Both leaders were in Beijing for the Olympic games. Sarkozy asked Putin for time to mediate the conflict, but Putin refused.<sup>77</sup> Ignoring Putin’s rebuttal, France quickly deployed Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner to Georgia on August 10 in order to draft a peace agreement with the Georgian leadership.<sup>78</sup> Kouchner was accompanied only by the chair of the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE), Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb.<sup>79</sup> Although no representative of the EU was on the ground, French diplomats kept their EU and American allies well informed during the talks. Kouchner described his role by saying “One needs to act fast. This is not an exercise in diplomacy. This

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<sup>70</sup> Sarkozy 2008b

<sup>71</sup> Steinmeier 2008a

<sup>72</sup> Steinmeier 2008b

<sup>73</sup> Leparmentier and Ferenczi 2008

<sup>74</sup> Leparmentier and Ferenczi 2008

<sup>75</sup> Kouchner 2008d

<sup>76</sup> Cheterian 2009, 163

<sup>77</sup> Leparmentier 2008b

<sup>78</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 141–42; The Guardian 2008a

<sup>79</sup> Leparmentier 2008a



is an exercise of survival.”<sup>80</sup> Time was especially of the essence because many considered that Moscow wanted to go all the way to Tbilisi and overthrow Saakashvili. According to US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in a phone call with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov on August 10, Lavrov demanded not just a non-use-of-force pledge from Georgia, but also that Saakashvili resign as Georgian President.<sup>81</sup> Behind the scenes, as it was working for a ceasefire, the Élysée was also trying to postpone a high-level NATO meeting: French leaders feared that such a meeting would undermine the French mediation if NATO strongly condemned Russia.<sup>82</sup>

In a move to gain good will from the Kremlin, Kouchner left Tbilisi and traveled to North Ossetia, on Russia’s territory, to hear stories from refugees who had fled South Ossetia and hear “from both sides” of the conflict.<sup>83</sup> Paris then suggested to Moscow that President Sarkozy could come to negotiate a ceasefire, a suggestion that was endorsed by President Medvedev.<sup>84</sup> The move was risky: Ronald Asmus reports that “French national security advisor Jean-David Levitte, for example, initially advised the president not to go because of the risk of being confronted with a *fait accompli*.”<sup>85</sup> US President Bush allegedly shared this analysis, and advised Sarkozy not to go to Moscow because he could arrive there when Moscow captures Tbilisi.<sup>86</sup> The Élysée was worried that Sarkozy would be humiliated and arrive in Moscow as Russian troops march into Tbilisi. In order to avoid this scenario, Sarkozy and Medvedev, as well as their respective advisors, spoke on the phone several times and the Russians agreed to two conditions posed by France. First, a ceasefire would be in place by the time the President arrived in Moscow. Second, Russian forces would not move to take Tbilisi. Medvedev agreed to both conditions.<sup>87</sup>

In preparing for Sarkozy’s visit, the French President spoke on the phone several times with President Bush and his European counterparts, to make sure that they were informed and supported his initiative.<sup>88</sup> Just before the French President’s plane touched

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<sup>80</sup> Leparmentier 2008a

<sup>81</sup> Asmus 2010, 182

<sup>82</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 142

<sup>83</sup> Leparmentier 2008b

<sup>84</sup> Asmus 2010, 194

<sup>85</sup> Asmus 2010, 194

<sup>86</sup> Leparmentier 2008b

<sup>87</sup> Asmus 2010, 194

<sup>88</sup> Asmus 2010, 197

down in Moscow on August 12, Medvedev announced a ceasefire, thus fulfilling the conditions set by the French to begin the negotiations.<sup>89</sup>

The tense talks between Sarkozy and Medvedev lasted several hours, and at some point the two men were joined by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Asmus reports a conversation that allegedly took place during the talks.

Putin: I want to hang Saakashvili by the balls.

Sarkozy: Hang him?

Putin: Why not? The Americans hanged Saddam Hussein.

Sarkozy: But do you want to end up like Bush?

Putin: Ah, there you have a point.

Sarkozy: Let the Georgian people decide for themselves who they want as a leader. It is a democracy, they will decide. That is none of your business. If you have security concerns because of the attack, then let's discuss those issues. That is why I have come.<sup>90</sup>

Sarkozy eventually secured Russia's agreement to a six-point ceasefire, in which the parties agreed to the following principles:

1. No recourse to the use of force.
2. Definitive cessation of hostilities.
3. Free access to humanitarian aid, and to allow the return of the refugees
4. Georgian military forces must withdraw to their normal bases of encampment
5. Russian military forces must withdraw to those lines prior to the start of hostilities. While awaiting an international mechanism, Russian peacekeeping force will implement additional security measures.
6. The opening of international discussions on the modalities of lasting security in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>91</sup>

The major concession of the ceasefire agreement to Moscow is that it does not mention Georgia's territorial integrity while Kouchner's draft negotiated in Tbilisi did so.<sup>92</sup> After the deal in Moscow, Sarkozy then flew to Georgia not to continue the negotiation, but to pressure Georgia's President Saakashvili in signing on the document. Sarkozy seemed to have no patience as he saw Georgians as responsible for the conflict and Georgia as the smaller nation which had to accept the compromise that he had negotiated "for them" in Moscow. During the negotiations, apparently exhausted and impatient at the Georgian

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<sup>89</sup> Asmus 2010, 198

<sup>90</sup> Asmus 2010, 199–200

<sup>91</sup> The New York Times 2008

<sup>92</sup> Leparmentier 2008b

questions and demands for revision, Sarkozy spoke loudly and angrily “[w]here is Bush? Where are the Americans? (...) They are not coming to save you. No Europeans are coming either. You are alone. If you don’t sign, the Russian tanks will be here soon.”<sup>93</sup>

Sarkozy was criticized for his brash method of negotiation as acting as “Moscow’s messenger” there “to persuade Saakashvili to capitulate.”<sup>94</sup> At the same time, Sarkozy was right that short of US and EU involvement, the much less powerful Georgia stood no chance against Russia and had to compromise. On the same day as Sarkozy’s visit to Tbilisi, strangely at odds with his diplomatic *démarche*, the Presidents of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Ukraine were in Tbilisi to emphasize their support for Georgia and made strong declarations against Russia.

In the end, however, Georgians still insisted on clarifications for point 5, which seemed too vague and permissive for Russian troops. Sarkozy agreed to write a letter to Medvedev to clarify the agreement without rewriting it. The French President met US Secretary of State Rice in France on August 15, at the fort of Brégrançon, to discuss the ceasefire agreement. They produced a letter that Rice would bring to Saakashvili in Tbilisi, while Sarkozy would arrange talks about the letter with the Russians. The clarifications carried to Georgia by Rice concerned article 5.<sup>95</sup> Saakashvili agreed to sign the ceasefire after reading the letter, but could not resist expressing his anger against the Europeans during his press conference with Rice.<sup>96</sup> He accused Europeans of a “new Munich” and contended, speaking about Russia, on the need to look “evil directly in the eye.”<sup>97</sup> Russian President Medvedev signed the ceasefire on the next day.<sup>98</sup>

#### Followers on Both Sides of the Atlantic

American officials in the Bush Administration were “appalled” by the result of the French negotiation.<sup>99</sup> They saw the text as too vague and containing no clear deadlines.<sup>100</sup> Baltic and Polish leaders were also critical of the adopted text. On August 13, they issued a joint

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<sup>93</sup> Asmus 2010, 206

<sup>94</sup> Traynor 2008b; See also Vernet 2008

<sup>95</sup> Bolopion 2008

<sup>96</sup> Asmus 2010, 210

<sup>97</sup> Asmus 2010, 210

<sup>98</sup> IISS 2008, 1

<sup>99</sup> Asmus 2010, 202

<sup>100</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 146

declaration criticizing the peace plan for failing to mention Georgia's territorial integrity.<sup>101</sup> Yet, despite these reservations, the US and all European allies remained behind the French lead.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated "we certainly welcome the EU mediation"<sup>102</sup> on August 12, and the next day, after the peace agreement in Moscow, announced a trip to France saying "I'm going to France because we support very strongly the European Presidency, which is France, in its mediation efforts."<sup>103</sup> A few days later, she declared "we continue to be focused on the immediate task of assuring that the Russian President honors the commitment that he undertook to the European presidency,"<sup>104</sup> explicitly backing the six-point ceasefire. Similarly, President Bush expressed his strong support for France's efforts,<sup>105</sup> and insisted on the implementation of the agreement by arguing that "[n]ow Russia needs to honor the agreement and withdraw its forces."<sup>106</sup>

The British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, also supported the French-brokered agreement, although less explicitly, declaring that Russians "have promised that they will pull out, and they should go ahead with doing that."<sup>107</sup> When a journalist questioned what the EU had achieved by remarking that "[s]urely the hostilities ended because Russia had achieved its military goals," German Foreign Minister Steinmeier replied: "[f]rom the many telephone conversations I have had since the fighting broke out I know how difficult it was to get both sides to lay down their weapons. So we shouldn't play down the success of the mediation by the French Council Presidency and the EU."<sup>108</sup> Chancellor Merkel expressed the hope that "the six-point plan will be signed by all sides."<sup>109</sup>

Finally, the EU Council collectively approved the six-point peace agreement on August 13, after the French President convened an extraordinary meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Ministers focused on Georgia.<sup>110</sup> The meeting's communiqué states that the Council "welcomes the agreement subscribed to by the parties yesterday on the basis of the mediation

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<sup>101</sup> Lasas 2012, 1067

<sup>102</sup> Condoleezza 2008a

<sup>103</sup> Condoleezza 2008b

<sup>104</sup> Condoleezza 2008d

<sup>105</sup> Bush 2008b

<sup>106</sup> Bush 2008e

<sup>107</sup> G. Brown 2008

<sup>108</sup> Steinmeier 2008a

<sup>109</sup> Merkel 2008

<sup>110</sup> Popescu 2011, 86

efforts carried out by the Union.”<sup>111</sup> The Council demanded that all parties honor their commitments related to the agreement.

NATO Foreign Ministers met in Brussels on August 19, where they reiterated their support for the French mediation by demanding for the Kremlin to “act immediately to withdraw its troops” as agreed in the ceasefire agreement.<sup>112</sup> NATO’s Secretary General reiterated that Georgia would one day be a member, and the organization suspended the meetings of the NATO-Russia Council.<sup>113</sup> This was decided despite the fact that German Foreign Minister Steinmeier had opposed this suspension pushed by the US, declaring that “[t]alks in the NATO-Russia Council are essential. We need open lines of communication.”<sup>114</sup> The alliance also approved the formation of a NATO-Georgia commission to underline support and improve cooperation with Tbilisi. Shortly after the meeting, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband, speaking from Tbilisi, presented this new Commission as meaning that the “formal process” for Georgian membership “had kicked off,” an interpretation that was immediately rejected by NATO officials.<sup>115</sup>

France brought their peace agreement to the United Nations Security Council to give it more legitimacy, to “turn a political agreement into a legal document,”<sup>116</sup> but the member states could not agree on a resolution because Russia refused to mention Georgia’s territorial integrity in the text.<sup>117</sup> Despite this failure of obtaining the UNSC’s stamp of approval, as shown in their declarations, all transatlantic powers backed the French deal.

### Russia’s Failure to Comply

On August 15, German Chancellor Angela Merkel met Russian President Medvedev in Sochi.<sup>118</sup> Merkel was displeased that Russia’s attack on Georgia was completely out of proportion. She repeated after the tense exchange that “both sides are probably to blame for the conflict,”<sup>119</sup> but she also traveled to Georgia following the meeting and reaffirmed

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<sup>111</sup> EU Council 2008

<sup>112</sup> Bolopion, Ferenczi, and Jégo 2008

<sup>113</sup> Bolopion, Ferenczi, and Jégo 2008

<sup>114</sup> Traynor 2008c

<sup>115</sup> Borger and Traynor 2008a

<sup>116</sup> Leparmentier and Ferenczi 2008

<sup>117</sup> The Guardian 2008c

<sup>118</sup> Popescu 2011, 86

<sup>119</sup> A. E. Kramer and Levy 2008

NATO's commitment to one day welcome Georgia as one of its members.<sup>120</sup> This move is surprising considering that Merkel had been the key leader in opposing Georgia's NATO membership action plan at the Bucharest summit, and it shows how German policymakers were losing patience with Russia.

After several days of the Western powers, including the French, complaining that the Russians troops were in violation of the ceasefire agreement, Moscow began to withdraw some of its forces on August 22.<sup>121</sup> Their troops left the Georgian town of Gori and stopped their obstruction of Georgia's main highway, which was able to open again for the first time in 9 days.<sup>122</sup> However, transatlantic powers condemned the fact that withdrawal was only partial: Russian troops remained in a large "buffer zone" along the territory of Abkhazia and South Ossetia where they dug up positions, establishing checkpoints and fortifying defences.<sup>123</sup>

Then, in a bold move that appeared to nullify the Sarkozy agreement, Russian President Medvedev announced on August 26 that Russia recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia justified its decision on the grounds that the two entities had suffered genocide at the hands of Georgian forces, and in a situation similar to Kosovo, should thus be granted independence.<sup>124</sup> All transatlantic powers immediately condemned the recognition.

French leaders began to toughen their rhetoric: Russia's late and partial withdrawal from the conflict zone and its recognition of the secessionist republics undermined the credibility of Sarkozy's initiative. Furthermore, the French ambassador was detained by Russian soldiers for three hours in Georgia on August 22, an offense to French diplomacy.<sup>125</sup> France condemned Russia's recognition forcefully and indicated that Moscow had to comply with the six-point agreement, but had clearly failed to do so.

On August 27, NATO and the G7 issued statements condemning Russia's action with regard to the conflict.<sup>126</sup> On September 1st, an emergency European Council meeting

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<sup>120</sup> Stelzenmüller 2009, 94; Dempsey 2008

<sup>121</sup> IISS 2008, 2

<sup>122</sup> Harding 2008a

<sup>123</sup> Harding 2008a

<sup>124</sup> De Waal 2010, 215

<sup>125</sup> Popescu 2011, 88

<sup>126</sup> IISS 2008, 2

condemned Russia for recognizing the secessionist republics and failing to implement the ceasefire agreement. The 27 EU countries decided to delay the negotiations on a strategic partnership with Russia.<sup>127</sup> The EU also agreed during this meeting that it would send ceasefire monitors to Georgia if Russia could comply with the agreement.<sup>128</sup> EU member states also agreed on the deployment of another EU Special Representative for Georgia specifically dealing with the crisis.<sup>129</sup> Finally, despite Russia's actions defying the six-point peace agreement, the EU meeting fully backed the result of the French mediation, stating its will "to support every effort to secure a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Georgia."<sup>130</sup> In a new attempt to make sure that the agreement was fully implemented, the summit led to the announcement that the French President, the High Representative for CFSP, Javier Solana, and the President of the EU Commission, José Manuel Barroso, would go to Moscow on September 8.<sup>131</sup>

#### The Second Agreement and the Aftermath

Sarkozy traveled to Moscow again on September 8, accompanied by EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso and EU High Representative Javier Solana. After four hours of talks at the Maiendorf Castle outside Moscow, Russian leaders accepted to remove their checkpoints and completely withdraw from the buffer zone.<sup>132</sup> According to reports from the talks, Russian representatives were reluctant to give in and tried everything during the negotiations, including to remove the article stating that Russia had to go back to the line before hostilities broke out, at which point Sarkozy threatened to walk out.<sup>133</sup> This new deal established that a EU observer mission would replace Russian troops within a month, and peace talks on the situation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia would begin later in Geneva. Sarkozy emphasized after the meeting about this implementation agreement that "this time there is a calendar for the withdrawal of Russian forces" and that "there is no ambiguity" about where the troops need to withdraw.<sup>134</sup> Sarkozy presented this second agreement,

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<sup>127</sup> Ferenczi, Leparmentier, and Nougayrède 2008

<sup>128</sup> IISS 2008, 2

<sup>129</sup> Popescu 2011, 86

<sup>130</sup> R. G. Whitman and Wolff 2010, 93

<sup>131</sup> Ferenczi, Leparmentier, and Nougayrède 2008

<sup>132</sup> Harding 2008b

<sup>133</sup> Weisensee 2010, 21

<sup>134</sup> Weisensee 2010, 21

sometimes referred to as the Sarkozy-Medvedev Agreement or the Implementation Agreement as a success, saying that although he was aware that not all has been resolved, “what has been resolved has been considerable.”<sup>135</sup> Sarkozy then flew to Tbilisi where he asked the Georgian President to sign a pledge of non-aggression.<sup>136</sup>

France was emboldened by its new diplomatic victory, and expressed its annoyance at the United States. On September 3, the US had announced a significant aid package for Georgia, totalling \$1 billion.<sup>137</sup> President Bush sent US navy ships to the Black Sea in order to directly deliver humanitarian aid to Georgians, a move which was interpreted by Moscow as a provocation and a way to sneak weapons in Georgia. Defending the results of France’s peace mediation, French Foreign Minister Kouchner declared “What do you think is the most efficient? Sending American battleships on the Black Sea loaded with humanitarian aid or stopping the tanks as Sarkozy and I have done?”<sup>138</sup>

All Russian troops had withdrawn from the borders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia by October 8. They were replaced by the deployment of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM).<sup>139</sup> The EUMM’s mandate centered on measures for stabilization, normalization, confidence-building, and provides information to inform European policy in the region.<sup>140</sup> Its almost 300 observers are unarmed, and were able to patrol along the ceasefire lines, but not on Abkhazia and South Ossetia’s territory as they had hoped.<sup>141</sup> In 2009, after Russia vetoed the mandates of the UN (UNOMIG) and the OSCE Mission to Georgia, the EU “remained the only international institution involved in maintaining stability in the conflict zones.”<sup>142</sup>

On October 22, the EU participated in organizing an international donors conference for Georgia in order to assist the country with its economic problems and the reconstruction of its infrastructure. At this conference, a total of €3.4 billion were pledged for Georgia, 614 million of which came from the EU and its member states.<sup>143</sup> Diplomatic talks began in

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<sup>135</sup> Harding 2008b

<sup>136</sup> Harding 2008b

<sup>137</sup> IISS 2008, 2

<sup>138</sup> LeMonde.fr, AFP, and Reuters 2008

<sup>139</sup> Cheterian 2009, 160

<sup>140</sup> Freire and Simao 2013, 470–71

<sup>141</sup> Popescu 2011, 88

<sup>142</sup> Popescu 2011, 90

<sup>143</sup> Popescu 2011, 89



Geneva on October 15 in order to attempt to resolve the conflict, but these meetings made little progress and continue to be bogged down by the irreconcilable positions of the Georgian government and the secessionist Republics.

### Assessing French Leadership

*By liberating the commercially significant main road, ending the occupation of Georgia proper, and thus helping to stabilise Georgia politically and economically, the EU had a significant and direct impact on the country's vital interests.*

– Jan Weisensee<sup>144</sup>

There are debates over whether Russia would have continued its invasion all the way to Tbilisi without the French ceasefire or if their strategic objectives were already attained anyway when the agreement was mediated. Still, French leadership is credited both with a diplomatic success in rallying the transatlantic community together, and as a substantive success in influencing the situation on the ground. French leaders decided that they had no time to solicit a clear mandate from the EU, and so they acted on their own but carefully consulted their partners along the way, and then asked them to validate the agreement that they had reached.<sup>145</sup> They also included their allies despite driving the talks themselves, as they did when they tasked the US Secretary of State Rice to deliver clarifications about the ceasefire agreement during her trip to Tbilisi. Successful followership from the transatlantic community was essential to its success.

Thanks to French leadership, President Saakashvili remained in office after the crisis, the conditions set by Paris for Sarkozy to go to Moscow were met in time, and Russian troops eventually withdrew from the areas along the border of Abkhazia and South Ossetia that they had occupied during the war.<sup>146</sup> The mediation set Georgia on the course of stability and permitted the EU to become involved on the ground, and after 2009 becoming the only international organization with a presence in Georgia.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Weisensee 2010, 21

<sup>145</sup> Leparmentier 2008c

<sup>146</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 144; Asmus 2010, 213–14

<sup>147</sup> Popescu 2011, 92–93

Of course, diplomatic negotiation by itself could not give Abkhazia and South Ossetia back to Georgia, entirely solve the intractable conflict, nor could it force the secessionist republics to yield as they rejected the return of refugees and refused for the EUMM to deploy on their territory. Overall, Jan Weisensee, who has carefully assessed the foreign policy impact of the EU during the Georgia crisis, finds that the EU, mostly through the French leadership, had a considerable or significant impact on several key issues, including the issue of focus in this chapter: the six-point peace plan and the extended implementation agreement on September 8.<sup>148</sup>

The main French success explained in this chapter however, is unambiguous: despite some reservations at first, both the US and EU member states united in backing the negotiated peace agreement and they pressed Moscow to fully comply with it. What motivated the French to lead and what explains their followers' willingness to support them?

### **The Liberal Explanation for French Leadership**

Several authors point out to the economic or “geopolitical” interests of transatlantic powers, especially with regard to the supply of oil and gas, as a crucial factor in shaping the Western response to the five-day war. According to the liberal approach, policymakers, both for reasons of energy security and the pressure from domestic economic groups, should support a ceasefire to stabilize Georgia and protect their investments there, and seek to accommodate Russia, the most powerful actor in the region, in order to avoid hurting energy supply or business prospects.<sup>149</sup>

At the time of the conflict, several important oil and gas pipelines transported the resources of the Caspian Sea from Azerbaijan through Georgia to reach Turkey and Europe. The most important was the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline inaugurated in July 2006. Operated by British Petroleum (BP), the pipeline bypasses Russia to transport oil through Georgia to the Turkish deep sea port of Ceyhan, from which it can be transported to Europe.<sup>150</sup> Despite its volume of one million barrels of oil per day, the BTC only represents 1 % of worldwide oil supplies.<sup>151</sup> Another pipeline which runs mostly parallel to the BTC

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<sup>148</sup> Weisensee 2010

<sup>149</sup> Popescu 2011, 8

<sup>150</sup> German 2010, 100; De Waal 2010, 170–71

<sup>151</sup> German 2010, 100

but transports natural gas is the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline, also referred to as the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP).<sup>152</sup>

At the time of the Georgian crisis, additional pipeline projects were competing in the region. The EU and the United States backed the Nabucco pipeline project, a project which would extend the Baku-Erzurum gas pipeline all the way to Austria. This ambitious 3300 km-long pipeline project had two competitors.<sup>153</sup> Russia was advocating two other pipeline routes, the South Stream and the Nord Stream. The South Stream project would cross the Black Sea to reach the Balkans, while the Nord Stream was the project of a gas pipeline from the Bay of Finland to Greifswald in Germany.<sup>154</sup>

According to Tracy German, "[t]he Caspian is set to become an important source of oil and gas for EU member-states as they seek to diversify sources to secure supply and avoid over-reliance on any one country."<sup>155</sup> The Bush Administration also sought to develop its ties with Russia in the years prior to the conflict to establish an energy transit corridor that could avoid both Russia and Iran.<sup>156</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel describe the South Caucasus as "an increasingly vital region for the US, and Georgia in particular, notably because of its central position for the transport of energy from the Caspian Sea."<sup>157</sup>

Analysts attributed the Russian intervention to the intention to destabilize Georgia in order to jeopardize the various pipeline projects to bypass Russia. The increased risk would mean that the BTC pipeline was not secure, which would scare investors away.<sup>158</sup> According to this analysis, transatlantic powers should have felt importantly threatened by the Russian invasion. This was especially true for countries of the European Union, because Russia was the biggest EU supplier: it provided 33 % of its oil and 38 % of its gas in 2007.<sup>159</sup> Consequently, both to secure energy supply and to avoid hurting economic interests in their respective countries, transatlantic powers are therefore expected to make a deal with the most powerful state involved to safeguard their interests. No one was willing to declare all-out war, and sanctions would certainly hurt transatlantic powers and their prospect of developing

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<sup>152</sup> De Waal 2010, 185

<sup>153</sup> German 2010, 103

<sup>154</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 126; German 2010, 103

<sup>155</sup> German 2010, 95

<sup>156</sup> Zunes 2015, 496

<sup>157</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 107

<sup>158</sup> Blank 2009, 430

<sup>159</sup> The Economist 2008

energy infrastructure connected to the Caspian Sea, so that mediating with Russia and accommodating Moscow was in Western countries' interests.

### Leader-Follower Dynamics and Economic Interests

Among the transatlantic powers, the United Kingdom was the state with the most investments and business links to Georgia and Russia. British petroleum (BP), a British energy company, operated the BTC pipeline and had invested in the region. There was also an ongoing dispute at the time of the 2008 war over a joint British-Russian venture between British Petroleum and Alfa-Access-Renova (AAR).<sup>160</sup> BP sought to retain its licenses on oil fields in Siberia representing about a quarter of BP's total output, one of the companies most valuable asset which "could hardly be overestimated at a time when major global oil companies are struggling to find new reserves."<sup>161</sup> The business conflict was finally resolved on September 5, possibly as an effort from Russia to send the message that it was still a safe country for foreign investment.

Because of their intense preferences, British policymakers should have led in attempting to reach a ceasefire to stabilize Georgia and protect their energy infrastructure. They should also have been most willing to accommodate Russia to secure business opportunities. However, British policymakers did not lead and were reluctant followers who condemned Russia quite harshly. At the end of August, British policymakers, supported by Sweden, the Baltic States and Poland, even proposed sanctions against Russia in EU meetings, a move that might have derailed French efforts at negotiating the full implementation of the six-point peace deal.<sup>162</sup>

If preference intensity is defined not as existing economic interests, but as energy vulnerability and dependency, then Germany should have been in the lead. In 2008, Germany was the Western European country most dependent on Russia for its gas: it imported 40 % of all its natural gas from Russia.<sup>163</sup> A war that alienated Moscow and a degradation of East-West relations would have had dire consequences for Germany. Gas imports require costly infrastructures, so that it is not easy to shift to a completely new supplier. Germany also had

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<sup>160</sup> Harding and Wearden 2008

<sup>161</sup> A. E. Kramer 2008

<sup>162</sup> Popescu 2011, 88

<sup>163</sup> Baran 2008

interests in accommodating Russia: at the end of his tenure as German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder had extended a one billion euros credit guarantee for the Nord Stream pipeline project.<sup>164</sup>

Yet, contradicting liberal expectations, it was France who led the way for peace and engaged the most with Moscow, although it had less important interests in the region and was less dependent on Russia. Moreover, the liberal approach would expect the British or German lead to be easy and enthusiastically supported by other transatlantic powers. For example, the Western consortium led by BP also includes American companies (Chevron and ConocoPhillips), the Italian company ENI, and the French energy company Total.<sup>165</sup> As I have shown, both British and American policymakers were among the most critical of Moscow, which cast doubts on this explanation.

The explanation that economic and energy interests were threatened by Russia's intervention does not explain the French lead – French policymakers would have a lower preference intensity on the subject than the UK or Germany – nor does it explain the British and American policymakers' strong condemnation of Russia and reluctance to follow the path of peace mediation set by the French leadership. The liberal and geopolitical approaches often exaggerate the stakes in order to attempt to explain the events. In the end, at the moment of the crisis, oil imports coming through Georgia represented less than 3 % of Europe's oil imports and none of its gas.<sup>166</sup> Furthermore, Russia never really threatened the BTC pipeline during the crisis: it is likely that they were aware of the need to avoid appearing to be targeting the energy infrastructure.<sup>167</sup> Russia “would have been reckless to jeopardize its relations with Azerbaijan, Turkey, and BP by attacking the pipeline, even if it wanted to hurt Georgia.”<sup>168</sup> Additionally, the pipeline is often threatened because it is in a volatile region, and the source of the threat is not necessarily the conflicts in Georgia. The BTC was shut down during the conflict not because of the Russo-Georgian war, but because of a fire in the Turkish sector which was revenged by the Kurdish Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK).<sup>169</sup> Thus, risk and

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<sup>164</sup> Baran 2008

<sup>165</sup> Mouawad 2008

<sup>166</sup> The Economist 2008

<sup>167</sup> Bowker 2011, 203

<sup>168</sup> De Waal 2010, 180

<sup>169</sup> German 2010, 102

instability already surround the supply from this route. Turkey is seen as its weakest link, not Georgia.<sup>170</sup>

Rather than waging war only for oil and gas, Russia's invasion probably had more to do with countering US influence more generally in Georgia, stopping NATO's expansion, asserting Russia's military power, the drive of these goals being enhanced by Putin's personal feelings of hate toward Saakashvili.<sup>171</sup> Perhaps the starkest demonstration that the war had more to do with wider East-West relations than with narrow economic interests is the response of the "fervent hawks".

#### Fervent Harks: Emotions Trump Economic Interests

According to the expectations of the liberal theory, the countries with the most to lose should be the most motivated to lead to defend their interests. The Baltic states and Poland were certainly among the states with the most to lose during the crisis, as they were highly dependent on Russia's market, and also on Russia's energy networks and infrastructure.<sup>172</sup> Poland imported "about two-thirds of its natural gas and almost all of its crude from Russian pipelines."<sup>173</sup> The Baltic countries were also almost entirely dependent on Russia for their natural gas, and Moscow had shown its willingness to cut off supplies at a moment's notice, as it did in Latvia in 2003 and Lithuania in 2006.<sup>174</sup> These countries barely had any economic relationships with Georgia, but they were exposed to devastating retaliatory measures from Russia.<sup>175</sup> The liberal approach thus predicts that these states would try to lead on a stance favorable to Russia and to engage Moscow, in line with their economic interests, and that they might also refuse to follow a stance which was too critical of Russia.

The complete opposite occurred. Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia and Poland are sometimes grouped together under the label of "fervent hawks,"<sup>176</sup> a group of states which were aligned during the crisis in being fiercely critical of Russia, calling it an imperialist power, making analogies with Nazism and the USSR, and demanding radical measures such

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<sup>170</sup> German 2010, 107

<sup>171</sup> Traub 2008

<sup>172</sup> Lasas 2012, 1067–68

<sup>173</sup> Cienski 2008

<sup>174</sup> Baran 2008

<sup>175</sup> Lasas 2012, 103

<sup>176</sup> See Larsen 2012, 103

as speeding up the integration of Georgia in NATO and the EU. Although in the end they agreed to support the French-brokered ceasefire, they first criticized it publicly and disagreed with the European states who they saw as too soft on Russia. As I will discuss later, economic dependence and interests clearly could not override emotional memories from the Second World War and the Soviet Rule.

### *Summary of the Liberal Argument*

Even in this least-likely case for the liberal argument, the argument is still successful in predicting the end result. All transatlantic powers have energy and economic interests tied to Russia and Georgia, so it makes sense from a liberal perspective that a ceasefire to stabilize the country – which also received the approval of Russia – is the adopted position in the end. However, although the community converged on this position, the leader-follower process to get there does not fit the liberal expectation. This approach fails to explain who leads and why, and why did followers sometimes took risks that might have jeopardized the negotiated peace agreement, like condemning Moscow or arguing in private for economic sanctions. The liberal explanation is disqualified by the fact that policymakers adopted positions contradicting the domestic preferences of powerful energy interests, and that the leader was not the policymaker with the most intense preferences.

### **The Cognitive-Affective Explanation**

French policymakers, and especially President Sarkozy, wanted to prove their European and Atlanticist convictions, and had memories of Europe being accused of failing to lead in the Balkans, which motivated them to take the initiative. They were also the better positioned to forge a prototypical discourse that their allies could get behind. This better position stemmed both from circumstance, because France occupied the EU Council's rotating presidency at the time,<sup>177</sup> but also from the Élysée having worked to rebuild ties to the US and to Eastern Europe. Even the most reluctant followers did not dare to reject the peace agreements: under the difficult circumstances, they could not claim to do better and understood that other measures, such as sanctions or permanent expulsion of Russia from international institutions, would not find consensus in Europe.

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<sup>177</sup> Tran 2008

### The Great Showman

When Sarkozy became chair of the EU's rotating presidency on July 1st, 2008, his main foreign policy project was the Mediterranean Union. This project mostly focused on the Middle East and North of Africa, and it aimed at tackling issues such as migration, terrorism, energy security, trade and investments.<sup>178</sup> Sarkozy's plan was derailed when the Russo-Georgian war imposed itself on his agenda.

Analysts almost always present Sarkozy as a leader reveling in being the center of attention.<sup>179</sup> He "had a love for the limelight and a yearning to put France, the European Union, and above all himself on the world stage."<sup>180</sup> Le Gloannec writes that "[c]ertainly Nicolas Sarkozy likes to bask in the sun of mediatic attention and to steal the show from others, be it compatriots or counterparts on the world scene."<sup>181</sup> Although this yearning for attention seemed to diminish Sarkozy's credit for leading the way, implying that he was only posturing for fame, commentators also recognized his qualities, such as his "increasingly impressive and astute stewardship."<sup>182</sup> French political scientist Bertrand Badie, in an interview to *Le Monde*, said that the French Presidency did what it had to.<sup>183</sup> Dominic Hughes of the BBC described Sarkozy's mediation as a "big diplomatic success" from a President who "has shown flair for the high-profile diplomatic intervention" and "is not being praised for his diplomatic skills."<sup>184</sup>

Despite the criticism, the President's energetic and impetuous showmanship may also have been a great asset to establish his leadership. Sarkozy's assertive and extraverted behavior was aligned with the general stereotype of a leader in West. Furthermore, by taking much of the attention, he was also taking risks that others were reluctant to take, putting his credibility on the line, and diverting the attention from what others were doing – or not doing – to resolve the crisis. Sarkozy's style had earned him other diplomatic successes before the crisis, like the release of Bulgarian medical staff held in Libya, and the liberation of Ingrid

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<sup>178</sup> Le Gloannec 2008, 20

<sup>179</sup> Tran 2008

<sup>180</sup> Asmus 2010, 191

<sup>181</sup> Le Gloannec 2008, 16

<sup>182</sup> Traynor 2008d

<sup>183</sup> Badie 2008

<sup>184</sup> Hughes 2008



Betancourt, who had been held hostage by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) for more than six years.<sup>185</sup> Thus, Sarkozy's pomp was not just thin air: he had shown that his method could bring success.

*The Balkan Analogy*

*Who else than Europe could intervene to stop the war?*

– Foreign Minister of France Bernard Kouchner<sup>186</sup>

In August and September 2008, French policymakers made a few references to the Cold War, arguing for the need to go beyond the Cold War vocabulary and oppositions of the past,<sup>187</sup> as well as to the Second World War. For example, President Sarkozy declared “[w]e cannot go back to the age of spheres of influence. Yalta is dead.”<sup>188</sup> However, another analogy was at the forefront of French policymakers' minds.

French Foreign Minister Kouchner was already a seasoned diplomat when he became Sarkozy's Foreign Minister. As the humanitarian who had co-founded Doctor without borders (*Médecins sans frontières*), Kouchner's involvement in several conflicts throughout the years stemmed from his own personal family experience: his grandparents were taken by the Gestapo in 1943 and sent to the death camp of Auschwitz when he was only four years old.<sup>189</sup> The “godfather” of the right of humanitarian interference,<sup>190</sup> Kouchner was Minister of Health and Humanitarian Action during the conflict in Yugoslavia, and urged President Mitterrand to intervene more forcefully in Bosnia.<sup>191</sup> Later in 1999, he became the leader of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission for Kosovo (UNMIK), according to the mandate established by resolution 1244. Kouchner said that he learned in Kosovo that “among the victims were oppressors.”<sup>192</sup>

When the 2008 war began, Kouchner mobilized his convictions in favor of humanitarian intervention, the need for international involvement in mediating peace, and

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<sup>185</sup> Hughes 2008

<sup>186</sup> Kouchner 2008d

<sup>187</sup> Kouchner 2008b

<sup>188</sup> Traynor and Harding 2008

<sup>189</sup> Le Monde 2008

<sup>190</sup> Ourdan 2001

<sup>191</sup> Rollat 1992

<sup>192</sup> Ourdan 2001

the lesson of not supporting one side too strongly in “ethnic” conflicts. He relied heavily on his experience in the Balkans as an analogy to understand Georgia. When asked by a journalist whether there was too much interference (ingérence) in Georgia, Kouchner replied, “I think there is not enough interference for peace, on the contrary, this notion of responsibility to protect created by France and which was successfully applied, in particular in the Balkans, is not applied enough here.”<sup>193</sup> Kouchner made several other references to former Yugoslavia, showing that the comparison was clearly in his mind.<sup>194</sup> He referred to his personal experience when talking about the fragility of the ceasefire, declaring that this ceasefire was fragile like all ceasefire, and that “unfortunately, I am well placed to know that”.<sup>195</sup> President Sarkozy also shared this frame when he emphasized the decisive engagement of the EU in a conflict that was for him the first such conflict since former Yugoslavia and Kosovo.<sup>196</sup>

French policymaker’s memories of Yugoslavia drove them to establish a strong leadership that would at least stop hostilities swiftly in 2008, something which they felt like Europeans had failed to do at the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>197</sup> However, when Russia justified recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with the precedent of Kosovo, they rejected this analogy, arguing that both conflicts were very different. This “mirror comparison is not right.”<sup>198</sup> The Western heroes of Kosovo did not want to be compared to the Russian attack on Georgia.

### *Shared Beliefs Breed Good Relations: Multipolarity, Atlanticism, and Europeanism*

Sarkozy believed in the need to engage with all great powers to bring about the rise of a multipolar world, was strongly in favor of France having good relations with the Americans, and also wanted to develop and reinforce EU institutions. France’s foreign policy was in line with these convictions both before and during the crisis. Sarkozy’s leadership was accepted by the Americans and his European partners because it came after several speeches, diplomatic work, and gestures geared toward building trust, improving relations with allies,

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<sup>193</sup> Kouchner 2008b

<sup>194</sup> See Kouchner 2008c

<sup>195</sup> Kouchner 2008d

<sup>196</sup> Sarkozy 2008b

<sup>197</sup> Asmus 2010, 192

<sup>198</sup> Kouchner 2008f

and deploying a rhetoric that was representative of the various positions in the transatlantic community.

France sought to engage with all great powers and favored the development of a multipolar world where the EU would be one such pole of power.<sup>199</sup> France argued strongly for multilateralism as the correct approach to solve problems in this nascent multipolar world, in which, according to Sarkozy, no state is powerful enough to solve international problems.<sup>200</sup>

Sarkozy was also recognized as an Atlanticist who admires the United States, and President Bush in particular, much more than previous French Presidents. As a gesture of good will, he told the Americans of his decision to be a candidate for the French presidency 16 months in advance,<sup>201</sup> and he campaigned on promises of improving ties with Washington.<sup>202</sup> He sought to repair France's relationship with America after the deterioration of this relationship under Chirac – especially with regard to the issue of Iraq – but he also wanted to preserve France's autonomy, status, and distinctiveness.<sup>203</sup> The American embassy portrayed Sarkozy as “the French political man who supports the most the role of the United States in the world.”<sup>204</sup> After his election, Sarkozy declared to the US Congress in November 2007: “In the end, I want to be your friend, your ally, your partner. But I want to be a friend standing, an independent ally, and a free partner.”<sup>205</sup> On almost all issues, Americans and the new French leadership saw eye-to-eye, with the Americans also praising his choice for Foreign Minister, as Kouchner was seen as “one of the rare political man either from the left or the right to support openly the American invasion of Iraq.”<sup>206</sup>

Sarkozy was also very much “pro-EU” and wanted to contribute to reinforcing European institutions. According to Sarkozy, “the emergence of a strong Europe, a major actor on the international scene, can contribute to the reconstruction of the more just, more effective world order demanded by our peoples.”<sup>207</sup> He believed that France needs Europe to

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<sup>199</sup> Larsen 2012, 107

<sup>200</sup> Sarkozy 2008a, 723–24

<sup>201</sup> Ourdan 2010

<sup>202</sup> Asmus 2010, 122–23

<sup>203</sup> Howorth 2010, 13, 18

<sup>204</sup> Ourdan 2010

<sup>205</sup> Howorth 2010, 18

<sup>206</sup> Ourdan 2010

<sup>207</sup> Le Gloannec 2008, 16

be strong, and that likewise Europe can only be strong with France. Sarkozy became the first French president to display the European flag on his official picture and include troops from other European countries for the Bastille Day's parade.<sup>208</sup>

Sarkozy also wanted to repair France's relations with Eastern and Central European countries, which had been strained as these countries had supported the US in their invasion of Iraq, and Sarkozy's predecessor had publicly chastised them for their pro-American stances.<sup>209</sup> The ultimate French policy to show support for the US and to accommodate East European countries – which was in the works and discussed long before it was officially announced in 2009 – was Sarkozy's idea of France fully reintegrating the command structures of NATO. Sarkozy described anti-Americanism as “this cultural cancer that hinders France from deploying its diplomacy.”<sup>210</sup> A pro-US France made it harder for East European countries to oppose the development of a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). They had done so in the past because they feared French “anti-americanism” was behind the proposal.<sup>211</sup> Sarkozy argued that both NATO and the ESDP were important, they were complementary organizations rather than competing with each other.<sup>212</sup> As early as August 2007, Sarkozy hinted at a possible return of France in NATO's command and discussed this complementarity with the EU.<sup>213</sup>

Despite Sarkozy's pro-US and Atlanticist credentials, he was also careful not to fight with Germany, and at the Bucharest summit he supported Chancellor Merkel's lead in opposing offering MAP for Ukraine and Georgia. This decision earned him good will from the German Chancellor, and showed that he would not accept anything that the Americans demanded.

Sarkozy also had good relations with the actors involved in the conflict itself, which may be less important to establish leadership in the transatlantic community, but was certainly important for the chances of the peace mediation itself. And it is this success which convinced many of the most reluctant followers to rally behind the French-brokered agreement. Sarkozy got along well with Saakashvili, who was “one of the first heads of state

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<sup>208</sup> Le Gloannec 2008, 16–17

<sup>209</sup> Leparmentier 2008c

<sup>210</sup> Leparmentier 2008c

<sup>211</sup> Howorth 2010, 22–23

<sup>212</sup> Howorth 2010, 21

<sup>213</sup> Le Gloannec 2008, 18

Sarkozy received at the Élysée Palace after his election.”<sup>214</sup> Although Sarkozy was critical of Russia’s record on human rights during the campaign, he toned down his rhetoric once he was elected.<sup>215</sup> He mostly earned credits in Moscow for opposing MAP for Ukraine and Georgia, alongside Chancellor Merkel, at the Bucharest NATO summit.<sup>216</sup>

Sarkozy was the only head of state or government with good relations with everyone, and him and his Foreign Minister carefully crafted a position that could be endorsed by everyone in the transatlantic community. Washington would probably not have been comfortable to support a French lead when Chirac was president, but it could now accept Sarkozy’s leadership considering his willingness to improve ties with the US. British policymakers were the least involved in the crisis, and seemed to take their cues from Washington. It was also hard for Eastern European countries to reject French leadership when it was so openly supported by the Americans. Germany and several other Western European countries who wanted engagement with Russia could accept Sarkozy’s plan because it was duly negotiated with Moscow. Furthermore, the ceasefire did successfully stop the violence and Russian attacks against Georgia for the most part, which gave it considerable credibility even for reluctant followers.

#### *Emotional Ties and Negotiating Tactics*

Sarkozy was able to leverage his good relationships and positive ties with the actors involved in the peace negotiation. As I have shown, tactics to pressure the belligerents, like threatening isolation on Georgia or threatening to walk out from talks in Moscow if Russian negotiators asked the impossible, were effective. Sarkozy, backed by his partners who voiced their displeasure, also pressured Moscow into the second “implementation” agreement after they had not fully implemented the initial ceasefire agreement.

Moreover, Sarkozy and Kouchner criticized the position of Eastern European states, as well as the US Administration’s move of sending battleships on the Black Sea. However, they were only small piques directed against allies, and never threats like the ones employed to push Moscow and Tbilisi around. All these bold moves and pressures were only possible

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<sup>214</sup> Asmus 2010, 123

<sup>215</sup> Le Gloannec 2008, 15, 20–21

<sup>216</sup> Tran 2008

without breaking the peace negotiations or creating a transatlantic rift because France's counterparts were willing to engage with French diplomacy and reach a positive result. The good will and connections previously established paved the way for France's shuttle diplomacy. The wide support in the transatlantic community meant that the diplomatic efforts had the credibility they needed to succeed. Perhaps most impressive is the fact that the forceful but balanced act of leading for peace achieved to stop most of the fighting in just five days. It appears highly unlikely that this same result could have been achieved without the involvement of high-level policymakers and the assertive style of the French President

### Germany's Policy of Rapprochement

Henrik Larsen argues that Germany's reluctance to criticize Russia stemmed from the fact that among the generation in power at the time of the crisis "many look gratefully at Russia for having supported German reunification in the 1990s."<sup>217</sup> He also adds that Germans might make an analogy between Russia's current situation and their own past, seeing post-Cold War Russia as a "defeated" power that should not be humiliated because this could lead to revanchism. "Don't corner a defeated great power; instead integrate it" is a lesson from history shared by several German policymakers.<sup>218</sup> Rather, Germany and their transatlantic partners should engage Russia, and "bind" it to the West. This is consistent with the strategy revealed in 2006 of *Annäherung durch Veflechtung* (rapprochement through interlocking) which recalls the slogan *Wandels durch Annäherung* (change through rapprochement), German Chancellor Willy Brandt's motto in the 1970s.<sup>219</sup>

Although Angela Merkel had a good working relationship with Russian leaders, it was hard for her and for the German Federal Foreign Office to lead the mediation because they did not have a good relationship with Georgia. When Merkel and Saakashvili met for the first time, the two did not get along well. Merkel was critical of the Georgian President's reforms, and the Georgian President felt misunderstood.<sup>220</sup> Later, in talks with President Bush in November 2007, after Saakashvili's crackdown on the opposition, the US President joked with the German Chancellor "to please not tell him 'I told you so'" about Saakashvili's

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<sup>217</sup> Larsen 2012, 111

<sup>218</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 129

<sup>219</sup> Stelzenmüller 2009, 94

<sup>220</sup> Asmus 2010, 121

credentials as a democrat.<sup>221</sup> The Georgian leaders blamed Berlin for successfully opposing the MAP in Bucharest, and saw German policymakers, especially Foreign Minister Steinmeier, as being too close to Moscow.<sup>222</sup> Chancellor Merkel reportedly spoke of Saakashvili as a “maverick” and especially distrusted him after learning that, after his reelection in 2008, the Georgian President considered once again a military option to reclaim the two secessionist provinces.<sup>223</sup> After the beginning of the 2008 war, German policymakers solidified their perception of Saakashvili as an “irresponsible gambler.”<sup>224</sup>

Although in German politics the Chancellor’s Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party is supposed to be the party critical of Russia while the Foreign Minister at the time, Frank-Walter Steinmeier of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), supposedly belongs to a pro-Russia party, in fact there was very little difference between the two coalition partners’ approach during the conflict.<sup>225</sup> Both policymakers sought to engage Russia, but also to establish that their allegiance lay firmly with the transatlantic community.<sup>226</sup> Both emphasized the need to end the violence over attributing blame, and distributed blame equally between Russia and Georgia. Thus, despite their difference in party allegiance, Germany’s top policymakers shared similar ideas on how to respond to the crisis.

French policymakers’ considerations for Russia and negotiation of a ceasefire in Moscow was welcome in Berlin, as it seemed to be a clear example of successful engagement.

### The American Prism of Democracy

*You gathered here armed with nothing but roses and the power of your convictions, and you claimed your liberty. And because you acted, Georgia is today both sovereign and free, and a beacon of liberty for this region and the world.*

– US President George W. Bush<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Asmus 2010, 121

<sup>222</sup> Asmus 2010, 156–57

<sup>223</sup> Bowker 2011, 198, 204

<sup>224</sup> Stelzenmüller 2009, 94

<sup>225</sup> Stelzenmüller 2009, 97

<sup>226</sup> Stelzenmüller 2009, 97

<sup>227</sup> De Waal 2010, 203

*That Georgia is on the road to democracy and has a free press is the major myth created by Georgia that the West has believed in.*

– Human Rights Ombudsman of Georgia, Sozar Subari<sup>228</sup>

Before the five-day war, the Bush Administration and Saakashvili's Georgia had close ties. Official at the highest level of the Administration were in close contact with the Georgian President's entourage. Saakashvili himself spoke excellent English and had studied in the US. He enjoyed privileged relations with Richard Holbrooke, and in the Congress with John McCain and Joe Biden.<sup>229</sup> One of the sources of this good relationship was the decision by Georgia to send 2,000 troops in Iraq as part of the US-led coalition of the willing, an enormous contribution relative to the size of Georgia.<sup>230</sup> In 2005, President Bush had visited Georgia, when Georgia's main highway was named the George W. Bush highway, and the President declared that the "Rose Revolution" bringing Saakashvili to power turned the country into a "beacon of liberty" in the region.<sup>231</sup>

During the 2008 crisis, Stephen Blank goes as far as to say that "Saakashvili was able to manipulate elite opinion in Washington in his favor."<sup>232</sup> It is more likely that the US were glad to leave the leadership to France because they did not want to intervene, but understood that directly negotiating with Russia and on Russia's terms would be seen as betraying their Georgian ally. Support for Georgia was strong not just at home and in the Republican party, but in the Bush Administration as well. US Vice President Dick Cheney, for instance, publicly declared that the Russian intervention "must not go unanswered" although he remained vague as to what exactly would be the answer.<sup>233</sup>

US policymakers, and in particular the US President, framed the conflict through the prism of the democracy agenda, as a struggle between democracy and dictatorship.<sup>234</sup> President Bush stated that "[i]n the years since it's gained independence from the Soviet Union collapse, Georgia has become a courageous democracy."<sup>235</sup> According to Bush, "[t]he

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<sup>228</sup> Akhvlediani 2010, 137

<sup>229</sup> Bowker 2011, 203

<sup>230</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 14

<sup>231</sup> Bowker 2011, 203

<sup>232</sup> Blank 2009, 436

<sup>233</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 100

<sup>234</sup> Bowker 2011, 203

<sup>235</sup> Bush 2008c



people of Georgia have cast their lot with the free world, and we will not cast them aside.”

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This perspective, presenting Georgia as a nascent democracy threatened by the shadow of Russian authoritarianism, greatly exaggerated the democratic level of Saakashvili’s rule.<sup>237</sup> Saakashvili’s government was no stranger to several tactics similar to those employed by the Kremlin: the suspicious assassination of opposition figures, widespread claims of election fraud, the closing of TV stations critical of the government, and in November 2007 the crushing of peaceful protestors with force.<sup>238</sup> Saakashvili’s Georgia was pro-Western rather than democratic. Former Georgian Foreign Minister Zurabishvili, who later became Georgia’s President, writes “Americans wanted stability more than democracy. Both democracy and stability paid the price.”<sup>239</sup>

American policymakers’ analogies clearly referred to the Cold War. In the word of President Bush “The Cold War is over. The days of satellite states and spheres of influence are behind us.”<sup>240</sup> US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice referred to the Prague Spring and warned Russia not to build a new “Iron Curtain.”<sup>241</sup> She characterized Russia’s intervention as “Soviet Style” behavior and emphasized teaching Russia the lesson that “the world was not going to stand for 1968-like behavior where they occupied a capital and brought down a government and stayed for 20 years.”<sup>242</sup>

Finally, some observers noted that the US could not lead because they had no credibility in opposing Russia as a power who had invaded another country based on false pretenses, and by using disproportionate force. The 2003 American invasion of Iraq, when the United States attacked Saddam Hussein’s Iraq without a UN mandate and under what turned out to be false assertions about Hussein’s possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction and links to Al Qaeda, comes to mind.<sup>243</sup> President Putin made this comparison himself, saying about the Americans,

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<sup>236</sup> Bush 2008d

<sup>237</sup> Bowker 2011, 203

<sup>238</sup> Zourabichvili 2009; Zunes 2015, 496

<sup>239</sup> Zourabichvili 2009, 322

<sup>240</sup> Bush 2008c

<sup>241</sup> Bowker 2011, 197

<sup>242</sup> Condoleezza 2008c

<sup>243</sup> Milne 2008

[t]hey had to hand Saddam Hussein for destroying several Shia villages (...) but the current Georgian rulers who in one hour simply wiped 10 Ossetian villages from the face of the earth, the Georgian rulers which used tanks to run over children and the elderly, who threw civilians into cellars and burnt them – they are players that have to be protected.<sup>244</sup>

Another instance discussed by commentators was the 2006 Israel disproportionate attack on Lebanon, which was supported by the US, and led to the death of more than a thousand civilians.<sup>245</sup>

Surprisingly, the US President may also have shared the belief that a too assertive US lead would only play in Moscow's hand. Asmus writes, "Bush also feared that the media would make the danger of a U.S.-Russian confrontation and not Russian behavior toward Georgia, the story. (...) In short, the administration wanted a tough response but it wanted Europe to take the lead."<sup>246</sup> The Bush Administration may have learned the lesson from Afghanistan and Iraq that being too aggressive was a risk as the President spent his second term repairing ties with his allies, and decided in this case that Putin might only benefit from resentment feeding off of the appearance of a threatening US foreign policy.

In summary, the Bush Administration adopted a very pro-Georgian stance framed as part of its democracy agenda, ideas which were not shared by France and Germany. They saw Russia as a Soviet-style threat, and were thus reluctant to intervene directly, but they also wanted to avoid engaging with Russia on Moscow's own terms less they were seen as betraying Georgians or repeating the Cold War rivalry. The core American policymakers' belief and emotional ties to Georgia made American leadership of the transatlantic community unlikely. The possibility of leadership was even more remote because of the nature of the issue at stake, peace mediation, which went against the image of aggressive "warmongers" that the Administration made for itself with the invasion of Iraq. Their push for Georgia's NATO membership could even be seen as responsible for Russia's renewed willingness to intervene in its near-abroad. American policymakers had positive feelings toward Sarkozy and were kept informed throughout the crisis, throwing their support behind

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<sup>244</sup> Traynor 2008a

<sup>245</sup> Milne 2008; Zunes 2015, 497–98

<sup>246</sup> Asmus 2010, 178

a plan that they saw as flawed, but good enough to stop the war and ensure the survival of Saakashvili's regime.

If there was a risk for leadership in the case of France, the risk for French leaders to lose credibility by failing in their mediation attempt, there was also a cost for followership on the US part. During the crisis, in the *New York Times*, Roger Cohen described Bush as "asleep at the wheel" after Russia made clear its intention to retaliate after the Bucharest summit.<sup>247</sup> The President was ridiculed as "watching beach volleyball in Beijing" when Russians were invading Georgia.<sup>248</sup> The *New York Times* ironically referred to President Dick Cheney, after he had been sent to Tbilisi at the end of August, as the "master of diplomacy," and held that the Bush Administration was responsible for the ties between Russia and the West being "the worst in a generation."<sup>249</sup> Editors of the *Wall Street Journal* wrote on August 13: "[s]o far the Administration has been missing in action, to put it mildly" and remarked that President Bush risked ending his tenure "on a Carter-esque note of weakness."<sup>250</sup> On August 17, Michael Dobbs wrote an article in the *Washington Post* critical of the President: "Instead of speaking softly and wielding a big stick, as Teddy Roosevelt recommended, the American policeman has been loudly lecturing the rest of the world while waving an increasingly unimpressive baton."<sup>251</sup> Despite its history of assertive and even unilateral foreign policy, and despite clear expectations in the media about the need for American leadership, the US remained withdrawn and mostly acted as a good follower supportive of the French mediation.

### The Moral Follower

*You know there is a golden thread of common humanity that across nations and faiths binds us together and it can light the darkest corners of the world.*

– British Prime Minister Gordon Brown<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Roger Cohen 2008

<sup>248</sup> Jenkins 2008

<sup>249</sup> The New York Times Editorial Board 2008

<sup>250</sup> The Wall Street Journal Editorial 2008

<sup>251</sup> Dobbs 2008

<sup>252</sup> Honeyman 2009, 88

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown advocated a moral foreign policy at the time, himself the son of a Church of Scotland minister, his religious beliefs influenced his foreign policy beliefs.<sup>253</sup> Brown advocated a “new global society,” a reformist agenda for international institutions that went far beyond narrow British national interests.<sup>254</sup> Brown made great declarations of principles, arguing that “through each of our diverse heritage there runs a single, powerful moral sense,” and that “there is a human need for cooperation (...) built on the desire for liberty and the call to justice – respect for the dignity of every individual and our sense of what is equitable and fair.”<sup>255</sup>

Brown’s Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, also supported an assertive moral foreign policy. At Oxford in February 2008, he gave a lecture titled “the Democratic Imperative” in which he argued about “a continuing moral imperative to help spread democracy.”<sup>256</sup>

These beliefs of the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were in perfect alignment with the Bush Administration’s democracy agenda. British policymakers held very similar ideas of a moral foreign policy based on “universal” values which were actually anchored in their Christian beliefs. Either taking their cue from Washington or sharing the same cognitive-affective wavelength, British policymakers, like their American counterparts, presented Georgia as a free and democratic country in opposition to an authoritarian Russia still stuck in old thinking of “spheres of influence.”<sup>257</sup> This step was easy to take considering that UK-Russia relations were already strained after the 2007 Litvinenko scandal. Alexander Litvinenko was a former agent of the Federal Security Service, Russia’s secret service agency, who had fled the country, received asylum in the UK, and was then allegedly poisoned at the hands of Russian agents. In July 2007, Foreign Secretary Miliband had expelled four Russian diplomats from the London embassy for their alleged role in the poisoning of Litvinenko with Polonium 210.<sup>258</sup>

British policymakers, like their American counterparts, also used Cold War analogies. They did not merely mention the willingness to avoid a new Cold War, but directly compared

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<sup>253</sup> Honeyman 2009, 88

<sup>254</sup> Humphreys 2015

<sup>255</sup> Humphreys 2015, 579

<sup>256</sup> R. G. Whitman 2010, 839

<sup>257</sup> Larsen 2012, 114–15

<sup>258</sup> R. G. Whitman 2010, 844

Russia's intervention to the Cold War days. "What is the alternative [to NATO] when you still had a stand-off as in the Cold War days?"<sup>259</sup> Foreign Secretary David Miliband visited Georgia and Ukraine after the six-point ceasefire and claimed that Vladimir Putin, then Prime Minister of Russia and seen as the man in charge, was nostalgic of "Soviet superpowerdom." He warned that "We don't want one [a new Cold War]. [Medvedev] has a big responsibility not to start one."<sup>260</sup> In an opinion piece in the Times, Miliband employed several Soviet analogies, for instance he expressed his opinion that "You don't need to be a student of the crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968 to find the sight of Russian tanks rolling into a neighbouring country chilling."<sup>261</sup>

Miliband's strange comments in Georgia about the NATO membership process having started, and tough speech against Russia in Ukraine seem to be the British government's hasty and improvised response to voices among their main opposition, the Conservative Party, as well as inside their own party, for a stronger stance against Russia.<sup>262</sup> Brown and Miliband's beliefs on the issue were thus widely shared in their country, and others even tried to gain political capital by arguing for the need to go further in punishing Russia. The two men were taken off guard when Conservative leader and leader of the opposition David Cameron went to Tbilisi before either the Prime Minister or the Foreign Secretary had done so.<sup>263</sup> Saakashvili liked Cameron very much after he had channeled Churchill by comparing the current situation to appeasing Hitler,<sup>264</sup> and advocated harsher measures against Russia, such as a ban on visas for Russian citizens.<sup>265</sup>

In the end, British policymakers deployed an aggressive rhetoric with no willingness to follow through, before accepting French leadership and the negotiated ceasefire agreement. Although they did not endorse it passionately, it was easy for them to frame the French-negotiated plan as a result which saved a democracy in danger, and did nothing to legitimize Russia's "Cold War era" behavior. Domestic politics turned into a competition for who would make the most anti-Russia statement, which was seen as the right, the moral thing

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<sup>259</sup> G. Brown 2008

<sup>260</sup> Borger and Traynor 2008b

<sup>261</sup> Miliband 2008

<sup>262</sup> Borger and Traynor 2008a

<sup>263</sup> Hencke 2008

<sup>264</sup> White 2008

<sup>265</sup> Hencke 2008

to do, a competition which risked alienating Moscow and brought British policymakers ever further away from the interests of the big energy companies in their own country.

### Other European Countries

*This is a return to the law of the jungle, something between the behavior of the British Empire in the 19th century and gangsta rap, this is what it makes me think about.*

– President of Estonia, Toomas Henrik Ilves<sup>266</sup>

Although I focus on main transatlantic powers, it is also very interesting in this case to consider if Cognitive-Affective Leadership can also explain the behavior of other states that followed Sarkozy's lead of the EU.

The Baltic countries and Poland were the fiercest European countries when it came to condemning Russia. They clearly condemned Russia's actions as aggression, and labeled its behavior as imperialist and fascist. Ainius Lasas argues that "identity politics driven by historical-psychological legacies provide the most plausible explanation" for these states' responses.<sup>267</sup> Russia's behavior during the conflict reminded these countries of their time under Soviet rule, "a prolonged tragic experience that left deep and painful wounds in individual and collective psyches."<sup>268</sup> They identified with Saakashvili's Georgia, a country which, like them, had suffered under the sway of the Soviets and now wanted to belong to NATO and the EU.<sup>269</sup>

During the conflict, the analogies on which the leaders of these countries based themselves were clear. Lithuanian President Adamkus spoke of a "second Munich" and argued that "when the Russian Federation justifies military aggression by the need to protect Russian citizens, it is using arguments identical to those used by Nazi Germany when it attacked its neighbours Czechoslovakia and Poland and crushed their independence."<sup>270</sup> Polish President Kaczynski identified a Russia "we have well known for centuries" and

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<sup>266</sup> Turc 2008

<sup>267</sup> Lasas 2012, 1061

<sup>268</sup> Lasas 2012, 1063

<sup>269</sup> Lasas 2012, 1072–73

<sup>270</sup> Lasas 2012, 1066

declared that “Poland’s turn may come.”<sup>271</sup> Echoing John F. Kenney’s famous speech, Estonian President Toomas Hendrick Ilves expressed his solidarity: “I am Georgian.”<sup>272</sup> Describing Russia as pre-modern in its behavior, he also compared Putin to the likes of Milosevic and Hitler.<sup>273</sup>

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner attempted to downplay the divisions in Europe by stating about these states that “they agree but just want to go further,”<sup>274</sup> and he explained this difference by the history of these countries from their time under the “bloc of the East.”<sup>275</sup> At various moments during the crisis, especially after criticizing the French-brokered peace plan on August 13, this group of countries attempted to establish leadership on several issues: they pushed for the suspension of EU-Russia negotiations on a new visa regime, argued for hastening Georgia and Ukraine accession to the EU and NATO, and wanted to adopt sanctions to punish Russia for its aggression.<sup>276</sup> These positions never had any chance in the EU, as they were strongly opposed by both France and Germany, as well as other states like Italy. In the end, as their leadership had been denied, they agreed to follow the French lead and accept the ceasefire and monitoring mission because it at least stabilized the situation and preserved Georgia’s government.

Sweden’s policymakers provide another example of the importance of history. As a former Special EU envoy to Yugoslavia and Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General to the Balkans, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt also took a hard stance against Moscow and drew clear parallels with his experience:

We did not accept Milosevic’s Serbia intervening militarily in other ex-Yugoslav republics by referring to the protection of people with a Serbian passport. And we should remember how Hitler a little more than half a century ago applied precisely this doctrine to undermine and attack significant parts of Central Europe.<sup>277</sup>

Bildt himself admitted that he might be ‘extra-sensitive’ to these issues considering his past in the Balkans.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Lasas 2012, 1066

<sup>272</sup> A. E. Kramer and Barry 2008

<sup>273</sup> Turc 2008

<sup>274</sup> Kouchner 2008a

<sup>275</sup> Kouchner 2008e

<sup>276</sup> Lasas 2012, 1067

<sup>277</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 131

<sup>278</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 132

Interestingly, Italy, which during the 2003 Iraq war was firmly in the pro-US camp, kept a low profile during the Georgian crisis. Italy's Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi was a close personal friend with Putin,<sup>279</sup> and although he warned against building an "anti-Russia coalition" in Europe,<sup>280</sup> he neither strongly supported nor opposed the French efforts. Berlusconi did not hold strong democracy promotion beliefs, nor was he interested in reviewing its positive opinion of Russian leaders.

The evidence supports the prominent role of emotional historical analogies over economic interests as the key driver behind the foreign policy of several other European states during the crisis. The peace agreement accommodating Russia's concerns was difficult to accept for Poland, the Baltic countries, and Sweden, but they agreed to become reluctant followers after it was clear that the mediation had been successful in preserving Saakashvili's Georgia, obtaining the withdrawal of Russian troops, and would provide further protection through the deployment of the EUMM. Economic dependence and energy security were not sufficient to silence countries in Eastern Europe, and their emotional beliefs came close to negatively affecting the peace negotiation, but in the end they rallied behind the transatlantic consensus.

#### *Discussion of the Cognitive-Affective Argument*

The beliefs of the protagonists were consistent with their behavior and positions during the crisis. The two countries sharing a democracy promotion agenda, the US and the UK, both strongly condemned Russia but remained withdrawn and uninterested in engaging Moscow. Conversely, France and Germany refused to attribute blame or distributed blame equally, and they both met Russian leaders during the crisis. The willingness to support peace and defend Georgia as a democracy against foreign intervention were also consistent with broader transatlantic values. Finally, the ethnic aspect of the conflict, and the intervention of Russia in a smaller former Soviet state by using the argument of protecting ethnic minorities clearly primed analogies of Yugoslavia, the Cold War, and Nazism that framed policymakers' reading of the events.

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<sup>279</sup> Putin's daughters spent their summer holidays at Berlusconi's Sardinian residence, see Traynor 2008d

<sup>280</sup> Tran 2008



Other elements of this case, however, are less conclusive for CAT. The emotions driving the leader's beliefs remain ambiguous. The French President was very dynamic: he took the task of peace mediation early on, put himself on the line, and traveled to conduct the final stages of the negotiations. What were the emotions that fueled this intense leadership and gave power to the President's beliefs? I found no personal or political experience in the President's life that could explain this, nor did the President employ highly emotional language.

Éric Maigret describes Sarkozy as "the hyperpresident," a president who is of every fight, wants to make all the decisions, and wants to lead the spectacle for the media.<sup>281</sup> European representative William Abitbol described Sarkozy as "the Duracel rabbit."<sup>282</sup> Sarkozy believed that the media are like reservoirs, "as long as you add fuel to them, you exist."<sup>283</sup> The French President certainly involved himself in the crisis with his characteristic energetic and flamboyant style. But this does not explain why in this case in particular, he was willing to risk his public image to achieve peace. He was not the only leader with pro-EU and Atlanticist beliefs. I see three possibilities that might explain the unusual intensity of the President's engagement.

First, there is the possibility that his role as the EU Council's President at the time made the French President feel responsible for such a conflict on the periphery of the EU. The feeling that the EU would demonstrate its effectiveness or fail to be relevant in this case may have driven the President, in line with his desire to make the EU a new pole of power, to act decisively.

Second, another possibility is that the President feared that a transatlantic rift, similar to the events of Iraq in 2003, would split the community apart. The lines of demarcation were very similar to 2003, with US-UK on one side and Germany and France on the other. Sarkozy may have seen in this crisis a threat to his project of reintegrating NATO's command and reinforcing the EU while maintaining good relationship with the US. Fearing the worst, he would thus be motivated to take the lead.

Finally, Sarkozy may also have been convinced that it was all worth it by his Foreign Minister. Kouchner had experience related to Bosnia and Kosovo, had founded an

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<sup>281</sup> Maigret 2008, 12, 73–74

<sup>282</sup> Charpier 2006, 9–10

<sup>283</sup> Charpier 2006, 123–24

organisation dedicated to helping people in zones of conflict, and had personal experience that made him very intensely believe in getting involved in foreign conflicts. The “French Doctor” father of the Responsibility to Protect was thus the perfect man to convince the President of the need to lead the mediation effort as the right thing to do, regardless of the risks. Yugoslavia was clearly evoked in this context, telling French policymakers that even if they did nothing, they would be accused of not doing enough.

Overall, I do not consider that this element discredits Cognitive-Affective Theory, because there is evidence that French policymakers, and especially the President, were the most intense in this case. But the level of emotionality, and the source of this intensity, are unclear. This case is inconclusive for the empirical implication of CAT which states that the leader should have the most intense emotional beliefs.

There is no evidence of a shift in the leader-follower process coming from events of the international environment or persuasion attempts from the leader. There is also no indication that societal groups and the media were emotionally driven. Another element that is ambiguous, aside from the emotional intensity of the leader, is the prototypicality of his leading positions. The leader did not, in his actions and rhetoric, emphasize the difference with an outgroup to bolster cohesion within the community. The leader’s positions remain prototypical of the community, emphasizing peace, democracy, human rights, and Georgia’s rights to sovereignty and territorial integrity. But the leader’s behavior induced leadership through a weaker form of prototypicality, stereotypicality. The French President was the stereotypical leader, virile, energetic, extraverted. The “man of the situation” willing to take risks and run the show. It is very likely that this style enhanced the French President’s leadership because it is valued as the usual form of leadership in the West and beyond.

There is an explanation that can reconcile the two ambiguous results of this case – about the leader’s emotionality and stereotypicality – and yet remain in line with the Cognitive-Affective Theory. CAT is issue-specific, and in this case, the issue is peace mediation. It is very likely that mediating peace requires the leader to calm the belligerents and reduce the emotionality of the situation rather than to increase it. This would explain that no intense emotional language was found despite the leader’s intense involvement. The leader may have felt powerful emotions, but publicly refrained to express them. Peace mediation also means to discuss with everyone and take their view into consideration. This

is not compatible with strongly antagonizing an outgroup by maximizing the differences between the ingroup and the outgroup. In this case, this would mean that the best path to enhance prototypicality is for the leader to be prototypical in his typical behavior rather than through ingroup-outgroup contrast. For instance, despite the fact that the French President almost bullied Georgian policymakers in accepting the Moscow deal, the French Foreign Minister had gone to Tbilisi and negotiated with them first, and the French President had a good relationship before the crisis with Saakashvili. He could argue that he was simply speaking the truth to a friend when saying that no one would come to their aid, and that their only chance was the French-negotiated ceasefire. Note also that if prototypicality is not an option in this case, then this may contribute in reducing emotionality: emotional condemnations of an adversary are avoided as inappropriate.

After reviewing how Cognitive-Affective Theory applies to this case, the theory certainly remains plausible. Other theories would fare even worse, as is the case for the Liberal approach. We may still consider that CAT is incomplete and that some aspects remain unresolved. What drove the French President's strong willingness to lead? How did he bring transatlantic allies together without emphasizing an antagonist? It seems that it is his behavior and approach to the conflict that worked in his favor. The Sarkozy team's balanced approach to firmly engaging Russia, insisting on withdrawal from areas outside of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and preserving Saakashvili's regime could be accepted by other members as representative of the ultimate outcome desired by the community. Sarkozy was able to leverage emotional ties to pressure and influence policymakers in accepting the agreement he brokered, and then, at the right time, to ask and obtain his allies' support in the transatlantic community. This suggests that the Cognitive-Affective approach needs to include a consideration for affective ties and relationships that were built prior to a conflict. Despite all being part of a community, some policymakers clearly have better personal and professional relationships with each other than some, and this can become important in moments of crisis.

### A Note on EU Institutions

As some scholars have remarked,<sup>284</sup> pro-EU Sarkozy paradoxically showed that the EU Presidency could lead on the world scene by using intergovernmental channels and marginalizing EU institutions. EU actors were very clearly sidelined during the crisis and left in the shadow of French leadership.<sup>285</sup>

Since 2003, the EU had created a European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus (EUSR-SC). Peter Semneby took this office in 2006, with the mandate “to assist creating the conditions for progress on settlement of conflicts.”<sup>286</sup> Only the low profile and back channels of the EUSR were used in key moments during the crisis. The EU Special Representative for the common foreign and security policy (CFSP), the EU official in charge of foreign policy at the time, Javier Solana, visited Georgia for the first time only on September 30.<sup>287</sup> According to an anonymous EU official “the French Presidency encouraged Javier Solana not to interrupt his August holiday.”<sup>288</sup>

Moreover, at the end of September, the EU appointed a new “EU Special Representative for Georgia.” Pierre Morel, a senior French diplomat, was selected for this appointment. This new appointment amputated the mandate of the EUSR for the South Caucasus and created an overlap between the two EUSRs. The move was aimed at giving France more control of the EUSR tasked with negotiating after the conflict, and was supported by several EU member states because the current EUSR-SC, Semneby, was seen as not “neutral” enough, he had views considered to be anti-Russian.<sup>289</sup>

So not only were EU institutions taking a backseat during the crisis, but when one EU actor defended positions that European powers did not like, they were able to reduce his influence further by creating a new position which overlapped with his responsibilities. President Sarkozy and Foreign Minister Kouchner were flying the EU banner high, but the Georgia war was clearly a case of French leadership *of* the EU, and not *by* the EU. French policymakers moved ahead without a clear EU mandate, but they successfully avoided their

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<sup>284</sup> Dimitrakopoulos, Menon, and Passas 2009

<sup>285</sup> Popescu 2011, 87

<sup>286</sup> Popescu 2011, 74

<sup>287</sup> Popescu 2011, 87

<sup>288</sup> Mourtizen and Wivel 2012, 142

<sup>289</sup> R. G. Whitman and Wolff 2010, 103; Popescu 2011, 89

initiative falling out of grace with their partners by consulting them, on both sides of the Atlantic, especially during the first few intense days of the crisis.

## **Conclusion**

*If there's a fine, splendid world in the future, it will be largely because the United States and Russia get on well together.*

– President Barack Obama, in a conference with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev<sup>290</sup>

Driven by his emotional beliefs and taking the gamble that leading was worth the risks, Sarkozy's showmanship successfully managed the divisions and sensitivities so that all transatlantic powers, as well as other EU states, followed his lead. The 2008 conflict came after years of deteriorating East-West relations. In the wake of the Russo-Georgian war, the Bush Administration canceled all talks with Moscow, insisted on suspending NATO-Russia Council meetings, and canceled a major US-Russia deal on the peaceful use of nuclear power.<sup>291</sup> However, as Bush ended his second term, his successor was committed to a different approach.

Not long after President Obama succeeded Bush and moved to the White House, his Secretary of State Hillary Clinton offered a reset button to her Russian counterpart, symbolizing the willingness of the Obama Administration to start anew and improve ties with Moscow.<sup>292</sup> Obama had been a keen observer of the Russia-Georgia conflict, as it occurred during his campaign for the Presidency and it was used by his rival, Republican John McCain, to cast doubt on his foreign policy skills. Obama wanted to pragmatically engage Russia and exchange economic incentives for Moscow's willingness to be more cooperative on a number of foreign policy issues.

For a short period of time, there was a détente in transatlantic powers' relations with Russia, and this new approach seemed successful: Moscow supported the US in its negotiations with Iran and North Korea, returned to NATO for dialogue, and Washington prepared a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, sent the agreement on peaceful nuclear

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<sup>290</sup> Roberts 2014, 2

<sup>291</sup> Roberts 2014, 4

<sup>292</sup> BBC 2009

cooperation to be ratified by the Senate, and even reaffirmed the US support for Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization.<sup>293</sup> This window of opportunity for better relations, even after the events in Georgia, would not have been possible without Sarkozy's diplomatic leadership and negotiated resolution. This peaceful resolution could have paved the way for a fine and splendid world, to paraphrase Obama. Unfortunately, this improvement did not last and this window closed for good with developments in Ukraine and a new crisis where Russia and the transatlantic states would again be on opposite sides.

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<sup>293</sup> Roberts 2014, 6–9

## Chapter 5 – Driven by Outrage: Leadership in Sanctions Against Russia

*Until I die, I will not understand that it took so long before rescue workers were able to do their difficult job in Ukraine. (...) human remains were used as a political game. I hope that I never have to see that again.*

– Frans Timmermans, Foreign Minister of the Netherlands<sup>1</sup>

In November 2013, President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych abandoned the prospect of an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU), and oriented his country toward closer ties with Russia. In the following months, Ukrainian society became increasingly fractioned between a pro-EU and pro-Russia side. This fracture, combined with Russian involvement in the conflict, destabilized the country as it lapsed into a full blown civil war. Analysts and political actors have described the resulting crisis in Ukraine as the worst crisis in Europe since the end of the Cold War,<sup>2</sup> the most serious of the 21st century,<sup>3</sup> and even the most serious foreign policy challenge since the end of the Second World War.<sup>4</sup>

Transatlantic policymakers were quickly drawn into the crisis, both because of their responsibility in its initial trigger,<sup>5</sup> and because of the important geostrategic location of Ukraine, a large European country which is both a neighbor to the EU and to Russia. Responding to these events, transatlantic policymakers adopted several common positions and deployed a dynamic diplomacy in attempt to deescalate the crisis. These positions include siding with the opposition to Yanukovych's government early on, supporting and negotiating many of the attempts at a ceasefire, condemning the referendum and annexation of Crimea by Russia, suspending Russia from the G8 and cancelling the Sochi summit, sending additional NATO air forces to patrol Eastern Europe, congratulating the new Ukrainian government after the May 25th elections, and providing financial assistance and equipment to Ukraine. This chapter, however, focuses exclusively on the issue of sanctions adopted against Russia.

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<sup>1</sup> Tharoor 2014

<sup>2</sup> Fabius 2014c; MacFarlane and Menon 2014; Steinmeier and Timmermans 2014

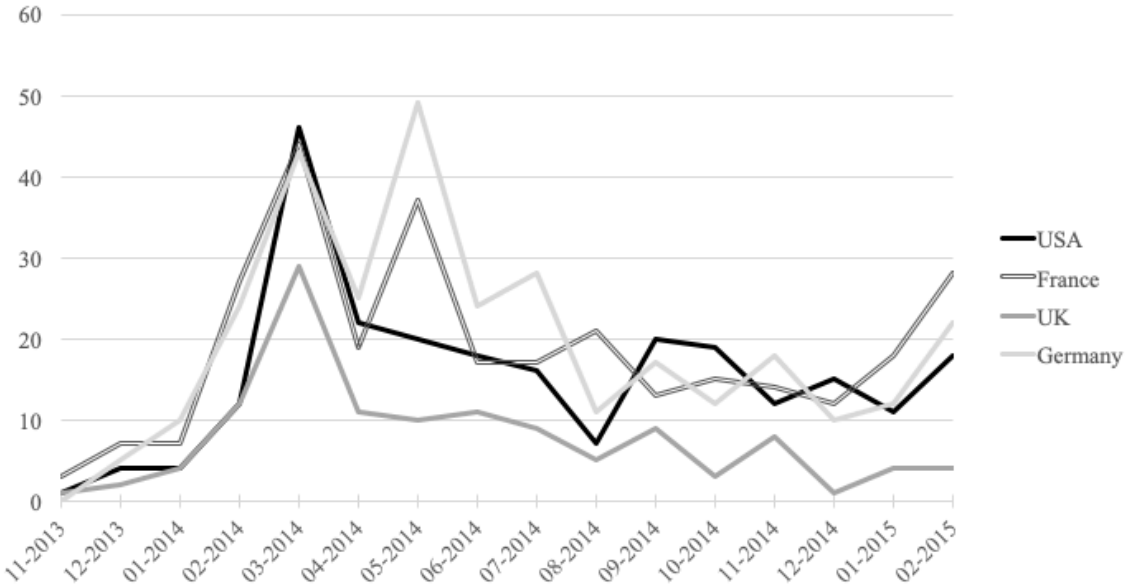
<sup>3</sup> Cameron 2014a; Hague 2014f

<sup>4</sup> Steinmeier 2014j

<sup>5</sup> For years before the crisis, the EU had been deepening its ties to Ukraine and undermining Russian interests in the country, see Gehring, Urbanski, and Oberthür 2017

In the first part of the chapter, I explain the decision to focus on the issue of sanctions. Secondly, I describe the positions adopted by transatlantic allies as the crisis unfolded with an emphasis on the leader-follower coordination process. I concentrate the analysis on the first months of the crisis, from February to July 2014. This covers the period of the escalation of violence and initial attempts by top decision makers to manage the crisis, and ends with the third round of sanctions, when sectoral economic sanctions were adopted by the United States (US) and the EU. The number of declarations made by various countries during the crisis can be a good indicator of the intensity of a crisis. Although each transatlantic power has its own bureaucratic culture and style influencing the number and length of the declarations they make, we can compare the number of declarations in time to their base rate to see when, during the conflict, did transatlantic powers make the most declarations. Figure 6 shows that the conflict was barely discussed in November, but spiked in February and March, eventually to drop in intensity after the adoption of sanctions at the end of July.

**Figure 6. Number of declarations made per month for each country**



Interestingly, this figure shows the increase in the declarations for France and Germany in May and June, when they increased their diplomatic efforts – leading to the Normandy format – to try solving the conflict. There is no similar increase for the US and the UK, who were



kept out of these negotiations. It also shows that the number of declarations began to rise again in January and February 2015, when negotiating the Minsk II agreement. In brief, this figure illustrates how February to July is the most interesting and intense period of the crisis, and how all transatlantic powers made more than 10 declarations per month during this period, with the exception of the UK near the end, while these states made almost no declarations earlier.

Finally, in the last part of this chapter, I contrast the empirical data of this case with various explanations of transatlantic leadership. Integrating policymakers' beliefs and their emotional reactions best explains the transatlantic leader-follower dynamics in this case.

### **The Issue of Sanctions**

I focus on the issue of sanctions for four reasons. First, sanctions were the most powerful tools that the transatlantic powers' decision makers were willing to use against Russia. They never truly considered direct military intervention, either unilaterally or through some multilateral force, so the sanctions became the central instrument to punish Russia without risking war. Sanctions are situated in the issue-area of declarative and coercive diplomacy, and in this case they aimed mostly at compellence: "the use of threats to persuade an opponent to change policies (...) to reverse the aggressive move that has been made."<sup>6</sup>

Second, sanctions have consequences for Russian individuals and entities targeted by them, but they also do for transatlantic actors. Important economic interests were involved. The different perceptions of their interests and of the cost that each state would bear made coordination over sanctions difficult, and created tension between allies. According to simulations conducted by the Austrian Institute for Economic Research (WIFO, Österreichisches Institut Für Wirtschaftsforschung) the cost of the sanctions and the resulting economic disruptions for EU countries and Switzerland was € 34 billion in value in the short run, and € 92 billion in the longer run. The drop in employment affected 0.9 million people in the short run, and cost 2.2 million jobs in the longer term.<sup>7</sup> In proportion of their gross domestic product, the Baltic countries, Finland and Eastern European countries were the most

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<sup>6</sup> L. Freedman 2014, 10

<sup>7</sup> Austrian Institute for Economic Research (WIFO) 2015, 1–2

affected.<sup>8</sup> Cooperating on sanctions represented a very difficult task for decision makers: how did they overcome the reluctance associated with economic costs and divergent interests to cooperate?

Third, these economic interests make this a very interesting case for the liberal approach to international leadership. Because of the great number and importance of economic interests involved, through trade, energy flows, and arm deals, this is an easier case for the liberal theory and a hard one for an approach based on emotional beliefs. From the standpoint of commercial liberalism, policymakers are expected to represent the economic interests of their own constituents. This would mean a strong willingness to lead against sanctions from the states most affected by potential sanctions. Liberal theorists also expect to find intense pressure from domestic groups and lobbies on decision makers, especially by those negatively affected by sanctions who would advocate that sanctions should be avoided, delayed, or kept at a minimal level. Combined with divergent interests, these factors predict that a common position on sanctions will be extremely difficult to reach, and that such a common position would be confined to the smallest common denominator. If divergences are overcome, a liberal approach would expect followership to be dependent upon side payments and various compensations offered to decision makers to secure their agreement to a common position.

The commercial liberal approach is not a strawman: several analysts did reason in line with this approach. At the end of March 2014, Ian Bremmer, professor at New York University and President of the Eurasia Group, wrote in *The New York Times* that “America’s attempt at tougher Iran-style sanctions, coordinated with allies, will ultimately fail.”<sup>9</sup> In line with liberal arguments, he argued that such sanctions would have “prohibitively high” costs for the Europeans and that American businesses would also push against the US adopting stronger sanctions targeting Russia<sup>10</sup>. Later in the crisis, James Kanter interpreted the resistance from European partners to adopt economic sanctions as due to their “deeper economic ties” to Russia and he mentioned Germany’s import of natural gas, Britain’s banking ties, Italy’s financial and energy interests, and France’s arm deals with Moscow.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Austrian Institute for Economic Research (WIFO) 2015, 3

<sup>9</sup> Bremmer 2014

<sup>10</sup> Bremmer 2014

<sup>11</sup> Kanter 2014

French commentators in *Le Monde* also explained the reluctance of the UK to adopt sanctions by the influence networks of Russian oligarchs in the City of London, or “Londongrad” as it had been called,<sup>12</sup> and for Germany by their energy interests and the influence on the government of powerful business lobbies.<sup>13</sup> Several other commentators and even political actors involved in the crisis explained the reluctance of EU member states by their financial, trade, or energy interests<sup>14</sup>. The liberal argument best illustrates the oft-implicit logic behind explanations of the transatlantic response to the Ukraine crisis.

Finally, studying coordination on sanctions is also quite important for practical reasons tied to this particular issue. Strong leadership and swift coordination on sanctions would make sanctions much more efficient as a tool to signal punishment and impose costs on bad behavior. The reason is that, and this is especially true for economic sanctions, discussing and threatening such sanctions for a long time gives time for the potential targets to move their assets so that if sanctions are expected and come late, targeted individuals and entities will be less affected. For instance, Clara Portela shows how the time-lag between adopting sanctions and their implementation was a problem in the case of sanctioning the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in 1998-1999 because it gave time for the Yugoslav government to move its funds out of the EU.<sup>15</sup> It is also a less powerful signal on the international scene if sanctions were adopted after serious disagreements and great hesitation.

The issue-area of sanctions, or “restrictive measures” as it is often called in the EU, is structured in a way that requires close coordination between EU member states on the one hand, and with the US on the other. Because of the procedure formalized in the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), sanctions must be agreed together unanimously by the EU Council, usually in the foreign affairs formation where the 28 Foreign Ministers meet (see Article 30-31 of the TEU). For several sanctions, like arm embargoes and visa bans, this decision is then enforced by Member states. However, when economic sanctions are involved (other than concerning arm trade), because they have an impact on the common market, there is a second step in the process: after unanimity in the Council, regulations must then be adopted through

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<sup>12</sup> Albert 2014; Roche 2014

<sup>13</sup> Lemaître 2014

<sup>14</sup> Ewing 2014; Fabius 2014; Thomas 2014

<sup>15</sup> Portela 2015, 53–54

a qualified-majority vote procedure according to Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).<sup>16</sup> This means that EU countries are bound together in adopting sanctions and must be in frequent contact to establish a common position.

The nature of the sanction issue also binds US to close coordination with their European partners and limits the possibility of unilateral action. American Officials expressed the worry that European companies would take advantage of unilateral US sanctions to replace American companies in trading with Russia.<sup>17</sup> Sanctions are really efficient only if an important group of countries adopts them together. In the next section, I explain how transatlantic cooperation over sanctions came about in response to the Ukrainian crisis.

### **Cooperating on Sanctions against Russia**

*America must always lead on the world stage. If we don't, no one else will. (...) But U.S. military action cannot be the only – or even primary – component of our leadership in every instance. Just because we have the best hammer does not mean that every problem is a nail.*

– President Barack Obama, in his address to the Military Academy, at West Point<sup>18</sup>

The crisis in Ukraine worsened throughout January 2014 as the Ukrainian government sought to repress the population and impose anti-protest laws. However, it was really pushed to the top of the agenda of Transatlantic decision makers in February 2014 when violence levels increased. After Yanukovich sided with Moscow, protests gradually spread all over Ukraine with the focal point in Independence Square in Kiev. On February 20 and the following day, at least 88 people, and some say more than 100, were killed in extremely violent clashes between protesters and the police in Kiev, with government snipers shooting down protestors.<sup>19</sup> The first sanctions adopted in the crisis were a response to this repression and targeted Ukrainian officials considered responsible for the violence against protesters with

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<sup>16</sup> Portela 2015, 41–42; Giumelli 2013, 9–12

<sup>17</sup> P. Baker 2014d

<sup>18</sup> Obama 2014j

<sup>19</sup> Foreign Staff of The Telegraph 2014; BBC 2014d

travel bans.<sup>20</sup> Despite an agreement mediated by the foreign ministers of the Weimar triangle (France, Germany, and Poland) in Kiev on February 21,<sup>21</sup> Yanukovich fled from the capital the next day as protestors took over government buildings and the pro-EU side took over the Ukrainian parliament. The focal point of the crisis then shifted to Crimea.

In this section, I show that the United States, and especially a group of pro-sanction officials within the US Administration, took the lead in favor of sanctions. During the two first rounds of sanctions, adopted on March 6 and 17, cooperation was achieved swiftly, so much so that it is not as easy to identify the leader. The third round of more ambitious economic sanctions adopted at the end of July are clearly the result of American leadership. European allies came along after four months of delaying followership and resistance to sectoral sanctions.

#### Round One: Covert Intervention and Targeted Sanctions

On February 27, Pro-Russia gunmen seized government buildings in Simferopol, the capital of Crimea.<sup>22</sup> The “[a]rmed militants took control of government buildings; crowd filled the streets chanting ‘Russia, Russia,’ and legislators called for a vote to redefine relations with Ukraine.<sup>23</sup>” A great number of these armed men appeared to be Russian military forces but wore no insignia and were not recognized by Russia.<sup>24</sup> In reaction, on February 28, US President Barack Obama expressed concerns with Russian “military movement,” and urged Russia not to interfere with Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>25</sup> The US Administration ratcheted up the rhetoric on March 1<sup>st</sup> when the US Secretary of State John Kerry condemned “the Russian Federation’s invasion and occupation of Ukrainian territory.”<sup>26</sup>

The US was the first transatlantic power whose decision makers publicly announced their positions on adopting sanctions against Russia. In several interviews as early as March 2nd, the US Secretary of State suggested that there would be repercussions, including “assets

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<sup>20</sup> Castle and Gordon 2014

<sup>21</sup> Hyde-Price 2015, 607–8

<sup>22</sup> BBC 2014d

<sup>23</sup> Higgins 2014a

<sup>24</sup> Yugas and Jalabi 2014

<sup>25</sup> Obama 2014a

<sup>26</sup> Kerry 2014b

freeze, visa bans” on Russia for its actions.<sup>27</sup> On the same day, in a joint statement, the G7 countries condemned Russia’s violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, and suspended Russia from the G8.<sup>28</sup> However, the joint declaration did not threaten Russia with sanctions. On March 3, the EU foreign affairs Council also stated the possibility of sanctions, although in less stark terms than the US had. The Council took position to possibly suspend bilateral talks with Russia on visa matters, and it stated that it will “consider further targeted measures.”<sup>29</sup>

On March 6, the United States adopted visa restrictions against individuals who participated in threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The US President also asked the Treasury Department to freeze the assets of anyone involved in such activities. President Obama declared that the aim was to “impose a cost on Russia and those responsible for the situation in Crimea,” and that these steps were taken in coordination with European allies.<sup>30</sup> The extraordinary European Council on Ukraine announced similar sanctions on the same day: suspending bilateral talks with Russia on visa matters, travel bans, and assets freeze.<sup>31</sup> The discussion among the 28 at the Council were difficult, with some countries such as the Baltic states, Poland, Finland, and Sweden in favor of strong sanctions while others, like Germany, strongly opposed sanctioning Moscow.<sup>32</sup> The Lithuanian President, Dalia Grybauskaitė, opened the works of the Council by declaring that “after Ukraine, there is going to be Moldavia, after Moldavia, it will be other countries.”<sup>33</sup>

The British Prime Minister claimed leadership in Europe for this first round of sanctions. According to him, “Britain played a leading role in helping to reach this agreement, including through a meeting I convened with fellow leaders from France, Germany, Italy and Poland on the morning of the Council.”<sup>34</sup> He also added that the idea of a contact group was first proposed by him to the Polish Prime Minister in January, and that the council tasked the European Commission to work on additional measure “at my instigation.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Kerry 2014c; Kerry 2014d

<sup>28</sup> G-7 Leaders 2014a

<sup>29</sup> EU Council 2014a

<sup>30</sup> Obama 2014d

<sup>31</sup> EU Council 2014b

<sup>32</sup> Lemaître 2014

<sup>33</sup> Riols and Salles 2014

<sup>34</sup> Cameron 2014b

<sup>35</sup> Cameron 2014b

These leadership claims are almost certainly exaggerated. First, these declarations come at the same time as reports that British Prime Minister Cameron strongly pushed against “any trade sanctions against Russia” during the EU meeting.<sup>36</sup> A memo for the Prime Minister that was photographed by BBC journalists when national security adviser Hugh Powell went to 10 Downing Street revealed that British policymakers wanted to avoid commercial sanctions or closing the financial center of London to Russians.<sup>37</sup> The British claims may have just been a way to present themselves in a positive light, or maybe they thought that they could avoid economic sanctions if they strongly supported this limited first round. Second, US policymakers spoke publicly on the issue of sanctions and were pushing for them earlier than British policymakers, suggesting that they were the actual position leader.

#### Round Two: The Annexation of Crimea

The same day as the first round of sanctions, the Supreme Council of Crimea moved ahead the date of a referendum on the status of the region – which was initially supposed to be held in May – to March 16.<sup>38</sup> At this point, the Obama Administration was divided on the issue of further sanctions. One group wanted far-reaching sanctions early on, even before the referendum in Crimea, because they thought a tough stance could prevent it. This group included the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Victoria J. Nuland, who made several trips to Europe during the crisis and has been described as “passionate about anchoring Ukraine in the West.”<sup>39</sup> It also included the US ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey R. Pyatt.<sup>40</sup> A second group of decision makers were worried that sanctions could have negative economic consequences and did not support strong sanctions. This group included Treasury Secretary Jack Lew, the President’s Trade Representative Michael Froman, and the International Economics’ Adviser Caroline Atkinson.<sup>41</sup>

The President decided in favor of an approach closer to the group reluctant to impose tough sanctions early. Like him, transatlantic policymakers firmly opposed the upcoming

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<sup>36</sup> M. R. Gordon and Erlanger 2014

<sup>37</sup> Albert 2014

<sup>38</sup> Yugas and Jalabi 2014

<sup>39</sup> P. Baker 2014a

<sup>40</sup> P. Baker 2014d

<sup>41</sup> P. Baker 2014d

referendum and warned of further sanctions should it be allowed to proceed. They considered the referendum illegal and illegitimate. They also worked to engage with Russia in order to persuade it to reverse its stance and remove their support for the secessionists.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel was probably the most active among transatlantic decision makers in engaging Russia. She made several phone calls to Russian President Vladimir Putin in an attempt to persuade him to change course. Merkel had good relations with the Russians prior to the crisis, she speaks Russian, and was presented by analysts as a leader who understands very well the Kremlin's world view.<sup>42</sup> These factors allowed the German Chancellor and Foreign Minister to take the diplomatic lead in close coordination with French policymakers and other EU allies. However, Chancellor Merkel's attempts failed and, exasperated, she told the American President that Putin lived in "another world."<sup>43</sup> The most that Merkel could do was to convince the Russian President to accept an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) observer mission. The purpose of this mission was to monitor Ukraine for violence and human rights violations.<sup>44</sup> Reports indicate that there was a similar division within the German government as there was in the American Administration. The German Chancellor was ready for more sanctions, but Foreign Minister Steinmeier was more reluctant and preferred pursuing talks.<sup>45</sup>

After the referendum in Crimea was held in dubious conditions,<sup>46</sup> the secessionists declared their independence and demanded to join the Russian federation.<sup>47</sup> Transatlantic policymakers reacted to the referendum by moving ahead with further sanctions. The US President, on March 17, authorized sanctions on Russian officials and entities "responsible for undermining the sovereignty, territorial integrity and government of Ukraine" and "operating in the arms sectors and proving support to officials of the Russian government."<sup>48</sup> The measures included travel bans and assets freeze for the targeted individuals and entities. The US targeted 16 senior Russian officials and business leaders, and they also targeted Bank

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<sup>42</sup> Smale 2014a

<sup>43</sup> Smale 2014a

<sup>44</sup> Smale 2014b

<sup>45</sup> Sjursen and Rosén 2017, 28

<sup>46</sup> These conditions include no time for public debate, Russian special forces and soldiers occupying the region and surrounding the Parliament building, and also no option on the ballot for the status quo, the choice being between joining Russia and going back to the 1992 status of Crimea as independent.

<sup>47</sup> Yugas and Jalabi 2014

<sup>48</sup> Obama 2014f



Rossyia.<sup>49</sup> On the same day, and for the same reasons, the EU Council targeted 21 individuals with travel bans and assets freeze.<sup>50</sup> These sanctions are understood among Europeans as “phase two” sanctions, going further than mere phase one suspension of talks with Russia and other restrictions, but not yet phase three that would target sectors of the Russian economy.

Even though President Putin declared earlier that Russia was not considering annexing Crimea,<sup>51</sup> and despite being confronted to these sanctions, Russia annexed Crimea on March 18 through a Treaty of Accession. The Russian President claimed that Crimea had “always been part of Russia.”<sup>52</sup> The difficulty of diplomatic dialogue with Putin, the failure to get Russians to change course, and the subsequent annexation of the region weakened the position of transatlantic states reluctant to adopt sanctions, as well as policymakers within divided governments who argued for diplomacy before sanctions.

Some commentators interpreted this second round of sanctions from EU policymakers as “backing away from their threat to impose wider economic sanctions.”<sup>53</sup> However, I have not been able to find any such clear threats in the declarations of EU policymakers. They were always very careful to avoid specifying what precisely would further measures or additional sanctions be like.

### The Long Wait for the Third Round

All transatlantic decision makers presented further economic sanctions as “on the table” after the annexation of Crimea, but their willingness to adopt such sanctions varied greatly. As early as a few days later, American officials came publicly in favor of sanctions and then consistently pushed for further sanctions against Russia in the months ahead. Both the US President and his Secretary of State discussed possible sectoral sanctions as early as March 20.<sup>54</sup> On the same day, European leaders asked the EU Commission to begin preparatory work on potential “stage three” economic sanctions. On March 25, the US President

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<sup>49</sup> Landler, Lowrey, and Myers 2014

<sup>50</sup> EU Council 2014c

<sup>51</sup> Yugas and Jalabi 2014

<sup>52</sup> BBC 2014a

<sup>53</sup> Higgins 2014b

<sup>54</sup> Kerry 2014i; Obama 2014g

discussed potential sectoral sanctions that could target sectors like energy, finance, arm sales, or trade.<sup>55</sup> He also declared that he was in consultation with European allies on this issue.

Damon Wilson, a former security aide to President Bush and executive vice president of the Atlantic Council, said of him “I don’t think I’ve seen a president more personally engaged on any foreign policy crisis in a concerted way as he has been on Ukraine.<sup>56</sup>” The President had firmly decided by the end of March to push for wider economic sanctions, but he was not willing to go ahead without a coordinated transatlantic response. The task of the US Administration for the next months would be to attempt to convince their partners across the Atlantic to come along. These attempts repeatedly failed and although “phase two” sanctions were broadened several times, European policymakers were reluctant to follow with sectoral sanctions.

When I asked an EU official that I interviewed if there were American pressures during this four-month period before the sanctions were adopted to influence EU powers, he confirmed my other evidence that identified the US as leaders: “oh yes, very much so. There was a lot of heavy lifting from the US to convince the recalcitrant member states to accept the sanctions, a stronger sanctions regime vis-à-vis Russia. The US had been very clear about this since the very beginning.”<sup>57</sup>

### *The Geneva Accords*

At the beginning of April, pro-Russian protestors across Eastern Ukraine adopted similar tactics to what the secessionists had done in Crimea: they seized government buildings and declared their independence. On April 7, the “People’s Republic of Donetsk” announced its aim to become an independent state,<sup>58</sup> and similar groups did the same in Luhansk. They were also similar but less important disruptions in Kharkiv.<sup>59</sup> The conflict quickly spread to the East of the country as the Ukrainian government was losing control over many areas and key buildings.

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<sup>55</sup> Obama 2014g

<sup>56</sup> Shear and Baker 2014

<sup>57</sup> Interview with EU official, May 11, 2018

<sup>58</sup> Higgins and Herszenhorn 2014

<sup>59</sup> BBC 2014d

At the time, German Foreign Minister Steinmeier's declarations were filled with remarks that emphasized discussion and keeping open diplomatic talks as the key position and most important necessity to have a chance to solve the crisis. He advocated that a "breakdown in communication" must be avoided at all costs.<sup>60</sup> Steinmeier publicly denied any possibility of German leadership, arguing that Europe as a whole was the leader:

A lead role in the EU is something that's regularly called for, yet something that would never be accepted. And it's easy to understand why. We've created institutions – in the realm of foreign affairs the High Representative – that help avoid any competition for leadership and domination.<sup>61</sup>

In mid-April, in reaction to this escalation in Eastern Ukraine, a conference brought together the main actors in Geneva to attempt and resolve the conflict. The US Administration was still divided, with a pro-sanctions group arguing for further sanctions to be adopted before the conference, and another preferring to avoid such sanctions to give a chance to diplomacy.<sup>62</sup> On April 17, after six hours of negotiation, the US Secretary of State, the Russian Foreign Minister, the interim Ukrainian Foreign Minister and the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton agreed on a number of points. What became known as the Geneva agreement called for the disarmament of armed groups in Eastern Ukraine, it also demanded that they return all illegally seized buildings. In exchange, the Ukrainian government accepted amnesty for protestors who were not suspected of capital crimes.<sup>63</sup>

After this agreement, on April 20, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius warned that if there was no deescalation and measures taken in line with the Geneva accords, a higher level of sanctions could be applied.<sup>64</sup> In the end, the Geneva agreements became only one of several ceasefire agreements adopted during the crisis that failed to stop the fighting or deescalate tensions. One of the main issue was that the pro-Russian groups were not included in the talks, and Russian decision makers claimed that they could not control them. In fact, Russia even argued provocatively that the agreement foremost targeted far-right groups in Western Ukraine such as *Right Sector* and that they were the ones responsible for the

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<sup>60</sup> Steinmeier 2014c

<sup>61</sup> Steinmeier 2014g

<sup>62</sup> P. Baker 2014f

<sup>63</sup> M. R. Gordon and Baker 2014

<sup>64</sup> Fabius 2014j

violence.<sup>65</sup> Insurgents in Eastern Ukraine did not release checkpoints nor did they vacate government buildings.<sup>66</sup>

On April 28, President Obama broadened sanctions to target more Russian officials and companies (from 33 to 48 individuals). Furthermore, he announced that existing export licenses for high-technology items that might contribute to Russia's military capabilities will be revoked, thus going slightly further than merely broadening existing sanctions.<sup>67</sup> On the same day, still in step with the US, the EU Council expanded the list of persons targeted by sanctions to 48.<sup>68</sup> This can be seen as European powers, and very clearly in the case of France, walking back from their threat to adopt a higher level of sanctions should the Geneva agreement be ignored.

#### *Further Provocations and the Ukrainian Elections*

After more referendums held under difficult conditions, secessionist movements in Donetsk and Luhansk declared their independence on May 11.<sup>69</sup> This time Russian officials refrained from recognizing the new "Republics" and did not express support for their referendums. However, the Russian President still found a way to add fuel to the fire. On May 9<sup>th</sup>, Vladimir Putin traveled to the naval port of Sevastopol. In a speech to celebrate the Russian victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War, he argued that the territory of Crimea belonged to Russia and that the annexation was only "righting a historical wrong."<sup>70</sup> In the wake of these events, the EU Council broadened the scope of individuals and entities targeted by stage two sanctions, bringing the total to 61 individuals and 2 entities affected.<sup>71</sup>

During this period, policymakers were mostly focused on the upcoming Ukrainian elections. All the top transatlantic decision makers threatened a higher level of sanctions if the Ukrainian election was impeded in any way. However, they left vague what they would consider as unacceptable interference and what was not. A country torn by a civil war could obviously not have "normal" elections under those circumstances. The following quotes are

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<sup>65</sup> A. E. Kramer 2014

<sup>66</sup> A. E. Kramer 2014

<sup>67</sup> P. Baker and Landler 2014

<sup>68</sup> EU Council 2014d

<sup>69</sup> BBC 2014d

<sup>70</sup> MacFarquhar 2014

<sup>71</sup> EU Council 2014e

representative. French Foreign Minister Fabius declared: “[i]f the elections of the 25 May do not happen, the presidential elections in Ukraine, which are the normal exit for a crisis, at this time we will move to level 3.”<sup>72</sup> US Secretary of State Kerry indicated that, “if Russian elements continue to sabotage the democratic process and prevent Ukraine from holding a free and fair election 19 days from now on the 25<sup>th</sup>, then we stand ready to implement additional sanctions.”<sup>73</sup>

The OSCE monitors gave the Ukrainian election high marks where it was actually held, but the situation prevented voting to take place in the Eastern part of the country, and the election could not be held at all in Crimea.<sup>74</sup> Despite these limitations, transatlantic decision makers did not mention sanctions after the elections, and they congratulated the new government for its election. This was so despite the fact that they recognized that the election was actually impeded, for instance the British Foreign Secretary praised citizens who overcame obstacles to vote and regretted that “separatist armed gangs who purport to be ‘peaceful activists’ sought to deny the citizen of Donetsk and Luhansk their right to vote.”<sup>75</sup> President Obama recognized that millions of Ukrainians went to the polls “[d]espite provocations and violence.”<sup>76</sup> Thus, transatlantic policymakers recognized that the elections were disrupted, and did not raise the level of sanctions as they had threatened to do.

### *The Ultimatums of June*

At the beginning of June, in a G7 statement, transatlantic powers declared themselves ready to impose further sanctions “should events so require,” still keeping the threat as a possibility, but without any clear conditions.<sup>77</sup> All the G7 top policymakers, as well as the Russian President, then traveled to Normandy for the commemoration of the D-Day landing during the Second World War. President Obama sought to use the G7 meeting in Brussels and the commemoration as an opportunity to convince European policymakers to follow his lead on sectoral sanctions.

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<sup>72</sup> Fabius 2014l

<sup>73</sup> Kerry 2014k

<sup>74</sup> Herszenhorn 2014a

<sup>75</sup> Hague 2014h

<sup>76</sup> Obama 2014i

<sup>77</sup> G-7 Leaders 2014b

However, this persuasion attempt failed. French policymakers were especially reluctant to follow on sectoral sanctions, according to observers because of the deal to sell warships to Russia, and also because they wanted to preserve their relationship with Moscow. A French official declared “How can you ignore Russia today? They are important actors in the Middle East. They are everywhere.”<sup>78</sup> The conversations between the US President and the President of France were described as “fraught with another fresh source of tension” because of the news of an American investigation that could result in a fine of several billions against the French bank BNP Paribas.<sup>79</sup>

On June 6, President Obama gave a one month ultimatum to Russia, demanding that they change course. The demands on Moscow included, “recognize and negotiate with the newly elected leader of Ukraine, stop the flow of fighters and arms across the border and press separatist to disarm, relinquish seized public buildings and join talks with the central authorities in Kiev.”<sup>80</sup>

Instead of following the US lead, French policymakers attempted to take the lead on a diplomatic initiative to resolve the conflict. Taking advantage of the fact that the Russian President and the Ukrainian President were both at the same place for the commemorations, French President Hollande organized a meeting. Although this meeting did not resolve the crisis, it became institutionalized as the “Normandy format,” a format which included the French President, the German Chancellor, the Ukrainian President and the Russian President in diplomatic talks to find solutions.

Far from being cooperative, in the following weeks Russia only seemed to take actions that could bring further destabilization. On June 16, Russian gas provider Gazprom cut off gas deliveries to Ukraine arguing that Ukraine had not paid for the gas and demanding that it pay a much higher price than it used to get, and higher than the market price as well.<sup>81</sup> On the ground, the conflict raged on and even escalated in mid-June, with Ukrainian government forces attempting to recapture the cities under secessionist control in the East. Sympathizers and increasingly sophisticated weapons were pouring in from Russia to support secessionists.

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<sup>78</sup> P. Baker 2014h

<sup>79</sup> P. Baker 2014i

<sup>80</sup> P. Baker 2014i

<sup>81</sup> MacFarquhar and Herszenhorn 2014

On June 14, pro-Russian forces shot down a military plane flying over Eastern Ukraine.<sup>82</sup> The fighting in the cities was very dangerous for civilians stuck between the Ukrainian and pro-Russian forces: the UN estimated that between mid-April and the end of July, 799 civilians had been killed and 2,155 wounded.<sup>83</sup>

On June 25, the EU announced a specific economic sanction, prohibiting the import of any goods from Crimea and the provision of financial services to entities in the region. On June 27, the EU announced their own ultimatum and laid out four conditions and a limited time frame of four days for Russia to comply. The four conditions were: the release of Western hostages kept by pro-Russian separatists, giving back three checkpoints held by the rebels to the Ukraine government, an agreement for the OSCE to monitor a ceasefire, and the beginning of negotiations over the Ukrainian President's 15-point peace plan proposed a few days earlier.<sup>84</sup> However, when these four days had passed, the EU did not take any action, and more than a week later it merely extended the list of individuals targeted by sanctions (from 61 to 72) without raising the sanction level.<sup>85</sup> The President of the European Council, Herman Von Rompuy, recognized later on July 17 that the steps requested by the ultimatum "have not been adequately taken" and that the violence and flow of arms and fighters across the Ukraine-Russia border continued.<sup>86</sup> Even at the end of June, Europeans still put much effort and faith in the diplomatic track, holding several conference phonecalls in the "Normandy" format.

British policymakers seemed satisfied with the current state of affairs. On June 5, the UK Prime Minister, talking about the US and EU countries, argued that "it's been very striking, actually, over the last few months, how we've been able to stay as unified as we have."<sup>87</sup> On June 11, he presented G7 nations as "united" in supporting Ukraine and sending a firm message to Russia.<sup>88</sup> On July 3, according to the Foreign Secretary, the "UK stands shoulder-to-shoulder with European partners" in resolving the Ukraine crisis. He also hinted vaguely at being ready to impose further sanctions.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> BBC 2014d

<sup>83</sup> Tavernise and Sneider 2014

<sup>84</sup> Herszenhorn 2014b

<sup>85</sup> EU Council 2014f

<sup>86</sup> Van Rompuy 2014

<sup>87</sup> Cameron 2014d

<sup>88</sup> Cameron 2014e

<sup>89</sup> Hague 2014m

On June 12, when asked if he was on the same page as the Obama Administration for future sanctions, French Foreign Minister Fabius replied “I think so, provided that everybody does the same sacrifices. It’s not a sanction against Europe. It’s a sanction against Russia. You must not forget it.”<sup>90</sup> French decision makers were reluctant to adopt sanctions because they felt that they would not be balanced and that they would be more hardly hit by them.

In the beginning of July, further tensions deteriorated the relationship between the US and Germany, impeding attempts at American leadership. The US-Germany relationship was already tense over the issue of American intelligence spying German officials and wire-tapping the Chancellor’s phone. When these revelations came to light in October 2013, the Chancellor declared that it represents a “grave breach of trust.”<sup>91</sup> However, these difficulties remained and intensified after further revelations. On July 2nd, the German intelligence service arrested a man suspected of spying for Russia, but instead discovered that he had been working for the United States. The investigation on his case also revealed that a second individual working for Germany was in fact an American agent. Confronted to these revelations, Germany demanded that the top United States’ intelligence official in Berlin leave the country.<sup>92</sup>

Despite these tensions, US officials continued their attempts at persuading their transatlantic partners. On July 14, the White House summoned European ambassadors because American officials wanted to show them the intelligence on Russia’s involvement in the situation in Ukraine.<sup>93</sup> Also in order to convince Europeans to adopt tougher sanctions, President Obama made phone calls to the British Prime Minister, the French President and on July 15 he called the German Chancellor.<sup>94</sup> However, European reluctance could not be overcome.

In summary, from March 18 to mid-July, transatlantic policymakers did broaden at times the individuals or entities targeted by travel bans and assets freeze, but despite several threats to move to a higher level of sanctions, they remained unable to coordinate on sectoral sanctions.

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<sup>90</sup> Fabius 2014m

<sup>91</sup> Barkin 2013

<sup>92</sup> Smale 2014c

<sup>93</sup> P. Baker and Kanter 2014

<sup>94</sup> P. Baker and Kanter 2014



### Round Three: Adopting Sectoral Sanctions

On July 16, 2014, in what seems like a follow-up to his June ultimatum, the US President unilaterally adopted further sanctions targeting Russia's largest companies and financial institutions. This included freezing assets of Russian defense companies, and blocking financing for banks and energy companies. The White House targeted energy giants like the Rosneft oil company and Gazprombank, as well as eight state-owned defense companies.<sup>95</sup> On the same day, on July 16, the French Foreign Minister indicated in Brussels that the text being prepared for the EU Council did not include level 3 sanctions, and that no arm embargo was in the cards.<sup>96</sup> The Europeans were reluctant to follow, and on July 18 the EU Council merely extended the legal basis for sanctions.<sup>97</sup> On July 25, it expanded the number of individuals targeted by the sanctions and added several entities to the list, bringing the total to 87 individuals and 20 entities, but still not bringing the sanctions to phase three.<sup>98</sup>

President Obama likely hoped that by going further he would create pressure for Europeans to jump on the bandwagon. He argued that American leadership was required to find solutions in a complex and challenging time.<sup>99</sup> It is also possible that he decided in favor of the unilateral move because he thought the time for persuading was over and that no more could be done to convince Europeans to follow. As the US Secretary of State put it, these sanctions "are reflections on the President's exhaustion of patience with words that are not accompanied by actions."<sup>100</sup>

On July 17, 2014, a civilian Malaysia Airlines plane, flight MH17 flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, crashed in Eastern Ukraine. 298 people, many of them Europeans, were on board. In the wake of the plane crash and the events of the following days, when it was revealed that the plane was probably shot down by pro-Russian separatist fighters using Russian military technology and as the investigation on the crash was impeded by these pro-Russia forces, European resistance to sectoral sanctions melted away. Although Russia agreed to a resolution adopted by the UN Security Council on July 21 (Resolution 2166) which condemned the attack on the civilian airplane, called for an international

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<sup>95</sup> P. Baker and Kanter 2014

<sup>96</sup> Fabius 2014q

<sup>97</sup> EU Council 2014g

<sup>98</sup> EU Council 2014h

<sup>99</sup> Obama 2014n

<sup>100</sup> Kerry 2014s

investigation, and demanded armed groups to allow full access to the crash site, this was too little too late.<sup>101</sup>

Even as the transatlantic community was coming together around a common position in favor of sectoral sanctions, tensions were so high between policymakers that they spilled out in public. On July 21st, the British Prime Minister – who favored stronger sanctions and presented Britain again “at the forefront” of the effort for further sanctions<sup>102</sup> – came out strongly against France delivering two helicopter carriers “Mistral” warships to Russia, a transaction that he said would be “unthinkable” in the United Kingdom.<sup>103</sup> The French Foreign Minister lashed back at him in an interview to *France Inter*. When asked what he had responded to the British Prime Minister, he said: “I replied amicably that it would be for example unthinkable in France that France would attack another country saying that there are weapons of mass destruction when there are none.”<sup>104</sup> In the same interview, an irritated Laurent Fabius argued that contracts need to be honored and that “we can also ask questions about the fact that there are so many Russian oligarchs in London, and also according to what your journalist colleagues published yesterday, I think, a list saying that the British today still have 250 authorizations to export arms to Russia.”

Fabius was referring to an inquiry of the British parliament that had determined on July 22 that the UK had continued to grant licenses to Russia for military equipment worth \$220 million.<sup>105</sup> Jean-Christophe Cambadélis, first secretary of the Socialist Party, declared that “David Cameron should start by cleaning up his own backyard” referring to Russian oligarchs in London.<sup>106</sup> This outburst came after several months of frustrations where French policymakers presented the British as hypocritical in pretending to push for sanctions when they also had financial interests in the matter. When I asked a French official in an interview if the United Kingdom was unhappy about being left out of the discussions in the Normandy format, he laughed, and answered “Yes, the United Kingdom felt left on the side by the Normandy format. But they were not the only ones.” He added that Polish policymakers were

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<sup>101</sup> United Nations Security Council 2014

<sup>102</sup> Cameron 2014g

<sup>103</sup> Cowell 2014

<sup>104</sup> Fabius 2014s

<sup>105</sup> Cowell 2014

<sup>106</sup> Cowell 2014

also unhappy about not being a part to the diplomatic format.<sup>107</sup> Another interview also confirmed this, when another French official argued that British policymakers were frustrated, but that Polish policymakers even more, they were “very very frustrated.”<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, French policymakers kept British and Polish policymakers out of the format, although they were regularly informed, and insisted for the name to remain Normandy, to show that the French had taken the diplomatic initiative. This frustration on the part of British policymakers likely explains their public criticism of the French deal.

The British Prime Minister’s comments mostly backfired. For instance, the media reminded the public that earlier in July, in order to raise money for the Conservative party, the prize of a tennis game with David Cameron was won in an auction by Lubov Chernukhin, a banker and the wife of a former deputy finance minister of Russia, for \$270,000 (£160,000).<sup>109</sup> A few days later, the German foreign minister defended France, even though he also argued in favor of including the arms industry in sanctions:

I can assure you that there are also other European countries who are continuing their arms cooperation with Russia in a similar way and who are glad to hide behind this example of France. If we’re serious about this, then arms industry cannot be excluded from future sanctions.<sup>110</sup>

David Cameron adopted a tough rhetoric and claimed leadership, yet his leadership was ineffective, and it may even have made followership more difficult for France.

The crash of MH17 was a turning point for European partners to shift their position and follow the US position. The Dutch decision makers, previously opposing sectoral sanctions, were now powerfully arguing for economic sanctions after several of their citizens had been killed in the takedown of MH17. It was also the case for Germany. Foreign Minister Steinmeier was suddenly stressing his country’s leadership. For instance, he declared: “...when it comes to arms deals, it should be noted that Germany stepped into the lead months ago.”<sup>111</sup> Scholars attributed leadership in Europe to the German Chancellor,

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<sup>107</sup> Interview with French official, May 30, 2018

<sup>108</sup> Interview with French official, March 1, 2018

<sup>109</sup> BBC 2014b

<sup>110</sup> Steinmeier 2014w

<sup>111</sup> Steinmeier 2014x

specifying that she led “in particular after 17 July 2014,”<sup>112</sup> and played a role in the EU reaching consensus.<sup>113</sup> According to Peter Baker and James Kanter, of all the phone calls that the US President made, the “critical call” was the one he made to Chancellor Merkel, because she was “the driving force behind Europe’s response to Russia.”<sup>114</sup> Chancellor Merkel was “the key” to the agreement of round three sanctions.<sup>115</sup> It appears that the German power became the European champion for sectoral sanctions, although again the US had led and attempted to persuade Europeans on this issue much earlier.

The importance of Germany may be best illustrated by how the Chancellor and Foreign Minister led on other issues in the crisis, although not on sanctions. The US recognized a leadership role to Germany in brokering the agreement reached on February 21 to attempt to resolve the conflict.<sup>116</sup> As I have shown, Chancellor Merkel’s efforts paved the way for the OSCE monitoring mission.<sup>117</sup> The compromise agreement to suspend rather than expel Russia from the G8 was also led by the Chancellor.<sup>118</sup> President Obama recognized Angela Merkel’s leadership in May because according to him she had been helpful in facilitating European unity and attempts at a diplomatic resolution.<sup>119</sup>

In anticipation of the upcoming EU Council meeting at the end of July, in a five-way videoconference, President Obama, Prime Minister Cameron, President Hollande, Chancellor Merkel, and Prime Minister Renzi of Italy agreed on the third round of sanctions.<sup>120</sup>

On July 29, the United States imposed further sanctions in key sectors of the Russian economy: energy, arms, and finance. They blocked the exports of specific goods and technologies to the Russian energy sector. They expanded their sanctions to more Russian banks and defense companies. They also formally suspended credit that encourages exports to Russia and financing for economic development projects in Russia. The main goal of these sanctions was to “curb Russia’s long-term ability to develop new oil resources, taking aim at

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<sup>112</sup> Karolewski and Cross 2017, 143–44

<sup>113</sup> Nitoiu and Sus 2017, 76–77

<sup>114</sup> P. Baker and Kanter 2014

<sup>115</sup> Ewing and Baker 2014

<sup>116</sup> Kerry 2014a

<sup>117</sup> Smale 2014b

<sup>118</sup> Hyde-Price 2015, 69; P. Baker 2014b

<sup>119</sup> Obama 2014h

<sup>120</sup> Ewing and Baker 2014

the Kremlin's premier source of wealth and power.”<sup>121</sup> These sanctions will have “an even bigger bite” according to President Obama because they are closely coordinated with Europe.<sup>122</sup>

On the same day, the EU Council's Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER II) reached agreement on sectoral sanctions against Russia.<sup>123</sup> The European Council President had demanded that the work on the details of the sanctions, which the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) had been working on, be delegated to European representatives of COREPER II.<sup>124</sup> According to the agreement that was reached, EU nationals and companies may no more buy or sell new bonds, equity or other financial instruments issued by major state-owned Russian banks. In addition, they adopted an embargo on the import and export of arms and related material from or to Russia. The agreement also prohibits the export of dual use goods and technology for military and energy use to Russia. The sanctions are limited by the fact that these measures were applied only to new contracts, therefore excluding existing contracts and arm deals. Also, despite the fact that new export licenses for oil or gas exploration in Russia were to be denied, the restrictions in technology export did not apply to Russian natural gas as the sanctions avoided measures that could impact Europe's gas imports.<sup>125</sup> Travel bans and assets freeze were extended to a total of 95 persons and 23 entities. The sanctions were formally adopted by the EU Council two days later.<sup>126</sup> Once adopted, the EU was then able to maintain unanimity on these sanctions for a long period. The sanctions were extended on September 2, 2015, and prolonged again on March, 10, 2016.<sup>127</sup>

The United States, and specifically the pro-sanctions members of the Obama Administration, were the leaders in the crisis and their target followers were the EU member states, more importantly core EU powers: the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. In the two first rounds of sanctions, despite tensions on how quickly sanctions could be adopted who

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<sup>121</sup> P. Baker, Cowell, and Kanter 2014

<sup>122</sup> Obama 2014q

<sup>123</sup> EU Council 2014i

<sup>124</sup> Natorski and Pomorska 2017, 66

<sup>125</sup> P. Baker, Cowell, and Kanter 2014

<sup>126</sup> EU Council 2014j

<sup>127</sup> M. K. D. Cross and Karolewski 2017, 5

frustrated some Americans, European partners were readily on board, so much that it publicly appeared as shared leadership, with the United Kingdom echoing American positions in Europe. This allowed for highly coordinated sanctions, which were adopted on the same dates, March 6 and March 17, by both the US and the EU. As the crisis evolved, opposition to sectoral sanctions both within the US Administration and among European policymakers waned with the crisis escalating and Moscow's provocation making it hard to argue for diplomacy. At the end of July, in the wake of the shoot down of MH17, the last resistance fell apart, and the EU did follow the US lead. Several weeks after the adoption of the third round of sanctions, when Washington Post's journalists Karen DeYoung and Dan Balz questioned a European official on Obama's leadership, the official declared that "Obama's taking the lead on sanctions against Russia – and pressing reluctant Europeans to join" was a key factor – along with the airstrikes against the Islamic State – in restoring European confidence in the President's leadership.<sup>128</sup> In the next section, I review the possible explanations as to why the leadership process unfolded the way it did, beginning with the liberal approach.

### **The Liberal Theory and Economic Sanctions**

I begin the analysis with the general economic portrait related to the economic sanctions. I then discuss the issue of energy, the French Mistral ships, and broader public opinion.

#### Economic Interests

From a liberal perspective, almost all the states involved had good reasons to oppose any sectoral sanctions against Russia. This anti-sanctions lead was expected from the EU, and more specifically from the EU countries most vulnerable to Russia. European economies are much more interdependent with Russia than is the American economy. There are about \$40 billion exchange in exports and imports between the US and Russia each year. In comparison, trade between Russia and Europe is ten times greater. Jack Ewing explained the Europeans reluctance to impose economic sanctions by the fact that, according to the *Deutsche Bank*,

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<sup>128</sup> DeYoung and Balz 2014

European banks are vulnerable to Russia for about \$194 billion, in comparison with only \$37 billion for US banks.<sup>129</sup>

**Table 6. Transatlantic powers' trade value of goods with Russia for 2013<sup>130</sup>**

	Exports	% of Total Exp.	Imports	% of Total Imp.
Total EU	158.9	6.8	274.1	12.2
Germany	48.7	3.4	55.1	4.6
France	10,1	1.8	14.0	2.1
United Kingdom	8.1	1.5	10.6	1.6
United States	11.1	0.7	27.8	1.2

The table shows that among transatlantic powers, the German economy was the most interdependent with Russia. However, in the EU all the states had to unanimously agree for the sanctions to come in place, and many countries had good reasons to expect important costs if the sanctions were implemented. Austria's biggest banks (Raiffeisen Bank International and Bank Austria) were the most exposed to a cut off in the relations with Russia in proportion to the size of its overall banking system.<sup>131</sup> Austrian businesses were also lobbying against sanctions. The chief executive of the Australian oil and gas supplier OMV (Österreichische Mineralölverwaltung) expressed his opinion against sanctions and argued that gas should not be used as a weapon.<sup>132</sup>

Hungary is heavily dependent on Russia for oil and gas, it cooperates with Russia on the South Stream Pipeline, and it signed an agreement in January, before the escalation in Ukraine, according to which Russia would finance the development of its nuclear power.<sup>133</sup> Cyprus and Russia have a close relationship through reciprocal foreign investments.<sup>134</sup> Greece wants to keep good relations with Ukraine because if the South Stream pipeline is

<sup>129</sup> Ewing 2014

<sup>130</sup> Trade numbers in billion US\$. Data from United Nations Commodity Trade Database: <https://comtrade.un.org/data>.

<sup>131</sup> Ewing 2014

<sup>132</sup> Smale and Hakim 2014

<sup>133</sup> Orenstein and Kelemen 2017, 93; Sierakowski 2014

<sup>134</sup> Orenstein and Kelemen 2017, 93

built, or another similar project in the south of Europe, it expects to be a hub for Russia gas imports.<sup>135</sup> According to Orenstein and Kelemen, Greece and Cyprus were at the time “completely reliant on the EU for bailout financing.” The authors believe that this dependence made it easy for other Member States to obtain their approval on the issue of the sanctions.<sup>136</sup>

At the time of the Ukrainian crisis, the Netherlands were the largest export market for Russia.<sup>137</sup> The Anglo-Dutch company Shell, which is based in The Hague, is an important foreign investor in Siberia. Shell is also the largest corporation in the country and many Dutch citizens have stocks in it through their pension funds.<sup>138</sup> The Netherlands imported Russian gas before the crisis in order to resell it to the rest of Europe.<sup>139</sup>

Almost all European countries had some economic interests in avoiding sanctions, including transatlantic powers. Many had domestic companies and business groups lobbying against sanctions. In Germany, important business interests voiced their opinion against imposing economic sanctions on Russia. For instance, Rainer Steele, chairman of Wintershall, declared that Europe should not turn away from Russia.<sup>140</sup> The France energy company Total had several ties to Russia. It produced 207,000 barrels of oil per day in Russia in 2013, and Russia was a “strategic priority” for the company which had shares in Novatek and development projects in Russia.<sup>141</sup> It also was in negotiations with Lukoil to develop shale oil in Russia.<sup>142</sup> British Petroleum (BP) also had many interests in Russia. BP held 19.6 percent stake in Rosneft, which generated \$1 billion in profit only in the fourth quarter of 2013.<sup>143</sup>

During the crisis, the media and some policymakers talked about Russian oligarchs living in London and placing their money in the City. Observers described the risk of the conflict with Russia for Britain by the fact that it “hosts Russian billionaires and their

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<sup>135</sup> Orenstein and Kelemen 2017, 93

<sup>136</sup> Orenstein and Kelemen 2017, 97

<sup>137</sup> P. Baker 2014c

<sup>138</sup> Erdbrink 2014

<sup>139</sup> Erdbrink 2014

<sup>140</sup> Smale and Hakim 2014

<sup>141</sup> Bezat 2014

<sup>142</sup> A. E. Kramer and Jolly 2014

<sup>143</sup> Krauss 2014a



money.”<sup>144</sup> However, this influence might be much exaggerated, especially after the 2008 economic crisis when Russian placements in London drastically diminished.<sup>145</sup>

The Italian company ENI also coordinates closely with Rosneft and is involved in plans to build new pipelines to Europe.<sup>146</sup> Nonetheless, and surprisingly, instead of stopping Italy from taking action, it seems that ENI’s leaders took the initiative on their own to do something about Ukraine. The chief executive of the company, Paolo Scaroni, met with the Ukrainian energy minister to discuss ways to help them get gas from other sources after Gazprom cut off their supply.<sup>147</sup>

Although not as vulnerable as European countries, American economic interests were also potentially affected by sanctions against Russia. Ford had two assembly plants in Russia; Boeing had a design center in Moscow and projects to sell a great quantity of planes to Russia and the neighboring countries in the future.<sup>148</sup> The American oil giant ExxonMobil has several joint ventures and common projects with the Russian oil corporation Rosneft.<sup>149</sup> The company considers Russia very important for the future of its oil and gas production,<sup>150</sup> and was thus affected by limits to exporting oil-related technologies found in the US President’s sanctions. According to the *New York Times*, between the first and second round of sanctions in March 2014, “[r]epresentative of groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers and the United-States-Russia Business Council have been holding meeting at the White House or in Congress to share their views.”<sup>151</sup> These associations lobbied against sanctions, especially economic sanctions. They claimed that this would have a high cost for their businesses and that others would just fill the gap left by American corporations. At the end of June, as the Obama Administration and the President himself were pushing for a third round of sanctions and the June 6 ultimatum was close to its deadline, business lobbies tried again to influence the Administration’s position. An ad signed by the president of the National Association of Manufacturers and the President of the US Chamber of Commerce was placed in all major newspapers. The ad argued that “some

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<sup>144</sup> Shear and Smale 2014

<sup>145</sup> NYT Blogs 2014

<sup>146</sup> Krauss 2014a

<sup>147</sup> Reed and Kanter 2014

<sup>148</sup> P. Baker 2014d

<sup>149</sup> P. Baker 2014c

<sup>150</sup> Krauss 2014a

<sup>151</sup> P. Baker 2014e

U.S. policy makers are considering a course of sanctions that history shows hurts American interests.” The advertising campaign linked sanctions to the loss of jobs in the US.<sup>152</sup>

There is some evidence that rather than acting as a mere transmission belt, US officials exerted their influence on domestic businesses. In May 2014, as part of its overall effort at pushing for sectoral sanctions, and in anticipation of such a move, top officials of the Obama Administration worked hard to convince American companies not to attend an international economic forum held in Russia. They argued that this event would be used by President Putin to flaunt Russian ties to American corporations. Despite the fact the Administration could not legally forbid the companies to travel to Russia at the time, after many phone calls from officials, this reverse lobbying was mostly successful. Several executives of American companies agreed to pull out from the forum.<sup>153</sup>

Recent studies have measured the impact of sanctions and shown that no European state should have supported them from a liberal perspective. Francesco Giumelli provides a detailed analysis of the how the EU exports to Russia were affected by the sanctions. Although these exports can be affected by many other factors, they remain the best indicator to assess the general impact of sanctions. Giumelli reveals that although Member states and economic sectors have been affected unevenly, “[n]o Member States has increased its export to Russia in the aftermath of the sanctions...”<sup>154</sup> The overall volume of EU exports to Russia decreased by 45 billion Euros in 2015 as compared to 2014.<sup>155</sup> Furthermore, Germany – which has been presented as a leader for sanctions in Europe – was the country where the largest nominal drop of exports occurred, a decrease of 14 billion euros, representing a 39% drop.<sup>156</sup> Giumelli also builds an indicator to identify the best and worst performing sectors of the various national economies in Europe, and he finds that Germany is the worst off, while Greece and Luxembourg achieved the best results.<sup>157</sup> As Giumelli remarks, these results do not match the states’ foreign policies: “Greece has been critical of EU sanctions, but it

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<sup>152</sup> P. Baker 2014k

<sup>153</sup> P. Baker 2014g

<sup>154</sup> Giumelli 2017, 1070

<sup>155</sup> Giumelli 2017, 1067

<sup>156</sup> Giumelli 2017, 1071

<sup>157</sup> Giumelli 2017, 1073

nevertheless appears to be on the winners' side of the story. At the same time, while Germany has been supportive of sanctions it appears to be on the losers' side."<sup>158</sup>

This analysis casts a serious doubt on the commercial Liberal approach to explain the leader-follower dynamics. It does not even include the fact that Western policymakers could have anticipated that Russia would take retaliatory measures. And indeed, in response to the sanctions, in early August Russia adopted a ban on agricultural imports from the EU, the United States and Canada, hurting the agricultural sector in many European countries.<sup>159</sup> This has been devastating for some states, for instance, Austrian exportations of agricultural products fell by 50 %.<sup>160</sup>

### The Issue of Energy

The EU countries are dependent upon imports from Russia for their energy needs: they import oil, coal, and uranium. However, these is “a diversity of suppliers and delivery via flexible means” for these sources, unlike natural gas which depends on fixed pipelines which makes it costly to change supplier.<sup>161</sup> So the EU is not just dependent on Russian gas, it is vulnerable toward Russia for its gas supplies, as a change of supplier would be difficult. The falling internal production, rising demand, instability in the regions where potential alternative suppliers are, and costly required infrastructure investments make it hard for the EU to quickly and easily shift its source of gas, which means that no matter how tense the relationship with Russia, the gas trade will remain necessary in the foreseeable future.<sup>162</sup> In 2013, delivery from Russia “accounted for 39 % of EU natural gas import or 27 % of EU gas consumption.”<sup>163</sup>

Among the 28 EU member states, this vulnerability varies enormously. Gas contracts with Russia are very different from one country to the next, and each country does its own negotiations. French Foreign Minister Fabius explained the difficulty of adopting sanctions by the energetic dependency on Russia for some member states:

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<sup>158</sup> Giumelli 2017, 1077

<sup>159</sup> The New York Times Editorial Board 2014b

<sup>160</sup> Marineau 2017, 136

<sup>161</sup> Buchan 2014, 5

<sup>162</sup> Henderson and Mitrova 2015, 37–40; Dickel et al. 2014, 1; Koranyi 2014, 68–71

<sup>163</sup> Dickel et al. 2014, 6

One of the reasons that prevents Europe to react to the Ukrainian crisis like it should is its energetic dependence. I give you two numbers: On the 28 countries of Europe, 6 countries are dependent for 100 % on Russian gas and oil, and 12 are dependent for 50 %. So 18 out of 28 countries depend for more than 50 % on Russian energy. Therefore, we understand that this is a break when it comes to discuss sanctions.<sup>164</sup>

The six countries dependent on Russia for nearly all their gas are Finland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.<sup>165</sup> According to the Country-specific Concentration Index, a measure used by Ralf Dickel and his colleagues to assess EU states' dependence and exposure to outside suppliers, Austria and Slovakia are also highly dependent.<sup>166</sup> The least dependent states are the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands, Ireland, Denmark, Croatia, and Belgium. France and Germany also have a rather low level of dependency.<sup>167</sup>

Commentators often explained German positions by the fact that this is the European state that relies the most on Russia for its energy as well as the most interdependent for trade.<sup>168</sup> In line with the liberal argument, even the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, saw peril in Germany's energy dependence. He declared that "Germany's reliance on Russian gas can effectively limit European sovereignty" and argued for a common European energy market.<sup>169</sup> Still, Russian gas represents a small part of Germany's total energy needs. Only 11 percent of Germany's energy is provided by natural gas, and of all the gas 35 % is imported from Russia.<sup>170</sup>

The US President acknowledged publicly that it was too much to ask European countries to completely cut off Russian imports of gas. In a joint press conference with the Chancellor of Germany, he stated: "Energy flows from Russia to Europe – those continued even in the midst of the Cold War, at the height of the Cold War. So the idea that you're going to turn off the tap on all Russian oil or natural gas exports I think is unrealistic."<sup>171</sup> There was thus an acknowledgement by the US that they would probably not get EU states to adopt sanctions on gas trade, and that the focus should be on other sectors of the economy.

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<sup>164</sup> Fabius 2014l

<sup>165</sup> Buchan 2014, 6

<sup>166</sup> Dickel et al. 2014, 8

<sup>167</sup> Dickel et al. 2014, 8

<sup>168</sup> Thomas 2014

<sup>169</sup> Smale 2014a

<sup>170</sup> Eddy 2014

<sup>171</sup> Obama 2014h

### The Two Mistral Warships

In 2011, France signed a contract to deliver two military ships to Russia. The Mistral helicopter carrier ships were sold to Russia for € 1.2 billion (about \$1.6 billion) and were to be built in France by STX, a South Korean company of which the French government owns 33 percent.<sup>172</sup> The construction of the first ship was underway at the Saint-Nazaire shipyard when the crisis erupted, and in an ironical twist, the second ship to be built was named the Sevastopol, after the location of the Russian Navy's base in Crimea.

France had been under pressure even before the sale of the ships was completed. The US, Ukraine, Georgia and the Baltic State criticized the decision to sell helicopter carriers to Russia in 2009 and 2010.<sup>173</sup> After the adoption of phase two sanctions, transatlantic allies as well as the media sharply increased pressure on French policymakers on the issue of the French Mistrals. Asked by a journalist about the ships, the French Foreign Minister replied on March 17 that because sanctions were only at phase two, the transaction of the ships was not involved. He also added that sanctions should be fair for everyone, and mentioned that it would be required "to do the same with the assets of Russian oligarchs in London."<sup>174</sup> The next day, he again commented on the problem by saying that the delivery could be suspended, and that the situation was complicated. According to him, "...we cannot continually deliver weapons considering this behavior, but on the other hand, there is the reality of jobs and the economy."<sup>175</sup>

The US President expressed his disagreement with France's decision about the Mistral ships:

I have expressed some concerns – and I don't think I'm alone in this – about continuing significant defense deals with Russia at a time when they have violated basic international law and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of their neighbors. So President Hollande understands my position. I recognize that this is a big deal. I recognize that the jobs in France are important. I think it would have been preferable to press the pause button. President Hollande so far has made a different decision.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Bohlen 2014

<sup>173</sup> M. R. Gordon and Knowlton 2014

<sup>174</sup> Fabius 2014g

<sup>175</sup> Fabius 2014i

<sup>176</sup> Obama 2014l

As mentioned in the previous section on transatlantic coordination, tensions also erupted later between France and Britain over the Mistral ships at the end of July.

### Public Opinion

Transatlantic public opinion was in favor of support for Ukraine, and throughout the crisis about two-thirds of European and Americans were willing to support tougher sanctions against Russia.<sup>177</sup> 60 percent of Germans supported their country to take the side of the West in the dispute surrounding Ukraine.<sup>178</sup>

### *Summary of the Liberal Approach*

There are some aspects of the transatlantic leader-follower process that the Liberal approach explains very well. It explains the higher difficulty of reaching agreement on the third round of sanctions that implied higher economic costs for European countries, and why from March to July most EU members were reluctant to follow the US lead. It also explains some of the details of the sanctions package applied at the end of July, with exceptions made to avoid sanctions on existing arms deals and gas trade. The constant support for siding with Ukraine in the public opinion surveys may have permitted transatlantic policymakers to take action against Russia knowing that they were on acceptable ground.

However, the liberal explanation fails all the main tests in this case. Several EU policymakers accepted and even defended a policy, economic sanctions, that would hurt their economy and affect important economic sectors in their home countries. Furthermore, the liberal explanation fails to explain who led. Why were American policymakers so motivated in taking the lead when their small economic interests in the crisis and pressure from domestic lobbies could have resulted in indifference, or even a low level of opposition to sanctions?

Realist scholars who emphasize relative gains may argue that the US stood to lose much less than Europe from economic sanctions, and therefore saw an advantage in leading the charge. If that is the explanation for the willingness to lead, however, then it fails to explain followership. If relative gains matter, European policymakers should have rejected the US suggestion of economic sanctions. This also fails to explain why the US President

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<sup>177</sup> Stelzenmueller and Raisher 2014

<sup>178</sup> Wergin 2014

would be ready to adopt some unilateral sanctions as he did in mid-July, since it might hurt US companies and be beneficial to European corporations ready to replace them.

Even authors who see a greater role for Germany in taking the lead in Europe argue that the German Chancellor took the lead *for* sanctions not *against* them, while Liberal Theory might expect her to lead in opposing any sanction because her country was the most potentially economically affected.<sup>179</sup>

The liberal argument also does not explain well why Europeans agreed to sanctions in the end. Scholars were surprised by this consensus on sanctions, because of “the repeated experience of ineffective EU policies towards Russia and the divergent views on the short-term Russia reactions to the EU positions.”<sup>180</sup> This unity on the issue of sanctions was “almost inconceivable before the crisis.”<sup>181</sup> I have found no evidence of bargaining or compensations offered to European states. There is a lack of evidence for liberal leader-follower mechanisms. Explaining followership through this approach would have required a very extensive package of compensations, as I have shown, almost all European countries had some economic interests in opposing sanctions, and studies show that they were indeed negatively affected after the adoption of sanctions. It may be that countries like Greece or Cyprus could not afford to oppose the emerging consensus because they were dependent on the EU aid. However, this is not plausible for other EU states on more sound footing who also initially opposed sanctions, like the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, or Finland. Economic interests or incentives offered by the leaders did not shift at the end of July. Therefore, the mechanisms for followership and the timing of this followership for the third round of sanctions remain unexplained in the liberal perspective.

Liberal theorists might argue for a *slow bargaining* hypothesis. The idea is that the EU launched preparatory work at the end of March, and that after four months of negotiations and compromises, EU states finally agreed at the end of July on a package of sanctions. Bargaining takes time when so many states have some interest in the matter, and the goal was to arrive at a balanced package that would not hurt some states much more than others. I find this hypothesis implausible. First, some countries, like Germany and Austria, were actually much more affected by the economic sanctions. Why would they accept to absorb

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<sup>179</sup> e.g., Karolewski and Cross 2017, 143–44

<sup>180</sup> Nitoiu and Sus 2017, 58

<sup>181</sup> Nitoiu and Sus 2017, 76–77

the costs and agree to give France the exclusion of existing arm deals from the sanctions? Second, I have shown that on July 16, the day before the wind began to shift on sectoral sanctions, the French Foreign Minister dismissed economic sanctions. He argued that level three sanctions were not discussed. This does not sound like someone who has been seriously discussing economic sanctions for months, and who may expect that a compromise will be reached soon. With their Normandy initiative, it seems much more likely that from April to June, French policymakers emphasized diplomacy in order to avoid sanctions altogether. Finally, there is also the round of phone calls that President Obama made in mid-July, before the events of MH17, where he failed to persuade his partners to adopt economic sanctions.

This analysis is a major blow to the Liberal Theory. The nature of the issues at stake and the overwhelming evidence that many companies and business associations pressured policymakers make this case a most-likely case for the Liberal approach. And yet, liberal scholars and observers were surprised when, defying their expectations, transatlantic policymakers did adopt economic sanctions. How did that happen?

### **Drunken Separatists and A Children Book: Emotional Leadership**

At the beginning of March, just before the first round of sanctions, US Secretary of State John Kerry traveled to Kiev where he had the highly emotional experience of visiting the memorials of the protesters shot down by government forces. In a public statement, he described this “incredibly moving” scene in great details:

It was quite remarkable, I have to tell you, to see the barricades, see the tires, see the barbed wire, see the bullet holes in street lamps, the extraordinary number of flowers, the people still standing beside a barrel with a fire to keep them warm, the shrouded vision in the clouds and the fog of the buildings from which the shots came, and the pictures, the photographs, of those who lost their lives, of the people who put themselves on the line for the future of Ukraine.<sup>182</sup>

He recounted emotionally how he met a woman there that expressed how she just wanted to enjoy the standard of living of other countries such as Australia.<sup>183</sup> Kerry declared that it gave him

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<sup>182</sup> Kerry 2014e

<sup>183</sup> Kerry 2014e



a deep, personal sense of how closely linked the people of Ukraine are to not just Americans, but to people all across the world who today are asking for their rights, asking for their privilege to be able to live, defining their own nation, defining their futures.<sup>184</sup>

The emotional argument for transatlantic leadership argues that the emotional beliefs of policymakers will orient their decision and provide their motivation to lead and to follow. I show in this section that the main ideational frame that guided policymakers during the Ukraine crisis was founded on the Cold War analogy, and that this frame enhanced the drive of US policymakers to lead. I also reveal how each round of sanctions was based on emotional reactions to developments in the crisis, and that the prospective American leaders, and other who eventually became champions, used emotional appeal to convince reluctant European decision makers. Finally, I discuss how MH17 was crucial in shifting positions in the transatlantic community.

#### American Leadership and The Long Shadow of the Cold War

*It is said that Joshua's trumpet brought down the walls of Jericho. But I watched personally that it was Poland's courage that unleashed the forces that brought down the Berlin Wall.*

– Vice President Joe Biden, during a visit to Poland<sup>185</sup>

The beliefs supporting the American response took the Cold War as the main reference point, and interpreted this as the need to show strong leadership similar to the Bloc leader behavior of the past. US Secretary of State Kerry discussed at length in public declarations how the Cold War personally affected his thinking. For instance, he declared:

One of the lessons that I certainly drew from the Cold War, which I grew up in, from the early days when we would crouch under our desks at school and practice for possible nuclear war, to the incredible emotions we all experienced with the fall of the Berlin wall and the sort of formal demarcation point of the end of the Cold War, to the vast array of challenges that we face today as the world is witnessing the explosion of sectarianism, religious extremism, radical ideologies, and frankly too many failed states and failing states – a vast challenge to governance, sometimes even witnessed here in

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<sup>184</sup> Kerry 2014e

<sup>185</sup> Biden 2014a

our nation's capital. So we – all of us – need to be thinking hard about how we project power. But not power for the sake of power – power to achieve great goals, power to leverage values and to protect our interests.<sup>186</sup>

Although Kerry often rejected that the situation was exactly the same as the Cold War and expressed hopes that East-West rivalry would not resume, the anchoring point of the Secretary of State was clearly the Cold War. It seems that every time the Secretary rejected the Cold War analogy, he simultaneously referred to it. For instance, he compared Russian behavior with the nationalistic fervor that was responsible for World War II, but then his more specific examples for such behavior referred to the Cold War, such as the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968.<sup>187</sup> He also offered his own interpretation of Russia behavior, suggesting that they may be annexing Crimea because they are angry about the end of the Cold War or the end of the Soviet Union.<sup>188</sup>

A speech by the US Secretary of State in May starkly illustrates the commitment of the US Administration to the Cold War analogy. On the day of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tatar Deportation, on May 16, 2014, Kerry gave an emotional statement in which he recounted Stalin's forced and "horrific" deportation of the Crimea Tatars. He added that "[t]he suffering caused by this mass expulsion is almost inexpressible." He linked these historical events to the current situation: "[f]or many Crimea Tatars, these abuses are still fresh in their minds and Russia's occupation and illegal attempt to annex Crimea has reopened old wounds."<sup>189</sup> The Secretary then went on to describe the human rights abuses perpetrated against Crimea Tatars during the current Ukrainian crisis, thus drawing a clear parallel between the historical deportation and current repression.<sup>190</sup>

President Obama similarly emphasized that his approach was not to go back to the Cold War, even as he often drew parallels to this same era. He mentioned that with the crisis in Ukraine, Russia was even more isolated than during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was part of the Soviet Union.<sup>191</sup> He also mentioned that energy flows from Russia to Europe had continued uninterrupted even "at the height of the Cold War."<sup>192</sup> The president even spoke

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<sup>186</sup> Kerry 2014j

<sup>187</sup> Kerry 2014h

<sup>188</sup> Kerry 2014h

<sup>189</sup> Kerry 2014l

<sup>190</sup> Kerry 2014l

<sup>191</sup> Obama 2014g

<sup>192</sup> Obama 2014h

of the events in Ukraine and other Russian neighbors as “Russia’s aggression toward former Soviet states.”<sup>193</sup> In a visit to Poland, he declared that the “Ukrainians of today are the heirs of Solidarity – men and women like you who dared to challenge a bankrupt regime.”<sup>194</sup> The Vice-President also made similar remarks referencing the Cold War.<sup>195</sup>

Although UK policymakers also made some reference to how violent clashes were “the worst bloodshed in Ukraine since the fall of communism,”<sup>196</sup> the First and Second World Wars were more important reference points for them. The British Prime Minister drew parallels with the First and Second World Wars:

this year we are commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the First World War, and that war, at heart, was about the right of a small country, Belgium, not to be trampled on by its neighbours. We had to learn that lesson all over again in the Second World War when the same thing happened to Poland, to Czechoslovakia and other countries. And, you know, in a way, this is what we’re seeing today in Europe.<sup>197</sup>

Notably, the Prime Minister named the countries that were former Soviet satellites rather than other European countries that were invaded during the Second World War, like France or Greece. The British interpretation of these wars fuels the sentiment that transatlantic partners must defend smaller states against the aggressive moves of expansionist powers. It thus explains the tougher stances and more “hawkish” rhetoric of British policymakers, who cast themselves in a Churchillian role.

French leaders also adopted the Cold War lense. Laurent Fabius agreed with a journalist that the 96,6 % results of the Crimea referendum was a “soviet score” and in the same sentence reiterated that this was the most serious crisis since the end of the Cold War.<sup>198</sup> The French President explicitly compared the situation with the Cold War: “[i]t is necessary to end with this rise of tensions that recalls, indeed, particular heavy moments of our recent history – I think about the Cold War – and that cannot last without consequences, notably economic consequences.”<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Obama 2014j

<sup>194</sup> Obama 2014k

<sup>195</sup> Biden 2014a; Biden 2014b

<sup>196</sup> Hague 2014a

<sup>197</sup> Cameron 2014i

<sup>198</sup> Fabius 2014g

<sup>199</sup> Hollande 2014b

German Foreign Minister Steinmeier expressed the necessity of assurances “to our friends in Eastern Europe who carry the memory of many decades of Soviet rule.”<sup>200</sup> He spoke about how the Ukraine crisis could mean “losing the progress our societies [German and Russian societies] have achieved and enjoyed since the end of the East-West conflict.”<sup>201</sup> He contended that Cold War and its logic is over,<sup>202</sup> and that no one had the right to “turn the clock back and resurrect a vanished bipolar world.”<sup>203</sup> However, at the same time he employed the Cold war as an explanation for Russia’s behavior. After being asked by a journalist to comment on a comparison made by the Russian President with German reunification, Steinmeier mused:

Maybe it reveals the deeply ingrained phantom pain that some people in Moscow continue to feel more than 20 years after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. What many people experienced as liberation from the Communist yoke is perceived very differently by some people in Moscow.<sup>204</sup>

The Foreign Minister spoke in other declarations of the fact that, according to him, no new order had really replaced the order after the fall of the Wall, and that “the Cold War is still casting its long shadow over this new, changed world.”<sup>205</sup> Steinmeier referenced the Cold War as “spectres from the past returning to haunt us.”<sup>206</sup> He argued that Europeans should fear a new division of Europe because “[s]pirits we believed dead are re-emerging on the edge of the European Union.”<sup>207</sup>

The German Chancellor also employed Cold War analogies, albeit in a less emotional and metaphorical way than her Foreign Minister. Chancellor Merkel declared that she had left the Cold War behind, that history does not repeat itself, and in the same declaration, that the dialogue in Ukraine could be inspired by the format of the 1989-1990 roundtables to negotiate reunification.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Steinmeier 2014a

<sup>201</sup> Steinmeier 2014c

<sup>202</sup> Steinmeier 2014c

<sup>203</sup> Steinmeier 2014g

<sup>204</sup> Steinmeier 2014d

<sup>205</sup> Steinmeier 2014f

<sup>206</sup> Steinmeier 2014h

<sup>207</sup> Steinmeier 2014k

<sup>208</sup> Merkel 2014e

French and especially German memories of the Cold War were not associated with the need to project power and stand up for their own values and principles like it was the case for United States' leaders: rather it was a source of fear, memories of pain, division, wasting progress made since the end of the Cold War. It motivated them in being cautious and avoiding further conflict with Russia rather than taking the lead.

Mostly because it was a year of commemoration, the German Chancellor and Foreign Minister both frequently referenced the two world wars. In a debate at the German Historical Museum, Steinmeier expressed fear when confronting the fact that “one hundred years after the end of the First World War the question of war and peace, of unity and division of our continent, has once again been raised in Europe.”<sup>209</sup> He emphasized the lesson of history that the failure of diplomacy on a local issue can lead to the outbreak of war on a global scale. He interpreted the events in support of dialogue and doing all that was possible for peace to prevail. According to Steinmeier, politicians “should never refrain from taking diplomatic and political initiatives” lest the inescapable logic of conflict goes out of control.<sup>210</sup> This emotional quote by the Foreign minister at the German-Russian forum is representative:

You – and especially I – could not have imagined that almost 70 years after the end of the Second World War and 25 years after the end of the Cold War, we would be facing a new division of Europe which could only lead to a breakdown in communication, misunderstandings and new conflicts. In the light of our difficult shared history, we – Germans and Russians – must never allow that to happen again!<sup>211</sup>

Even in his will to promote cooperation and dialogue drawn from a comparison with the First World War, the German Foreign Minister thought in Cold War terms. He presented his efforts for dialogue by saying that he “made every effort to abide by the spirit of Helsinki.”<sup>212</sup>

The German Chancellor Angela Merkel also noted how, after the end of the Cold War and 70 years after the Second World War, “borders are being altered in a manner which makes it seem as if the law of the strong is superseding the strength of law.”<sup>213</sup> She emphasized how the lessons of European history dictated “dialogue and integration instead

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<sup>209</sup> Steinmeier 2014b

<sup>210</sup> Steinmeier 2014e

<sup>211</sup> Steinmeier 2014c

<sup>212</sup> Steinmeier 2014c

<sup>213</sup> Merkel 2014d

of isolation and renationalization – cooperation instead of confrontation.”<sup>214</sup> German historical analogies were thus pushing in the direction of diplomacy, dialogue, and preserving peace, the “spirit of Helsinki,” rather than toward tougher sanctions.

In summary, most policymakers involved, and especially the US leaders, were reasoning with analogies of the Cold War. This is due to their own experiences: for most decision makers involved their formative years in politics were during the Cold War. This also comes from the Ukraine crisis itself, aggressive Russian moves attempting to control and annex its neighbor – formerly part of the Soviet Union – primed transatlantic policymakers to remember Soviet imperialism of the Cold War. Journalists also played a role in priming this framing, by regularly asking questions and writing articles suggesting that a new Cold War was emerging. The Cold War framing best explain why the US were motivated in taking the lead as a way to project force and defend their values. Furthermore, it also potentially explains why German policymakers, being passionate about avoiding divisions of the past and affected by Cold War analogies in a different way, led on other issues during the crisis related to diplomatic talks and the OSCE mission.

#### Emotional Rhetoric and the Road to Sanctions

All policymakers of transatlantic powers reacted emotionally and intensely at the Russian involvement in Crimea as a breach of international norms and violation of Ukrainian sovereignty. This condemnation and the following first round of sanctions were a direct response to the Russian intervention. The American President presented Russia as being “on the wrong side of history on this”<sup>215</sup> and the Russian intervention, a “fundamental breach of international law,”<sup>216</sup> as “deeply troubling.” When President Obama announced the first round of sanctions, he presented them as a response to a violation of international law, and a step to stand up for the principle of state sovereignty.<sup>217</sup> The US Secretary of State presented in his public rhetoric the fight of the Ukrainian opposition as demonstrating “remarkable bravery” in demanding their freedom and opposing “a kleptocracy and a tyranny governing

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<sup>214</sup> Merkel 2014g

<sup>215</sup> Obama 2014b

<sup>216</sup> Obama 2014c

<sup>217</sup> Obama 2014d

them.”<sup>218</sup> On the day of the adoption of the first round of sanctions, he repeated “we cannot allow Russia or any country to defy international law with impunity.”<sup>219</sup>

The UK Foreign Secretary condemned, in step with the US but a few days later, “any violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, which contravene Russia’s obligations under the UN charter, the OSCE Helsinki Final Act and the 1997 Partition Treaty on the Status and Condition of the Black Sea Fleet with Ukraine.”<sup>220</sup> The British Prime Minister announced the sanctions on March 6 in a speech in which he declared that the “sovereignty of one of EU’s neighbours has been blatantly swept aside” and that the aspirations of the Ukrainian people were being “crushed.”<sup>221</sup> He presented the sanctions as a response to Russia’s “fragrant breach of international law”. Channeling Churchill, he added: “we know from our history that turning a blind eye when nations are trampled over and their independence trashed shores up far greater problems in the long run.”<sup>222</sup>

French policymakers were the less stark in their condemnation. Fabius expressed the will to “remain firm” in their principles and to address this “unacceptable situation.”<sup>223</sup> According to him, the Russian invasion was “contrary to all international laws.”<sup>224</sup> Chancellor Merkel expressed her disappointment at Russia’s behavior, and suggested that “far-reaching changes” might occur in Germany’s relationship with Russia as a result.<sup>225</sup> This shared emotion toward Russian behavior allowed for condemnation and the adoption of a first round of limited sanctions.

### *Acting on Threats: The Second Round*

After the first round of sanctions, transatlantic decision makers also converged on their use of sanctions as a threat to prevent Russia from supporting the Crimea referendum and annexing the region. On March 14, the US Secretary of State went to London and had a six-hour long conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov. He reiterated that the upcoming referendum would be illegal and illegitimate, that the results would not be

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<sup>218</sup> Kerry 2014d

<sup>219</sup> Kerry 2014f

<sup>220</sup> Hague 2014b

<sup>221</sup> Cameron 2014a

<sup>222</sup> Cameron 2014a

<sup>223</sup> Fabius 2014d

<sup>224</sup> Fabius 2014e

<sup>225</sup> Merkel 2014a

recognized, that “there will be consequences if Russia does not find a way to change course,” and specifically mentioned sanctions.<sup>226</sup>

A few days before the referendum, the President declared that Russia had engineered “a slapdash referendum” that would not be recognized, and he threatened “[w]e have already put in place the architecture for us to apply financial and economic consequences to actions that are taken.”<sup>227</sup> He presented the sanctions in a statement on March 17 as a response to Russian provocations.<sup>228</sup>

The Foreign Secretary of the UK argued that the referendum “doesn’t meet any international norms or standards” and presented the date of the referendum as “a diplomatic deadline for these talks before other measures need to be taken.”<sup>229</sup> After the apparent failure of the talks in London, he emphasized that the referendum was “illegal, unconstitutional and illegitimate.”<sup>230</sup> This “flagrant violation” should be met with “tougher restrictive measures.”<sup>231</sup> On the day after the referendum, when sanctions were announced, the Foreign Secretary referred to the events as a “mockery of any real democracy.”<sup>232</sup> The British Prime Minister described the annexation of Crimea as “in flagrant breach of international law” and added that it sends “a chilling message across the continent of Europe.”<sup>233</sup> He presented the EU sanctions as a response to “a sham referendum held at the barrel of a Russian gun.”<sup>234</sup>

Laurent Fabius emphasized on March 11 that there will be sanctions because the vote and referendum were illegal.<sup>235</sup> He presented Russian behavior as an “obvious violation of international law.”<sup>236</sup> The sanctions decided at the EU Council were, according to him, in reaction to the “totally illegal and unconstitutional” vote.<sup>237</sup> President Hollande condemned the referendum and the annexation, but not in emotional terms. He declared “I condemn this decision [of Russia annexing Crimea]. France recognizes neither the results of the

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<sup>226</sup> Kerry 2014g

<sup>227</sup> Obama 2014e

<sup>228</sup> Obama 2014f

<sup>229</sup> Hague 2014c

<sup>230</sup> Hague 2014d

<sup>231</sup> Hague 2014d

<sup>232</sup> Hague 2014e

<sup>233</sup> Cameron 2014c

<sup>234</sup> Cameron 2014c

<sup>235</sup> Fabius 2014f

<sup>236</sup> Fabius 2014f

<sup>237</sup> Fabius 2014h



referendum held in Crimea on March 16, nor the attachment of this region of Ukraine to Russia.”<sup>238</sup>

The German Foreign Minister was very emotional when talking about the events in Ukraine. He often reasoned by basing his judgment on the First World War, thus arguing for further diplomatic talks. Steinmeier emphasized the importance of adopting sanctions in stages for the same reason. He specified that this determination to keep diplomatic talks open were “the lesson from the events of 1914, and one that I personally have drawn.”<sup>239</sup> In an article co-written with the Netherlands’ Foreign Minister in *The Handelsblad* on March 18, the Foreign Minister spoke again about the lessons of the First World War.<sup>240</sup> The German chancellor presented Russia’s justification for Crimea by comparing it with Kosovo as “shameful” and she added that “Russia’s actions in Ukraine undoubtedly represent a violation of fundamental principles of international law.”<sup>241</sup>

The second round of sanctions was also provoked by the reaction to further norm violations by Russia, although French and German followers were less passionate about strongly condemning Russia, they recognized Russian behavior as unacceptable and agreed to assets freeze and travel bans. The transatlantic community acted on its threat to impose further sanctions if Russia supported the referendum. This does not mean that coordination on the sanctions always went smoothly. For instance, the Prime Minister of Poland described that the negotiations at the EU Council “gave rise to a considerable amount of emotion, as certain countries sought to negotiate, to correct [the list] on the basis, for example, of their relationship with the individuals.”<sup>242</sup> For transatlantic decision makers, even when they disagreed, the stakes were thus about (re)defining the ingroup and establishing who was a friend and who was a foe, and not about forging the sanctions to avoid economic consequences for their own country.

Sjursen and Rosén argued that the normative arguments presenting Russian behavior as a breach of international law mobilized the sense of responsibility on the part of EU members and allowed them to reach agreement.<sup>243</sup> This is consistent with the cognitive-

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<sup>238</sup> Hollande 2014a

<sup>239</sup> Steinmeier 2014b

<sup>240</sup> Steinmeier and Timmermans 2014

<sup>241</sup> Merkel 2014b

<sup>242</sup> Natorski and Pomorska 2017, 62

<sup>243</sup> Sjursen and Rosén 2017, 29–31

affective argument, which shows how norm violation may provoke emotions that motivate policymakers. However, the limited format of sanctions also made things easier, and despite Russia's continuing norm violation and provocations in the following months, the movement for further sanctions stalled.

### *Resistance to Further Sanctions*

Europeans became reluctant to go further and withheld sectoral sanctions for about four months. During these months, the German Foreign Minister expressed powerful emotions. The declarations of the German foreign minister mostly focused on fear, he argued that Ukraine was “gripped by the fear of war,”<sup>244</sup> and said that he understood how the situation might scare people.<sup>245</sup> Steinmeier wanted to emphasize diplomacy over sanctions because he saw talks as the only avenue to prevent conflict from spreading and was afraid of a wider war. It seems that the fear of escalation rather than the fear of economic consequences was more important in the Foreign Minister's position of opposing sectoral sanctions. On May 19, as he was campaigning for the European elections, the German Foreign Minister lost his temper while addressing a crowd gathered at Alexanderplatz, in Berlin. He strongly argued against people in the crowd calling him a warmonger and some associating the Ukraine government with Nazism. He bursted out that the real warmongers were those who equated an entire society with Nazism, and replied that “[t]he world doesn't just consist of peace angels on the one side and evildoers on the other. Unfortunately, the world is more complicated.”<sup>246</sup> The German Foreign Minister clearly sought to avoid confrontation and escalation with Russia, and consistently emphasized diplomacy over sanctions.

In answering the question of a journalist of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Chancellor Merkel seemed to explained the position of her Foreign Minister and many other Germans:

Question: You accuse Moscow of a breach of international law and a violation against the lessons of European history. Why is there in Germany still so much understanding of Putin and his policy?

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<sup>244</sup> Steinmeier 2014h

<sup>245</sup> Steinmeier 2014i

<sup>246</sup> Dempsey 2014

Merkel: There is a profound human desire that we should solve this conflict peacefully – and this desire I understand well. Especially in this year, in which we commemorate the beginning of the First and Second World War, people correctly expect that we act differently than we have back then, and that today, for example, we remain ready to talk with Russia.<sup>247</sup>

Although less intensely, French decision makers also expressed a similar fear of escalation. The French Foreign Minister declared: “The situation is very worrisome and it is true that when populations have frayed nerves and when the incidents are multiplied, there can always be a skidding of incalculable consequences.”<sup>248</sup> He added that the first point of the French approach was to emphasize deescalation because it would make no sense to go to war against Russia.<sup>249</sup> He explained that we should not simply let ourselves be carried away by the images of the “scary reality” of what was happening in Ukraine.<sup>250</sup> The French President shared this analysis when he warned that there were still “extremely dangerous processes” going on in Ukraine.<sup>251</sup>

These findings that apply to both Germany and France are interesting because they suggest another explanation for European resistance. It is possible that European powers resisted not because they were driven by a logic of interests, but because they feared the escalation that would result from more consequential sanctions. They thus drove the diplomatic process as the same time as they hit the brakes on the economic sanctions. Eventually, emotionally intense events overcame this approach.

### Emotional Outrage after MH17

The tragic shutdown of flight MH17 on July 17, and the following handling of the remains of the victims had a major impact on the crisis, sparking strong emotional reactions that erased European resistance to economic sanctions. The US Secretary of State expressed that he was “horrified” by the crash of MH17.<sup>252</sup> He emphasized feeling insulted by the fact that “drunken separatists are stacking bodies into the back of trucks” and that access to the site

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<sup>247</sup> Merkel 2014f

<sup>248</sup> Fabius 2014k

<sup>249</sup> Fabius 2014k

<sup>250</sup> Fabius 2014l

<sup>251</sup> Hollande 2014c

<sup>252</sup> Kerry 2014r

was very restrained.<sup>253</sup> He repeated this fact that “drunken separatist soldiers are piling bodies into trucks unceremoniously and disturbing the evidence” in several interviews.<sup>254</sup> He labeled the events and Russian behavior as “grotesque,”<sup>255</sup> and held Moscow responsible for having inflamed, supplied, and trained the separatists.<sup>256</sup>

The US President emphasized that “Nearly 300 innocent lives were taken – men, woman, children, infants – who had nothing to do with the crisis in Ukraine”. He added that what he called an “heartbreaking event” was “an outrage of unspeakable proportion.”<sup>257</sup> He also mentioned that this “senseless act of violence” killed several researchers and activists going to an international conference dedicated to combatting AIDS.<sup>258</sup> The President emotionally stated, “our hearts have been absolutely broken as we’ve learned more about the extraordinary and beautiful lives that were lost – men, women and children and infants who were killed so suddenly and so senselessly.”<sup>259</sup> The President opened his statement announcing the new sanctions against Russia with a reminder that “families are still in shock” over the shutdown of MH17.<sup>260</sup> He argued that the reason why Europeans were stepping up to economic sanctions was “a recognition as a consequence of what happened with the Malaysian Airlines flight that it is hard to avoid the spillover of what’s happening in Ukraine impacting Europeans across the board.”<sup>261</sup>

This emotional outrage was used by American policymakers as a way to put pressure on the Europeans to rally behind their position on the issue of sanctions. In several interviews on July 20, the US Secretary of State declared that this event should be a “wakeup call for countries in Europe,” and restated that President Obama had taken the lead on July 16 in adopting “the toughest sanctions that have been put in place to date.”<sup>262</sup> Kerry also suggested that the Netherlands’ decision makers, because they were the most hardly hit by the tragedy

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<sup>253</sup> Kerry 2014t

<sup>254</sup> Kerry 2014u

<sup>255</sup> Kerry 2014s

<sup>256</sup> Kerry 2014s

<sup>257</sup> Obama 2014o

<sup>258</sup> Obama 2014o

<sup>259</sup> Obama 2014p

<sup>260</sup> Obama 2014q

<sup>261</sup> Obama 2014q

<sup>262</sup> Kerry 2014t

of MH17, would champion sanctions: “it may well be that the Dutch and others will help lead that effort because this has to be a wakeup call to Europe that this has to change.”<sup>263</sup>

Earlier in May, the Foreign Secretary William Hague had condemned the attack on a checkpoint in Volnovakha as “appalling provocation,”<sup>264</sup> and in June when a military transport was shot down by the pro-Russian separatists in Eastern Ukraine, the UK Foreign Minister condemned the attack as a “tragic incident.”<sup>265</sup> This rhetoric is tame in comparison to the reaction of Philip Hammond, the new Foreign Secretary, to the crash of MH17. On the day of the crash, he declared: “I’m deeply shocked by this appalling incident and send my heart-felt condolences to all those who may have lost family and friends.”<sup>266</sup> This time, the British Prime Minister also stepped in. David Cameron labeled the crash an “absolutely appalling, shocking, horrific incident.”<sup>267</sup> In an opinion letter for the *Sunday Times*, he compared the crash of MH17 to the “horror of Lockerbie in 1988.”<sup>268</sup> He also put pressure on European allies to give up their reluctance when he wrote in the same letter about feelings of “anger at some in the West, [who] instead of finding the resolve to deal with this issue, have simply hoped it would go away.”<sup>269</sup> These sudden feelings of anger clearly represent a shift from several declarations a few weeks earlier when the Prime Minister congratulated Europeans for their unity,<sup>270</sup> and the British Foreign Secretary spoke of the UK as standing “shoulder-to-shoulder with European partners” in resolving the crisis.<sup>271</sup> The Prime Minister emphasized that 10 British citizens and 80 children were killed in the crash in a speech to parliament on July 21, and he declared “[t]here is anger that the murder of innocent men, women and children has been compounded by sickening reports of looting of victims’ possessions and interference with the evidence.”<sup>272</sup> He also directly accused Russia by saying that “a conflict that could have been curtailed by Moscow has instead been fomented by Moscow.”<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Kerry 2014s

<sup>264</sup> Hague 2014g

<sup>265</sup> Hague 2014i

<sup>266</sup> Hammond 2014a

<sup>267</sup> Cameron 2014f

<sup>268</sup> This is a reference to a terrorist attack in 1988, when a civilian airplane, Pan Am Flight 103, exploded over Lockerbie in Scotland. The bomb was the work of Libyan terrorists.

<sup>269</sup> Cameron 2014g

<sup>270</sup> Cameron 2014d

<sup>271</sup> Hague 2014m

<sup>272</sup> Cameron 2014h

<sup>273</sup> Cameron 2014h

The day after the crash of MH17, the French Foreign Minister declared that this catastrophe was probably an attack and that it was “absolutely horrendous.”<sup>274</sup> He described his “terrible emotion” in a meeting with his colleague from the Netherlands, and how the Netherlands’ Foreign Minister had told him of belongings that were stolen from the victims’ bodies, including wedding rings that were removed from their finger.<sup>275</sup> Fabius directly accused Russia by declaring that it was without question that the missile that hit the plane was a Russian missile.<sup>276</sup> The French President expressed that he felt much emotion and was shocked by the events which he called an “atrocious tragedy.”<sup>277</sup>

The German Foreign Minister expressed how he was “utterly speechless that hundreds of innocent travelers lost their lives in this horrible way.”<sup>278</sup> Regarding the handling of the wreckage and access to the crash site, Steinmeier added that “[a]nyone who hampers or prevents this either has something to hide or is completely heartless, if not both.”<sup>279</sup> His emotions seemed to have moved from fear to anger, as he declared being furious that something like this could happen, and that it was “shocking and outrageous” that even after the MH17 disaster “the separatists will not comply with the most fundamental rules of our civilization.”<sup>280</sup> He expressed his indignation at the “heartless conduct” of the way separatists handled the victims. According to him, this behavior “shows quite clearly what kind of people we are dealing with.”<sup>281</sup> The German Foreign Minister acknowledged that the takedown of MH17 required new actions. He said that the situation had “radically changed” following the tragedy. Steinmeier then linked this change to sanctions and the agreement within the EU to “increase pressure on Moscow.”<sup>282</sup> He also presented the response to MH17 as a trilateral leadership, arguing that the Polish and French Foreign Minister along with him “immediately took the initiative.”<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Fabius 2014r

<sup>275</sup> Fabius 2014s

<sup>276</sup> Fabius 2014s

<sup>277</sup> Hollande 2014d

<sup>278</sup> Steinmeier 2014s

<sup>279</sup> Steinmeier 2014t

<sup>280</sup> Steinmeier 2014t

<sup>281</sup> Steinmeier 2014u

<sup>282</sup> Steinmeier 2014v

<sup>283</sup> Steinmeier 2014v

The majority of the passengers on board of MH17, 193 out of 298 people, were from the Netherlands.<sup>284</sup> The events turned Dutch policymakers from being reluctant to impose strong sanctions on Moscow – according to some commentators because they feared the possible economic costs<sup>285</sup> – to powerful advocates for sectoral sanctions. The resolution adopted at the UNSC was championed by the Netherlands’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Frans Timmermans. He delivered an emotional speech illustrative of how MH17 had changed Dutch citizens and political leaders’ views. He asked UNSC diplomats to imagine what it would feel like to be told that your husband is dead and then see “images of some thugs removing a wedding band from their hand.”<sup>286</sup>

Several scholars also recognized the impact of these events on decision makers. The “commotion” of the shutdown of MH17 was presented as a trigger for the third round of sanctions.<sup>287</sup> Mitchell Orenstein and R. Daniel Kelemen explain how a complete breakdown of the relation between the German Chancellor and the Russian President occurred after the events, and according to them the Chancellor took the lead from this point forward in pushing for economic sanctions from the EU.<sup>288</sup> As I have shown, this emotional lead was actually followership in the wider transatlantic view, with the Europeans rallying behind what had been the US position for four months.

My interviews have confirmed the emotional importance of MH17 for the economic sanctions. An EU official who was well positioned to see the various stances of EU powers, even before I mentioned MH17 in the interview, described the incident as “the point of no-return” which led to “sanctions which were unprecedented in their scope and most importantly in terms of target.” He added that “never before had a permanent member of the Security Council been the target of restrictive measures.” According to him, Europe could not remain silent after the shutdown, but some countries remained reluctant to adopt economic sanctions, even until the last minute (Italy, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Portugal, Hungary). However, the pressure was too great and these countries eventually gave in. When

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<sup>284</sup> BBC 2014c

<sup>285</sup> Erdbrink 2014

<sup>286</sup> Sengupta 2014

<sup>287</sup> Natorski and Pomorska 2017, 63

<sup>288</sup> Orenstein and Kelemen 2017, 94–96

I questioned him about the impact of MH17, he described the events of MH17 and their impact this way:

The big change is that, that was a finger in the eye of the Europeans. Most of the victims of the MH17 were Europeans, mostly Dutch okay, but it was clear that we were not speaking anymore about the security of a neighbor country that some consider a strong ally or future member of the European union (...). One thing is your ally, one thing is your wannabe ally, and one thing is when your citizens are affected by this.<sup>289</sup>

This evidence further undermines the slow bargaining hypothesis, and strongly reinforces the cognitive-affective explanation. This EU official basically says that the ingroup was now directly affected, in ways that outraged European policymakers (a finger in the eye), and that provoked strong emotions which overwhelmed resistance against sanctions.

#### Emotional Reactions of Other Actors

There is also evidence that commentators in the media and business leaders were also emotionally affected by the events, and that they expressed this emotion so as to push political actors to act against Russia.

The newspapers emphasized the emotional aspects of the tragedy and graphic details. In *The New York Times*, Sabrina Tavernise described at length the corpses and objects found on the crash site, including a Dutch pink children book and playing cards scattered on the scene and belonging to the “many children” among the victims.<sup>290</sup> According to the BBC, who published detailed portraits of several of the victims, 80 children were on board.<sup>291</sup> The *New York Times*’ editors urged policymakers to action: “After the downing of Flight 17 and the brutish handling of the victims, it is time for Europe to hold Mr. Putin to his words.”<sup>292</sup> What was possibly the strongest call to action came from a prominent public figure in France, the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy. In an opinion letter in *The New York Times*, he decried European “cowardice” in the Ukrainian crisis as a “disgrace” and compared their reactions with the appeasement of “the spirit of Munich.” Furthermore, his letter provided a

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<sup>289</sup> Interview with EU official, May 11, 2018

<sup>290</sup> Tavernise 2014

<sup>291</sup> BBC 2014c

<sup>292</sup> The New York Times Editorial Board 2014a



lengthy and vivid description of the events around the crash of flight MH 17 and related investigation,

an investigation [on the crash] made well nigh impossible by these dogs of war who follow no creed and no law, who, as they horrified the world by leaving the bodies of their victims abandoned in fields or heaped in poorly refrigerated train cars, as they reveled in their 15 minutes of fame by deploring before the news cameras of the world that the 298 lost souls had had the bad taste to “land” on people’s house or in reservoirs used for drinking water, were also purloining the plane’s black boxes, organizing the export to Russia of possibly compromising debris, and casually stripping the bodies of objects of value -- whatever the outcome of the investigation into all of this, an undeniable result was carnage, a war crime, an attack on Ukraine, the Netherlands and Malaysia all at once.<sup>293</sup>

There is also some evidence that business leaders changed their positions after the event. At the end of July, reports suggest that there was shift among German business leaders. In a statement, Hannes Hesse, executive director of the German Engineering Federation, declared that new sanctions were unavoidable in view of the recent escalation.<sup>294</sup> On July 28, in an article in the financial newspaper *Handelsblatt*, Ulrich Grillo, president of the Federation of German industries (BDI, Bundesverbands der Deutschen Industrie) argued in favor of sanctions against Russia. Although he wrote that a “sober assessment” (nüchternen Abwägung) of the situation was necessary, he first discussed the “awful shooting down” (furchtbare Abschuss) of MH17 in his opinion letter, arguing that the plane crash and the subsequent behavior of the separatists with the dead “have horrified us” (haben uns entsetzt). According to him and the association that he represents, Russian behavior in Ukraine must have “noticeable consequences” (spürbare Konsequenzen) and negative economic consequences for Germany are more than provided for if the sanctions succeed in making sure principles of international law are respected.<sup>295</sup> It is apparently easy to find a justification for bearing the cost of economic sanctions, even for business groups, when affective norms dictate that such sanctions should be applied.

A French official that I interviewed argued that this shift was probably the result of a push from the German government on business groups to declare themselves publicly in favor of economic sanctions.<sup>296</sup> It seems that there was a reverse top-down relationship with

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<sup>293</sup> Lévy 2014

<sup>294</sup> Ewing and Baker 2014

<sup>295</sup> Grillo 2014

<sup>296</sup> Interview with French official, March 1, 2018

policymakers convincing societal groups, and also that this persuasion became really effective after MH17.

### *Social Groups and French Friendship*

The strong bonds of friendship and partnership between France and Russia have tempered French outrage and willingness to punish Moscow throughout the crisis. French policymakers saw Russia as part of the ingroup rather than as part of an outgroup, which made them prefer dialogue and avoiding harsher sanctions. The French approach may also be linked to some French policymakers' idiosyncratic beliefs that do not seem shared within the community. The French Foreign Minister expressed the belief that the world should be multipolar, but that right now it is "zero-polar" or "a-polar," which according to him makes it impossible to solve many crises.<sup>297</sup>

There are many evidence of the French willingness to treat Russia as a partner even as the crisis escalated and as France condemned some of Russia's actions. On March 2 for instance, Fabius said that "the decisions taken by our Russian partners are contrary to the principles of the G7 and G8."<sup>298</sup> Despite condemnations, French policymakers still saw Russians as partners. Later in the crisis, the French position remained closer to the Russian stance than to their transatlantic allies. The French Foreign Minister suggested in an interview that he agreed with Putin's argument that he did not have full control over the separatist, and recognized that the Russian President demanded to cancel the referendum in Donetsk and Luhansk.<sup>299</sup>

French decision makers, especially the French President, often expressed less intense emotions and more willingness to preserve their friendship with Moscow. Other than ties of friendship, this may be explained by the memory of the Cold War when France also attempted to remain part of the Atlantic alliance while engaging Russia, or by the belief that the world should be multipolar, and so that Russia should be allowed in the club of world powers and included in diplomatic talks. Noteworthy is that in the end, the power of emotions evoked by the events and by their European counterparts shifted France's positioning. It is

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<sup>297</sup> Fabius 2014a

<sup>298</sup> Fabius 2014b

<sup>299</sup> Fabius 2014n

possible that it discredited their Russian “friends,” shranked the ingroup, and convinced French policymakers either that they had to do something about it, or at least that they could not go against the tide of support for economic sanctions after MH17. The pressures in private, notably from the Netherlands’s Foreign Minister to his French counterpart, show how French policymakers could not cast Russians as partners anymore when confronted to the shocking behavior of pro-Russian separatists, such as looting corpses.

#### *Summary of the Evidence for the Cognitive-Affective Argument*

Evidence proves that policymakers were driven by their emotional beliefs, especially analogies of the Cold War primed by the conflict, that Americans policymakers, especially the US Secretary of State and other officials within the Obama Administration, held strong convictions that drove them to argue for economic sanctions, and that the US leadership was enhanced because it was representative of the community’s norms.

Moreover, unique evidence validating CAT over the Liberal approach was found in this case. The leader claimed that his position was the position that European powers should adopt, and emphasized the difference with unacceptable Russian behavior. As if the shutdown alone was not sufficient, American policymakers intensified emotionality around the event. Harm to innocents and victims perceived as vulnerable, like women and children, were emphasized in the American rhetoric, as well as the violation of norms on the proper way to handle bodies. The shift in the leader-follower process occurred right when the shutdown of MH17 was emotionally resonating the most. There is even evidence of emotional appeals used for persuasion, for instance the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands used a powerful emotional argument – the wedding ring argument – both in private and in public to champion the cause of economic sanctions. Finally, these feelings of outrage were further amplified by the media and even business groups who, driven by their emotions, also declared that they supported economic sanctions.

While the Liberal Theory has a hard time trying to explain several facts that the Cognitive-Affective Theory explains easily, CAT can also explain what the liberal theory explains. For instance, the four-month long resistance of European powers were due to France and Germany preferring to engage Russia in diplomatic talks because they feared the dire consequences of further escalation. In the case of French policymakers, they also sought

to continue to see Russia as a friend and a partner, but that position became increasingly untenable.

The affective wave of MH17, washing over policymakers, the media, and domestic publics, overcame all resistance, or even the possibility that resistance would be acceptable. Economic interests and the trade situation were still important in the sanctions that were agreed upon in the end, but as the emotional leadership argument predicts, economic interests took a backseat once powerful emotions overcame policymakers. Transatlantic policymakers accepted to incur significant economic costs to show solidarity in punishing a rule-breaking power that had supported or at least permitted the outrageous crash and impeded the possibility of investigation.

### What About Institutions?

The EU was certainly a very important institution in this case. Without its existence, it is unlikely that there would have been such a willingness to closely coordinate their positions for European states. Furthermore, EU institutions, especially COREPER II, played a central role in negotiating the details of the sanction package. The EU both helped define the ingroup – the process and the willingness of adopting a common position – but it also facilitated this cooperation through frequent meetings, established procedures, and the bureaucratic work done in Brussels. However, once again, European powers were not satisfied with these institutions alone: French and German policymakers established the Normandy format, an ad hoc institution bypassing the EU. The High Representative for the EU's common security and foreign policy was almost completely absent and always played a secondary role throughout the conflict. At best, she might have been a mediator working in the shadow of powerful policymakers, more likely she was only echoing the European consensus without any political power of her own. The EU was important, but not the key mechanism in moving leader-follower dynamics. This reality was reflected in the comments of an EU official that I interviewed:

I said that it had been intergovernmental but I also added that the level of attention to a cohesive action is probably unprecedented in any other international organization. That is because the EU, of course, has its own development, its own dynamics, established high levels of trust and confidence among officials working there, among states, there is, of course, a track record in this regard. But, at the end of the day, we are speaking

about a question that relates to great power policies here. And, I think it is just normal, if you want to look at it in an objective way, that these decisions are taken by those that still have a bigger weight within a group.<sup>300</sup>

The crisis sparked debates within the EU and a willingness for improving its institutions. This gives a hint at how leadership may not only help cooperation within a given institutional structure, but actually be an impulse to change it. During the crisis, Polish policymakers proposed an idea that had already circulated in the case of Georgia: a common energy market so that the EU would negotiate at 28 with Russia, rather than negotiations being individual to each EU state. The events of the crisis, by revealing Russia as an antagonist, reinforced the willingness of EU actors to deepen and strengthen their integration. The idea seemed to convince the German Chancellor who declared “We must work for a European energy market vigorously and intensively.”<sup>301</sup>

NATO was certainly an important institution in this case. Nevertheless, NATO did not have much importance for the issue of economic sanctions. This issue was outside of NATO’s competencies as a defensive alliance. Inside NATO itself, there are indications that Polish policymakers – as well as policymakers from the Baltic states – were strong leaders and advocated for reinforcing NATO’s eastern borders.<sup>302</sup> This is unsurprising considering these countries’ geographical position and their emotional memories as states under the domination of the Soviet Union, a fact that I have discussed in the previous chapter.

## **Conclusion**

Cognitive-Affective Theory does not argue that policymakers will disregard all material reality to impose their beliefs and emotions on it. In fact, it argues that our cognitions and emotions are often shifting in response to signals from that reality, as was the case when the tragedy of MH17 resonated widely in the transatlantic community. It may seem that the death of civilians, no matter how tragic, was small compared to the billions that would be lost from economic sanctions. But a single event can have big repercussions through its emotional resonance. Vivid and emotional events took the foreground and relegated economic calculations to a second order concern.

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<sup>300</sup> Interview with EU official, May 22, 2018

<sup>301</sup> Merkel 2014c

<sup>302</sup> Interview with NATO official, February 22, 2018

The fact that material factors are part of policymakers' cognitions explains why blocking Russian gas exports was not even considered in the sanctions. The US President understood from the start that sanctions considering this specific resource would never be acceptable to Europeans, and he did not even try to lead on this point. Smaller states who opposed sanctions until the end could not fight the affective wave, especially with a position that was now endorsed by the Big Four in the transatlantic community.

This chapter also clearly shows how affective norms in the background structure the policymakers' behavior. It would not have been acceptable for the French Foreign Minister, when his counterpart spoke of how the tragedy shocked the people of the Netherlands, to refuse his call by arguing that French workers would lose jobs from sanctions, or that the economic interests of France must prevail. Top policymakers, who often have high levels of social skills and emotional intelligence, would recognize this very clearly. Affective norms also completely changed Foreign Minister Steinmeier's discourse: now that such a shocking event had occurred, it would not be socially and politically acceptable to simply continue diplomatic talk, and argue that Germany did not want to lead or to dominate. Now the situation demanded that German policymakers take the initiative, show how they did so, forcefully respond, and employ intense language to condemn the unacceptable behavior. This is exactly what they did. Not all policymakers may feel as intensely about MH17 and about Russia's involvement in the Ukraine crisis, but all policymakers are always concerned about *how they should feel* and what emotions they should express when such an affective wave comes crashing on their previously held international positions.

## Chapter 6 – The Middle East Maelström: Reluctant US Leadership against the Islamic State

*Even while I gazed, this current acquired a monstrous velocity. Each moment added to its speed – to its headlong impetuosity. In five minutes the whole sea, as far as Vurrgh, was lashed into ungovernable fury; but it was between Moskoe and the coast that the main uproar held its sway. Here the vast bed of the waters, seamed and scarred into a thousand conflicting channels, burst suddenly into phrensied convulsion – heaving, boiling, hissing – gyrating in gigantic and innumerable vortices, and all whirling and plunging on to the eastward with a rapidity which water never elsewhere assumes, except in precipitous descents.*

– Edgar Allan Poe, *A Descent Into the Maelström*<sup>1</sup>

When Iraq’s second-largest city fell to radical islamist militants in June 2014, a new threat appeared on the radar of transatlantic powers. As is often the case, transatlantic partners cooperated on a wide range of issues during this crisis. These issues included demanding a more pluralistic and transparent Iraqi government, sending humanitarian aid and weapons to Iraq, condemning the Syrian regime for its role in the emergence of the new enemy, and also starkly condemning this new group itself. In this chapter, I focus on the issue of military intervention, more specifically on the decision to conduct air strikes against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

Policymakers and the media have given several names to the insurgent group in Iraq and Syria. US officials often use the name Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), while many others use Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). French policymakers have also repeatedly used the word Daech or Daish to refer to the group. In order to delegitimize it, policymakers also refer to it as the so-called Islamic State or “Islamic State” in quotation marks. As I will show in this chapter, the group has also been given a plethora of other less official and more colorful names. The most accurate translation of the group’s full name is probably Islamic State of Iraq and el-Sham.<sup>2</sup> To keep things simple and avoid the debate as

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<sup>1</sup> Poe 1938, 128–29

<sup>2</sup> Lyons and El-Naggar 2014

to whether or not the organization is really a state, or whether or not it is a terrorist group, I will mostly refer to it as the Islamic State or ISIS unless I quote directly from political actors.

In this chapter, I first explain the importance of the issue of air strikes. This issue involves sharing a military burden and putting national soldiers in the line of danger, which makes it a difficult issue for cooperation and enhances its importance. I then provide an account of how transatlantic cooperation unfolded in confronting ISIS. After two months of avoiding involvement, the US President decided in favor of unilateral actions before taking the lead of a broader coalition. In the last part, I contrast leadership arguments to see how they fare against the empirical data. Although Liberal approaches are right that domestic factors mattered, empirical data shows how common ideas on fighting terrorism and emotional resonance in responding to the provocations of ISIS were the main drivers of the leader-follower dynamics. The strong currents of powerful ideas and intense emotions explain how a reluctant President who wanted to disengage his country from the Middle East was propelled to launch a US-led air campaign in Iraq and Syria.

### **The Issue of Air Strikes**

Because of its high level of resources and military power projection capabilities, the United States is usually expected to be in the lead for matters of military intervention. More often than not this expectation is accurate, as was the case for the fight against the Islamic State. Even in instances when the US lets others take the diplomatic lead, it often demands military leadership and takes on a disproportionate share of the burden for military and intelligence operations.<sup>3</sup> However, this capacity for action does not always translate into followership. Followers may delay or entirely deny followership to the US, as French and German policymakers did during the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Ally support is important as it can help the US share the burden of military strikes and lend legitimacy to the American intervention. Conversely, if an ally strongly opposes the US, it can undermine American actions and legitimacy. It can also make US actions harder or more costly, for instance by denying American forces the right to stage an attack from the ally's territory.

Military intervention, even without “boots on the ground,” requires solid justification as it is a sensitive issue at home for decision makers. Aerial campaigns require large sums of

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<sup>3</sup> Paquin, Massie, and Beauregard 2017



money and the potential sacrifice of pilots should they be killed or captured. Such interventions may give a head of state or government the opportunity to present him or herself as a strong leader, but it also carries high risks that it might backfire. No matter the reason behind the intervention, it can “lead to political crises at home and is not a decision that states enter into lightly.”<sup>4</sup>

On issues of military intervention, policymakers must also back their positions by mobilizing military assets. Therefore, questions of the efficiency of various strategies, different military capabilities of the states involved, and how to share the burden and coordinate operations on the ground also come into play. This makes international cooperation harder, but potentially more important in the consequences that both action and inaction can have. The current technology available to Western powers, and especially to the US, makes air strikes a powerful tool that can cripple an enemy and radically change the relative forces of warring parties within a country. Therefore, major consequences can result from decisions on this issue.

The fight against the Islamic State is expected to be an easier case for Cognitive-Affective Theory. The liberal hypothesis has much less to say in this case, because it is not clear how business interests or other domestic groups are affected by insurgents taking over far away countries. Liberal arguments mostly have a chance to explain the events indirectly, by showing how Western economic interests were affected in Iraq, how global markets were threatened by destabilization from the crisis, or how public opinion influences decision makers. As far as CAT is concerned, the highly sensitive issue of terrorism in Western societies in a post-9-11 world, and the publicized violent actions of ISIS are expected to strongly motivate decision makers to confront the problem. I focus in this chapter on the beginning of the crisis and the decision to launch the air campaign, and at the time no terrorist attacks in the West had been attributed to ISIS. However, reports in the media of the group’s actions in Iraq, their wealth, control of a large swath of territory, and ideology, as well as the gruesome videos released by ISIS itself, could not avoid provoking strong emotions in the public and among policymakers. This case is therefore interesting to understand how emotional leadership works and witness how it unfolds in an intense setting. If the emotional argument fails in this case, however, this would strongly undermine it.

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<sup>4</sup> Hildebrandt et al. 2013, 244

## **Cooperating on Striking ISIS**

In this section, I tell the story of how transatlantic policymakers responded to the emergence of the Islamic State and how they cooperated to fight against it. I focus on the how the leader-follower dynamics unfolded in response to the events on the ground.

### The Surprising Fall of Mosul

On June 10, radical Sunni militants who had controlled parts of Iraq and Syria for several months, including the city of Falluja, surprised everyone by taking over Mosul. The city of 1.4 million people fell to the insurgents' attack as several units of the Iraqi army collapsed.<sup>5</sup> As the crisis began, transatlantic policymakers were aligned in their response. They all declared that they opposed sending ground troops to Iraq. They also put the blame of the rise of ISIS on the Iraqi President Maliki and demanded that the Iraqi parliament choose a new and more inclusive government. This quote by the German Foreign Minister is representative: "The root of the problem is the central government in Baghdad's inability to involve and ensure the participation of the country's various regions, population groups, and religions...."<sup>6</sup>

For the first two months of the crisis, although they all agreed on condemning the Islamic State, transatlantic policymakers attempted to address the crisis through humanitarian aid, pressures on Iraqi politicians, and help in equipment and training to the Iraqi forces. For instance, US Secretary of State John Kerry went to Iraq on June 23 to speak to the leaders of the Sunni, Shia and Kurdish blocs of the Iraqi Parliament, and to convince them to move faster in forming a new government.<sup>7</sup>

As early as June 17, US military advisers presented to President Obama a wide range of military options to combat ISIS, from resupplying the Iraqi army to full-scale air war. Obama began at the time to consider the option of limited and highly selective air strikes against ISIS leaders similar to what had been done in Yemen.<sup>8</sup> However, he was reluctant to engage forces in Iraq, especially since he had done much to separate his foreign policy from

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<sup>5</sup> Al-Salhy and Arango 2014

<sup>6</sup> Steinmeier 2014l

<sup>7</sup> M. R. Gordon 2014a

<sup>8</sup> Landler and Schmitt 2014b

that of his predecessor. Julianne Smith, a former national security aide to Vice President Biden, described how the president must have felt: “[h]e was just getting to the point where he felt he could free himself from this agenda and not define his foreign policy solely on the last guy’s (...) And he was just turning a corner when this hit.”<sup>9</sup> In a later interview with Jeffrey Goldberg, when the journalist suggested the quote from the Godfather Part III to illustrate how the President was drawn to the Middle East, the President completed the quote himself: “[Just when I thought I was out] it pulls you right back in.”<sup>10</sup>

Even before the crisis escalated, the Iraqi Prime Minister had asked the Americans several times to conduct air strikes against ISIS.<sup>11</sup> However, the White House continued to resist these calls even after the fall of Mosul. Administration officials told the media at the time that air strikes were conditional on Iraq forming a new and more inclusive government which represented the three major groups in the country, the Sunni, the Shia and the Kurds.<sup>12</sup>

The Islamists militants continued to gain ground and expand the territory under their control, taking the city of Tal Afar on June 16.<sup>13</sup> At the time, the US Administration sent an additional 275 military forces to Iraq, with the limited aim to protect the American embassy in Baghdad.<sup>14</sup> US policymakers were looking for alternative ways to influence the events short of direct intervention. For instance, President Obama requested \$500 million from Congress to reinforce the Syrian opposition fighting ISIS in Syria with training and equipment.<sup>15</sup>

In July, the US Administration continued to put pressure on Iraqi politicians to choose a new government. Even Iran and leaders of the Shia clergy were asking Maliki to leave his office.<sup>16</sup> However, negotiations to agree on a new government were difficult and encountered many setbacks.<sup>17</sup> This unfolded simultaneously with a sharp increase of violence in the country. June 2014 was the most violent month in Iraq since 2008, with the UN reporting at least 2,417 people killed, 1,531 of which were civilians.<sup>18</sup> On July 15, Iraqi representatives

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<sup>9</sup> P. Baker 2014j

<sup>10</sup> Goldberg 2016

<sup>11</sup> M. R. Gordon and Schmitt 2014

<sup>12</sup> Landler and Gordon 2014

<sup>13</sup> Nordland 2014a

<sup>14</sup> Nordland 2014a

<sup>15</sup> H. Cooper 2014a

<sup>16</sup> Arango and Al-Salhy 2014

<sup>17</sup> Rubin and Al-Salhy 2014a

<sup>18</sup> Nordland 2014c

voted and finally elected a new speaker, the first step in the Constitution to form a government.<sup>19</sup> On July 24, the Parliament approved Fouad Massoum as the new President.<sup>20</sup> However, there still remained two important steps, the nomination of a Prime Minister and the approval of his cabinet, before the government could be fully formed.

In mid-July, Islamic State insurgents intensified their program of mass conversion, expulsion and extermination of other groups that did not share their ideas. Minorities in danger included the Yezidis, the Shabaks, Shiite Turkmen and Christians.<sup>21</sup> This highly violent endeavor and success of ISIS dragged the US into the conflict.

### Striking as The Lone Ranger

Islamic State militants made further progress in Iraq, and at the beginning of August were successfully fighting Kurdish peshmerga forces. The cities of Mahmour and Gwar, defended by Kurdish fighters, fell to ISIS on August 6.<sup>22</sup> Islamist fighters came close to the Mosul dam and they arrived within 30 minutes of the Kurdish capital, Erbil, thus “raising an immediate danger for the American diplomats, military advisers, and other citizens who are based there.”<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, a crisis was unfolding on mount Sinjar, a mountain where families from persecuted members of the Yezidi minority had fled. The Yezidis were now trapped on the mountain where they risked dying with the sweltering heat, and no access to food or water.<sup>24</sup>

The US President announced that he authorized air strikes against Islamic State’s targets on August 7. He did so on the same day as the Mosul Dam, the biggest dam in Iraq, fell at the hands of ISIS.<sup>25</sup> The goal of the air strikes was to protect American personnel in Erbil and provide support to a humanitarian effort in order to help the people stranded on Mount Sinjar.<sup>26</sup> Humanitarian assistance was also airdropped to these civilians. The US

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<sup>19</sup> Rubin and Al-Salhy 2014b

<sup>20</sup> Arango and Al-Salhy 2014

<sup>21</sup> Rubin 2014b

<sup>22</sup> Rubin and Arango 2014

<sup>23</sup> H. Cooper, Landler, and Rubin 2014

<sup>24</sup> H. Cooper, Landler, and Rubin 2014

<sup>25</sup> Arango 2014

<sup>26</sup> Obama 2014r

Administration sent an additional 130 military advisers in Iraq to help the evacuation of Mount Sinjar.<sup>27</sup>

President Obama emphasized the necessity of American leadership “to underwrite the global security and prosperity that our children and grandchildren will depend upon.”<sup>28</sup> A few days later, he stated “when countless innocent people are facing a massacre, and when we have the ability to help prevent it – the United States just can’t look away. That’s not who we are. We’re Americans. We act. We lead.”<sup>29</sup> The President was criticized for leading too late, and he justified the two months between the escalation of the crisis and the military involvement by presenting this delay as a strategy to pressure the Iraqi government. In an interview with Thomas Friedman, he declared that early air strikes “would have taken the pressure off of al-Maliki” and that the Iraqi Shiite would then think

We don’t actually have to make compromises, we don’t have to take any decisions. We don’t have to go through the difficult process of figuring out what we’ve done in the past. All we have to do is let the Americans bail us out again. We can go about business as usual.<sup>30</sup>

This argument, however, begs another question: if the US were holding off on strikes to pressure the Iraqi government, why begin the strike before a new Iraqi government was formed? According to reports from inside the US Administration, the strikes that had been decided were not at the time a “broad-based counterterrorism campaign,” it only sought to contain the expansion of ISIS.<sup>31</sup> Secretary Kerry echoed the President when he declared that such wider effort against ISIS would only happen when the Iraqi had formed a new government.<sup>32</sup>

The first US strikes, conducted by Predator drones and F-18 planes, attacked rebel positions around Erbil with the goal of stopping ISIS advances toward the capital of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG).<sup>33</sup> The decision to use the first strikes to protect the

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<sup>27</sup> H. Cooper 2014b

<sup>28</sup> Obama 2014r

<sup>29</sup> Obama 2014t

<sup>30</sup> Friedman 2014a

<sup>31</sup> M. R. Gordon 2014b

<sup>32</sup> M. R. Gordon 2014b

<sup>33</sup> Rubin, Arango, and Cooper 2014

Kurds provoked discontent in Baghdad, with politicians criticizing the US for protecting the Kurds and Christians, but not the Shia Muslims of the rest of Iraq.<sup>34</sup>

At that time, the American intervention was better labeled as unilateral intervention than leadership. Indeed, the President seemed more preoccupied with justifying his actions to Congress than to his international partners. He kept congressional leaders in the loop from early in the crisis.<sup>35</sup> In several letters to Congress, the President justified the ongoing air strikes with shifting policy objectives. At first, the goal was “to protect American personnel in Iraq by stopping the advance on Erbil by the terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and to help forces in Iraq as they fight to break the siege of Mount Sinjar and protect the civilians trapped there.”<sup>36</sup> After the population on Mount Sinjar had been able to evacuate safely on August 13,<sup>37</sup> the President wrote a letter to Congress on August 17 and the reason he gave for the air strikes was now “to support operations by Iraqi forces to recapture the Mosul Dam.”<sup>38</sup> The Iraqi and Kurdish forces recaptured the dam on August 18 with the help of American air support.<sup>39</sup> At the beginning of September, the objective became to “support an operation to deliver humanitarian assistance to civilians in the town of Amirli, Iraq, which is surrounded and besieged by ISIL.”<sup>40</sup>

Policymakers of core US allies, the United Kingdom, France and Germany, all announced their support for the US strikes, but specified that they would not engage in similar actions.<sup>41</sup> France claimed that any military involvement on its parts would require a “green light from the UN Security Council.”<sup>42</sup> Transatlantic partners helped the effort in other ways: French policymakers announced that they would send arms to support the Iraqi forces, British and German decision makers sent humanitarian aid for the Yezidis and other persecuted minorities.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Rubin, Arango, and Cooper 2014

<sup>35</sup> Landler and Schmitt 2014b

<sup>36</sup> Obama 2014s

<sup>37</sup> H. Cooper 2014c

<sup>38</sup> Obama 2014v

<sup>39</sup> H. Cooper, Landler, and Ahmed 2014

<sup>40</sup> Obama 2014z

<sup>41</sup> Cameron 2014k; Fabius 2014u; Steinmeier 2014z

<sup>42</sup> Fabius 2014u

<sup>43</sup> Daley and Cowell 2014

## Building a Coalition Against ISIS

The Western public, the media, and decision makers' outrage against ISIS grew in August as more shocking information and videos were released. On August 20, ISIS posted a video on the internet of the beheading of American journalist James Foley.<sup>44</sup> On the same day, in an interview to *Le Monde*, French President François Hollande announced his initiative for a summit in Paris where many countries would meet to discuss the fight against ISIS.<sup>45</sup>

In the wake of Foley's murder, Germany stepped up its involvement in the conflict. On August 31, German policymakers approved the delivery of arms, including antitank missiles, to the Kurdish forces in Iraq.<sup>46</sup> Although the German Foreign Minister recognized that the policy had sparked intense debates and was a fundamental change for German foreign policy, he declared that Germany's reticence to use military means was "well-founded and deeply ingrained in Germans' collective consciousness". He defended the policy by arguing that where

there is a threat of mass murder, where the stability and order of countries and entire regions are endangered, and where there is no chance of successful political settlements without military support, we must be willing to honestly weigh up the risks of getting involved against the consequences of doing nothing.<sup>47</sup>

The German Chancellor likewise defended the delivery of arms with Germany's responsibility and the risks of doing nothing.

Although the measures of European powers and US strikes did push back ISIS around Erbil, the group continued to make gains elsewhere and maintain most of the territory under its control. One of the reasons for this, as former White House adviser on the Middle East Steven Simon said, was that "you can't defeat an insurgency that has a cross-border safe haven, so you have to do something."<sup>48</sup> This is why the Obama Administration was considering several options to broaden and intensify the war at the end of August, including

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<sup>44</sup> Callimachi 2014a

<sup>45</sup> *Le Monde* 2014

<sup>46</sup> Smale 2014d

<sup>47</sup> Steinmeier 2014ad

<sup>48</sup> P. Baker and Shear 2014

arming Syrian rebels and striking ISIS targets in Syria.<sup>49</sup> As a sign of preparations for these actions, the President authorized surveillance flights over Syria.<sup>50</sup>

The month of September began with the murder of a second American hostage, Steven J. Sottloff, whose death was also made public in a video by the Islamic State.<sup>51</sup> At the end of August and beginning of September, as part of a larger effort to build a comprehensive strategy against ISIS, the US Administration deployed its diplomacy to reach potential allies. The main targets of their diplomatic attempts were key transatlantic partners, Australia, and states in the Middle East region who were neighbors to the unfolding crisis.<sup>52</sup> The two main venues for reaching partners were the September 5 NATO Summit in Wales, and the Paris Summit on September 15.

The Europeans clearly saw these efforts as a leadership attempt. According to a European official, the US lead on sanctions in the Ukraine crisis, and now in the airstrikes against ISIS, “have gone some distance in restoring allied confidence in the president.”<sup>53</sup> This confidence had to be restored in light of the Syrian blunder the year before, when the President and his Secretary of State made announcements suggesting that they were ready to strike down Assad, only to step back and change their mind, but not before the British Prime Minister lost a vote for intervening in Syria in the British Parliament and the French President had publicly announced strong support for the intervention.

Just before the discussion in Wales, French policymakers seemed to be reconsidering their position. The French Foreign Minister declared that the question of direct strikes by France “is open and we will discuss it in the coming days.”<sup>54</sup>

### *The Wales Summit*

At the Wales NATO Summit, transatlantic partners continued to declare publicly that they would not participate in air strikes, and emphasized other types of contribution. In a speech just before the summit, the French President François Hollande expressed his belief that today’s consequences in Syria and Iraq were due to the failed international mobilization

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<sup>49</sup> P. Baker and Shear 2014

<sup>50</sup> Landler and Cooper 2014

<sup>51</sup> Landler and Schmitt 2014c

<sup>52</sup> H. Cooper and Landler 2014

<sup>53</sup> DeYoung and Balz 2014

<sup>54</sup> Fabius 2014z



against Bashar Al-Assad's regime. He appeared still bitter at what had happened over Syria the year before, as he reminded audiences that "last year, I expressed my conviction that an international intervention was necessary in Syria." According to him, this inaction turned the situation into an "immense peril."<sup>55</sup> At the summit, the President reminded audiences and NATO allies again that France was ready to act a year ago.<sup>56</sup>

US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, on the sidelines of the NATO summit, announced the formation of a group that he called the "core coalition" against the Islamic State, which included the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Canada, Germany, Turkey, Italy, Poland and Denmark. The goal of this announcement was to bolster the international legitimacy of US actions against ISIS.<sup>57</sup> On the margins of the Wales summit, US diplomats also discussed with non-NATO members who were present. They were especially eager to include other Sunni Arab States in the coalition against ISIS.<sup>58</sup> According to a State Department official I interviewed, this united front in Wales was "precooked," allies had discussed it in the weeks preceding the summit and all agreed on the need to form a coalition against ISIS.<sup>59</sup>

The Defense Secretary, shortly after the Wales Summit, went to Ankara to discuss Turkey's role in the coalition. The Obama Administration wanted Turkey to stop the flow of migrants who traveled through its territory to join ISIS. It also needed the authorization of the Turkish government to use military bases on Turkish soil in order to launch air strikes against ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria.<sup>60</sup>

#### *Announcing the Anti-ISIS Strategy*

On September 8, the Iraqi parliament finally approved a new "inclusive" government led by a new Prime Minister, Haider al-Abadi.<sup>61</sup> However, the Iraqi had not been able to agree on the two most important ministries for security, so the Defense and Interior Ministries remained vacant.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, transatlantic decision makers considered the government

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<sup>55</sup> Hollande 2014j

<sup>56</sup> Hollande 2014k

<sup>57</sup> H. Cooper 2014d

<sup>58</sup> H. Cooper 2014d

<sup>59</sup> Interview with US official, May 22, 2018

<sup>60</sup> H. Cooper 2014e

<sup>61</sup> Fahim and Ahmed 2014

<sup>62</sup> Fahim and Ahmed 2014

more inclusive because of the more conciliatory tone of the new Prime Minister, although the new cabinet actually included a lower number of Sunni politicians than under Maliki.<sup>63</sup>

In an address to the nation on the evening of September 10, President Obama asserted his willingness to eliminate the Islamic State and unveiled his strategy to do so. He justified his action by arguing that ISIS is “plotting against our homeland.” President Obama laid out an ambitious objective: “[w]e will degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy.”<sup>64</sup> He presented this strategy as a collective effort. “I can announce that American will lead a broad coalition to roll back this terrorist threat.”<sup>65</sup> He added: “[a] broad, American leadership is the one constant in an uncertain world. It is America that has the capacity and the will to mobilize the world against terrorists.”<sup>66</sup> The Obama Administration presented the broader effort against ISIS as a long-term effort that would not bring quick results, with officials suggesting it may take three years to achieve their goals.<sup>67</sup>

As announced in the speech, the Administration moved forward with strikes in Syria despite the fact that it did not have a UNSC resolution to support this action, and even though the Syrian government had not asked for assistance like the Iraqis did. The Administration legally defended its decision by claiming that the strikes were required to help Iraq defend itself.<sup>68</sup> On the domestic side, US officials made a case that rested on previous approvals in Congress for war against Al Qaeda in 2001 and authorizing military intervention in Iraq in 2002.<sup>69</sup> Both justifications rested on shaky ground: they implied that it was okay to violate Syrian sovereignty and relied on invoking 13-years-old Congressional authorizations from a time when ISIS did not even exist.

Despite the President’s statement and presentation of the Administration’s strategy against ISIS, there remained some ambiguity and confusion in the US rhetoric, especially on the issues related to US involvement in Syria. US policymakers did not have a good response to the argument made by their allies and commentators that striking ISIS in Syria would

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<sup>63</sup> Dodge and Wasser 2014, 31

<sup>64</sup> Obama 2014ab

<sup>65</sup> Obama 2014ab

<sup>66</sup> Obama 2014ab

<sup>67</sup> E. Schmitt, Gordon, and Cooper 2014

<sup>68</sup> Sengupta and Savage 2014

<sup>69</sup> Sengupta and Savage 2014

actually help the Assad regime. US Secretary of State Kerry gave a very confusing answer in an interview the day after the statement, in response to a journalist asking how this could help Assad: “ISIS is really separate from Assad in Syria, except where they choose not to be; where they choose to engage, they engage. But Assad doesn’t control the eastern part of Syria, they do, ISIL does. So I don’t believe that’s true.”<sup>70</sup> This answer not only contradicts earlier statements by the Secretary of State himself insisting on the turmoil in Syria as the source for ISIS,<sup>71</sup> it also makes no sense in itself: ISIS cannot be a separate issue “when it chooses to be” and it is specifically because Assad does not control the territory controlled by ISIS that it would help him if the group was weakened.

Although the Administration’s approach sometimes lacked clarity, it eventually succeeded in rallying two out of the three transatlantic powers to its position and convinced them to participate in air strikes themselves.

#### The Paris Summit and French Followership

On September 11, Saudi Arabia hosted a meeting attended by the US Secretary of State. Kerry attempted to rally the states in the region who were present behind the US position and convince them to participate in the strikes. Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq participated in the meeting. After the event, all the countries except Turkey agreed to a joint communiqué in which they endorsed a common approach to counter ISIS.<sup>72</sup>

On September 13, ISIS released another video, this time of them beheading a British aid worker. The next morning, Prime Minister David Cameron called an emergency meeting with his top advisers.<sup>73</sup> Despite this event, the British Prime Minister reiterated his position that the UK would not take part in direct military action.<sup>74</sup>

On September 14, several Arab states in the region agreed to join the US in air strikes against ISIS in both Iraq and Syria.<sup>75</sup> Both Saudi Arabia and Qatar were blamed for fanning the flames of extremism and radicalism, and thus being indirectly responsible for the rise of

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<sup>70</sup> Kerry 2014aa

<sup>71</sup> Kerry 2014p

<sup>72</sup> M. R. Gordon 2014c

<sup>73</sup> Callimachi and De Freytas-Tamura 2014

<sup>74</sup> Cameron 2014l

<sup>75</sup> Sanger, Gordon, and Schmitt 2014

ISIS. According to Emile Hoyakem, they sought to repair this damage to their credibility, and joined the US strikes against ISIS “to improve their image, shape American strategy in Syria and prevent Washington from seeing Iran as an alternative partner.”<sup>76</sup>

Just before the Paris summit, the German Foreign Minister repeated that delivering weapons to the Kurds was “a decision that wasn’t easy for Germans to take” and he emphasized dimensions other than military action to which Germany was participating: pushing for an inclusive Iraqi government, cutting the flow of money and weapons to the Islamic State, and delegitimizing ISIS in the Muslim world.<sup>77</sup>

US Secretary of State John Kerry tried to rally a coalition as broad as possible, and publicly declared that he welcomed any kind of contribution. Partners’ possible contributions included humanitarian aid, helping stop the flow of funds to ISIS, stopping foreign fighters from going to join them, and “repudiating the gross distortion of Islam that ISIL is spreading.”<sup>78</sup> In a round table before the press at the Paris summit, he even declared “we don’t want every country to play a military role.”<sup>79</sup> American policymakers were looking for a broad coalition that would legitimize their actions more than they were looking for others to share the military burden and participate directly with them.

French policymakers used the summit to prepare the ground for their participation in the air strikes and they hoped that the summit would make them look as co-leaders rather than followers. French Foreign Minister Fabius repeated that France would not intervene, but he added that if they did, it would not be because they want to, but because of the need to respond to the threat posed by the “throat slitters of Daech.”<sup>80</sup> Fabius also gave specific examples to show how it was impossible to do nothing, “you can stay in your slippers and say that this is far away and does not concern us, but did you see what happened to M. James Foley, M. Steven Sotloff and M. David Haines? They were decapitated.”<sup>81</sup> He added that countries which were “politically responsible” needed to measure “the cost of inaction,” as this would be like leaving the terrorists “free rein.”<sup>82</sup> This was clearly a new rhetoric for

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<sup>76</sup> Hoyakem 2014, 67

<sup>77</sup> Steinmeier 2014ae

<sup>78</sup> Kerry 2014af

<sup>79</sup> Kerry 2014ah

<sup>80</sup> Fabius 2014aa

<sup>81</sup> Fabius 2014ab

<sup>82</sup> Fabius 2014ab

French policymakers who had argued that France supported American actions, but would not intervene directly themselves. The summit and this rhetoric prepared the ground for the French public to accept France's participation, presented France as international leaders, and attempted to persuade other states who attended, especially key transatlantic allies, to join the military intervention.

Three days after the Paris summit, French President François Hollande announced that France would join the US in striking ISIS from the air in Iraq, although it would not conduct strikes in Syria.<sup>83</sup> According to French officials, the Élysée and the Quai D'Orsay saw Assad as a driving force behind the crisis, and were worried that strikes in Syria would strengthen the Syrian dictator.<sup>84</sup> President Hollande presented the strikes as protecting France and the security of the country against terrorists.<sup>85</sup> He recalled yet again how France was ready to act in 2013, and strongly condemned the "barbarity" of ISIS, which needed to be fought because it threatens the entire world.<sup>86</sup> Fabius argued that fighting the group that spreads terror was in France's own interests, for "our defense, of us Europe, of us French."<sup>87</sup> French policymakers also presented themselves as the champions of fighting terrorism and defending Christianity:

If you ask people in Africa, who intervened in Mali and in Central Africa to avoid scary terrorism problems and a genocide? France. (...) If you interrogate people on what is happening in Iraq: which country took the initiative, notably to defend the Christians? France.<sup>88</sup>

In response to the French shift, the US President declared that "as one of our oldest and closest allies, France is a strong partner in our efforts against terrorism, and we're pleased that French and American service members will once again work together on behalf of our shared security and our shared values."<sup>89</sup> The day after the French operations began, Kerry thanked "President Hollande and Laurent Fabius in France for their leadership in hosting the

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<sup>83</sup> Biflesky 2014

<sup>84</sup> Castle and Erlanger 2014

<sup>85</sup> Hollande 2014n

<sup>86</sup> Hollande 2014n

<sup>87</sup> Fabius 2014ac

<sup>88</sup> Fabius 2014ad

<sup>89</sup> Obama 2014ad

conference in Paris.”<sup>90</sup> French followership allowed the US to present themselves as the leader of a wider group, as the President restated that the US were leading an international coalition.<sup>91</sup> French policymakers earned praise and leadership attributions from the moment when they followed the US and agreed to fight alongside them.

On September 22nd, the US air force dropped bombs and Tomahawks cruise missiles in the most intense assault yet in the air campaign, targeting the Al Qaeda affiliate Khorasan group in Aleppo and the Islamic State targets in northern Syria. They were joined in their aerial assault by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, and Jordan. According to a senior military officer, the US and its allies “dropped almost as many bombs in one night as the United States had during all of its operations in Iraq against the Islamic State.”<sup>92</sup> The US President’s justification for broadening the strikes to Syria and intensifying them was that terrorism had to be fought everywhere, that “[i]f you threaten America, you will find no safe haven.”<sup>93</sup> US Secretary of State Kerry justified and supported the US intervention by arguing that it was a common effort, the unified response of a coalition, and more importantly it involved the “unprecedented participation of five Arab countries in the air strikes in Syria.”<sup>94</sup> It is plausible that the French strikes in Iraq and the support of states with large Sunni Arab populations allowed the President to intensify the strikes in Syria.

In retaliation to the French strikes ISIS vowed to kill French citizens. A French tourist in Algeria, Hervé Gourdel, was kidnapped and killed on September 24 by a group in Algeria that had sworn allegiance to the Islamic State and answered their call to kill Westerners.<sup>95</sup>

### The United Kingdom and Other NATO allies Come Along

In a speech to the UN General Assembly on September 25, the British Prime Minister announced that he was recalling the British Parliament on the next day to demand a vote on the United Kingdom’s participation in air strikes against ISIS in Iraq.<sup>96</sup> He presented this step as only one part of a comprehensive strategy against ISIS, and he emphasized that this was

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<sup>90</sup> Kerry 2014ak

<sup>91</sup> Obama 2014ae

<sup>92</sup> H. Cooper and Schmitt 2014; H. Cooper and Gordon 2014

<sup>93</sup> Obama 2014ab

<sup>94</sup> Kerry 2014aq

<sup>95</sup> Callimachi 2014b

<sup>96</sup> Cameron 2014n

possible because “[t]he UN Security Council has now received a clear request from the Iraqi government to support it in its military action against ISIL. So we have a clear basis on international law for action.”<sup>97</sup>

On September 26, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Denmark joined the coalition against ISIS. Like France, they agreed to military operations in Iraq, but decided to steer clear of Syria.<sup>98</sup> The British parliament approved 524 to 43 the motion that authorized air strikes and assistance to train and equip troops fighting ISIS in Iraq.<sup>99</sup>

The only core transatlantic ally that did not agree to conduct air strikes in Iraq was Germany. The German Foreign Minister publicly emphasized his countries’ other contributions to justify that they were not directly participating in the air strikes. He declared “[t]here are enough nations flanking the US air strikes, but too few are covering the other tasks.”<sup>100</sup> US leadership was therefore successful in obtaining its allies’ support, but only two out of the three core transatlantic power conducted air strikes by the Americans’ side.

### **The Liberal Explanation in Fighting ISIS**

How can we explain the US willingness to strike and lead, delayed French followership, late British followership, and Germany’s reluctance to come along? Although it is more difficult to apply the liberal argument to the ISIS case, there are still many ways that liberal mechanisms could influence leader-follower dynamics. Liberal theorists might argue that policymakers were responding to domestic pressures, especially from religious constituencies, or wanted to stabilize the world economy. I will also discuss the wider public opinion views on the crisis.

#### Domestic Pressures

Right from the beginning of the crisis, the US President was severely criticized at home, especially by Republicans in Congress. President Obama was attacked for not having a strategy against ISIS, for not anticipating and addressing the problem earlier, and was

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<sup>97</sup> Cameron 2014n

<sup>98</sup> Castle and Erlanger 2014

<sup>99</sup> Castle and Erlanger 2014

<sup>100</sup> Steinmeier 2014ag

accused of being responsible for the rise of ISIS because he withdrew American troops from Iraq and did not enforce the red line in Syria in 2013. After Mosul fell, the Speaker of the House John A. Boehner said that Obama was caught “taking a nap.”<sup>101</sup>

However, it is hard to identify clear pressures in one direction that could have influenced the Administration’s policies and willingness to lead. The fault line in favor or against intervention cut across party lines and divided both parties between some who preferred staying out of the conflict and others who wanted a stronger intervention.<sup>102</sup> This situation crystallized odd coalitions during the vote on arming the Syrian rebels, with, on the one hand, Republican defense hawks and liberal interventionists Democrats converging together, and on the other, being opposed by an alliance of anti-war liberals and tea party sympathisers averse to more spending.<sup>103</sup>

### Religious Politics

Liberal authors have applied an ethnic politics version of the liberal argument to the recognition of secessionist states. They argue that ethnic constituencies put pressure on national decision makers, which in turn, to gain the vote of these constituencies in the next election, will recognize a secessionist state that has ties to the ethnic group.<sup>104</sup> In the case of Iraq, an argument with a similar logic was applied to religious groups. According to a special adviser at the Foundation for Strategic Research, François Heisbourg, French and German decision makers “consider that they have a high degree of responsibility for Christians in the Middle East,” suggesting that their initial involvement in the Iraqi conflict was driven by religious politics<sup>105</sup>.

There are, in fact, several instances when French and German policymakers promoted themselves as champions in the defense of Christians in the Middle East. It is possible, however, that this rhetoric was aimed at Christians in their own countries rather than being a factor influencing their willingness to follow. This is especially the case for Germany, which did not follow the US lead on air strikes. Moreover, the ISIS campaign of persecution against

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<sup>101</sup> Landler and Schmitt 2014a

<sup>102</sup> Shear and Landler 2014

<sup>103</sup> Diaz 2014

<sup>104</sup> Carment and James 1997; Saideman 2001

<sup>105</sup> Daley and Cowell 2014



Christians in Iraq began much earlier than the decision of France to carry air strikes. Christians were expelled from Mosul in July and there were already reports of persecutions against them,<sup>106</sup> yet French policymakers decided in favor of air strikes more than two months later.

Another religious liberal argument may be that governments feared that Western intervention in the Middle East would anger or alienate the Muslim populations in their own countries. This argument, however, can be easily discarded. France was the first core ally to follow the US lead, and it is the European country with the biggest Muslim population (7.5 % of its population, as compared to 5.8 % for Germany and 4.8 % for the UK).<sup>107</sup>

As I will show in the next section on the emotional argument, they were religious group who attempted to influence the governments, especially the US Administration. Nonetheless, this attempt was not driven by economic interests, the promotions of policy ideas, and they did not result from a privileged place in national institutions. The groups reacted to the persecution of ingroup members, and their emotional attempts at persuading decision makers worked through emotional resonance, not electoral leverage.

### Iraq and Syria's Oil

An argument focused on general economic interests and long-term stability of the global economy might explain US leadership by the necessity to intervene in order to ensure that the flow of oil from Iraq remains steady. In 2014, Iraq produced 3.3 million barrels of oil a day, the second-largest production in the OPEC after Saudi Arabia.<sup>108</sup> Some policymakers' statement may suggest this explanation For instance US Secretary of State Kerry gave "maintaining the stability of energy markets" as one of the reasons why Iraq was an important partner.<sup>109</sup>

Overall, this argument also does not hold: the US did not spring into action in the key moments during the crisis when oil production capacity was threatened. On June 19, Iraq's biggest oil refinery, in Baiji, fell to the ISIS insurgents after several days of siege.<sup>110</sup> On July 4, the biggest oil field of Syria, the Omar oil field, producing 30,000 oil barrels a day when

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<sup>106</sup> Rubin 2014b

<sup>107</sup> Hackett 2016

<sup>108</sup> Krauss 2014b

<sup>109</sup> Kerry 2014q

<sup>110</sup> Nordland 2014b

fully functional, was overtaken by ISIS fighters.<sup>111</sup> As I have shown, the US began their strikes more than a month later, and thus were not driven by a need to secure access to Syrian or Iraqi oil or by a desire to avoid perturbations on the oil markets.

### General Public Opinion

Throughout the crisis, more than 50 % of Americans consistently disapproved of how the President was handling foreign policy, including his handling of ISIS.<sup>112</sup> At the end of September, 58 % of respondents to a CNN/ORC survey declared that the US should not “take the leading role among all other countries in the world in trying to solve international problems.”<sup>113</sup> At the same time, it is unclear why the American people disapproved of the President’s approach. Polled Americans both strongly opposed sending ground troops against ISIS and at the same time argued that the response to ISIS had not been aggressive enough.<sup>114</sup> At the beginning of September, 76 % of respondents agreed with the President that ISIS could strike the US at any time.<sup>115</sup> However, when the President later unveiled his strategy against ISIS, 34 % of respondents to a *PEW Research* poll said the campaign was more likely to increase rather than decrease the chances of a terrorist attack in the US, with only 18 % believing it would decrease it.<sup>116</sup> Seven in ten Americans supported air strikes against the Islamic State, which was the policy of the Administration.<sup>117</sup> The US Secretary of State cited the high support in the American public as shown in polls to justify the Administration’s positions.<sup>118</sup> After the announcement of the strategy against ISIS on September 10, 64 % of Republicans and 60 % of Democrats approved the President’s plan.<sup>119</sup>

It seems as though many Americans were not convinced by how the President announced his policy, or were convinced by his opponents that he was not doing enough, while at the same time they agreed with air strikes to counter ISIS without ground troops.

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<sup>111</sup> Rubin 2014a

<sup>112</sup> CNN/ORC 2014, 2, 5

<sup>113</sup> CNN/ORC 2014, 8

<sup>114</sup> CNN/ORC 2014, 10

<sup>115</sup> CNN/ORC 2014, 11

<sup>116</sup> Pew Research Center 2014b

<sup>117</sup> Hirschfeld Davis and Sussman 2014

<sup>118</sup> Kerry 2014ab

<sup>119</sup> Pew Research Center 2014b

This assessment is confirmed by later polls in October when 62 % of Americans said the goals of the Administration were *unclear* in the campaign against ISIS.<sup>120</sup>

The support for US air strikes was high in the UK, in France, as well as in other NATO countries like Denmark and Norway.<sup>121</sup> It was lowest in Germany, and in all countries the public was divided on whether their own country should take part in the strikes.<sup>122</sup> 53 % of the French people said they cared about what happened to the Christians of Iraq,<sup>123</sup> and 52 % supported sending arms to the Kurds.<sup>124</sup> Once the French President had announced that French forces would participate in strikes against ISIS in Iraq, a *IFOP/Le Journal du Dimanche* poll showed that 59 % of French respondents were favorable to an international military intervention against ISIS, and 53 % supported “a military engagement of France in Iraq.”<sup>125</sup> An opinion survey conducted between September 3 and 5, 2014, revealed that 60 percent of British citizens polled already supported British military action against ISIS in Iraq.<sup>126</sup> Data from *YouGov* shows that public approval for air strikes against ISIS went from 37 % in August to 57 % at the end of September when the Prime Minister announced the strikes.<sup>127</sup>

According to polls, two-thirds of Germans opposed the move to send weapons to help the Kurds battle ISIS.<sup>128</sup> This indicates that German policymakers were ready to step beyond what was widely seen as acceptable in their country to contribute in the fight against ISIS. It also suggests that going much further – for instance by conducting air strikes – would have gone beyond the range of options acceptable to the public and might have provoked a backlash. A mid-September *YouGov/Omnibus* survey revealed that 54 % of Germans opposed the participation of their country in military operations (only 34 % supported it).<sup>129</sup>

Overall, the polled public opinions do not exactly match the states’ decisions – with German leaders sending arms to the Kurds although most Germans opposed it – and it was not the policymakers for which public opinion was the most favorable to air strikes who were

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<sup>120</sup> Pew Research Center 2014c

<sup>121</sup> Graham-Harrison 2014

<sup>122</sup> Jordan 2014

<sup>123</sup> IFOP/Le Figaro 2014

<sup>124</sup> IFOP/Atlantico 2014

<sup>125</sup> IFOP/Le Journal du Dimanche 2014

<sup>126</sup> T. Ross 2014

<sup>127</sup> Dahlgreen 2014

<sup>128</sup> Smale 2014d

<sup>129</sup> Schmidt 2014

the first to follow the US lead. However, the data shows that for the US, France and the United Kingdom, the policymakers positions matched what was acceptable to a majority in their country. This might explain the variation between transatlantic powers, with Germany avoiding air strikes because most Germans opposed it.

### *Summary of Evidence for the Liberal Theory*

If the Liberal Theory is stretched to comprise general public opinion rather than specific intense constituencies, then public opinion on the issue of air strikes is consistent with transatlantic states' positions. It is also clear that who followed and who did not can be explained by the disparity in the public opinion on the matter. The Liberal Theory, however, fails to explain who leads. Why would US policymakers have the most intense preferences in this case? All four transatlantic powers emphasized the need to counter the rise of the Islamic State for their own security, but the US was not likely to be more affected than their European counterparts. As the sole superpower, the US may have had more interest in regional stability and global stability, but these preferences certainly do not stem from domestic constituencies as liberal scholars expect.

The mystery of this case remains. What drove President Obama to act unilaterally and then take the lead of an international coalition? Why did France and the UK follow American leaders when they did?

### **Cognitive-Affective Leadership against the Islamic State**

*There's a scene in the beginning in which the gang leaders of Gotham are meeting (...) These are men who had the city divided up. They were thugs but there was a kind of order. Everyone had his turf. And then the Joker comes in and lights the whole city on fire. ISIL is the joker. It has the capacity to set the whole region on fire. That's why we have to fight it.*

– Barack Obama, talking to his staff about the Middle East, and 2008 movie *The Dark Knight*<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Goldberg 2016

In this section, I argue that the crisis was framed through a post-9-11 *War on Terror* prism, and that emotional reactions related to the suffering of minorities and attacks on Westerners combined with these ideas to drive transatlantic policymakers. I first begin by analyzing the ideas and beliefs of policymakers, and then I focus on their emotional drive at critical junctures in the crisis.

### The Power of Beliefs

The counterterrorism frame, the Iraq analogy, the exaggeration of the threat and the demonization of ISIS as an evil enemy all worked together in a belief package reminiscent of the Bush years, which was surprising because of how some policymakers, especially President Obama, had repudiated this approach in the past. These emotional beliefs reinforced each other and made it difficult to justify inaction for very long.

### *War on Terror 2: Judgment Day*

As Michael J. Boyle, professor at La Salle University, had remarked, Obama's rhetoric had an "eerie echo of President George W. Bush's description of the global war on terrorism as a campaign against 'evildoers'."<sup>131</sup> This time it was not just the US, but the four core transatlantic allies who framed the crisis as an issue of counterterrorism and perceived the events through a post-9-11 prism.

US Policymakers employed a variety of formulas that directly called back to the September 11, 2001 attack and the wars following it. Here I give just a few representative examples. US Secretary of State Kerry presented ISIS as "so extreme that even al-Qaida saw fit at one point to try to dissociate itself to some degree from it."<sup>132</sup> According to President Obama, the "barbarity" of ISIS is "building off what happened with al Qaeda and 9/11 – an extension of the same mentality that doesn't reflect Islam, but rather just reflects savagery, and extremism, and intolerance."<sup>133</sup> He repeatedly declared that ISIS is "the continuation of a problem we've seen certainly since 9/11."<sup>134</sup> President Obama began his September 10 Statement on the strategy against ISIS by reminding Americans that "[w]e took out Osama

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<sup>131</sup> Boyle 2014

<sup>132</sup> Kerry 2014m

<sup>133</sup> Obama 2014y

<sup>134</sup> Obama 2014aa

Bin Laden and much of Al Qaeda’s leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan” and he remarked that “[t]omorrow marks 13 years since our country was attacked.”<sup>135</sup> In a statement in Saudi Arabia, the US Secretary of State declared

[o]bviously, today is a particularly poignant day for this meeting. Today is September 11. Thirteen years after the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the devastating consequences of extremist hate remain fresh in the minds of all Americans and so many of our friends and allies around the world.<sup>136</sup>

He then went on to discuss how the extremist ideology of groups “like ISIL” still pursue violence.

The British Prime Minister also used 9-11 as a reference point, saying that the terrorist threat existed even before these attacks.<sup>137</sup> He also referred to other terrorist attacks against British citizens, such as the 2005 “7/7” attacks in London, and the murder of Lee Rigby in 2013.<sup>138</sup>

When talking about how ISIS found 500 million of dollars in the Mosul bank, the French Foreign Minister reminded his audience that the 9-11 attacks in New York had cost only one million.<sup>139</sup> Emphasizing fear, he declared in an interview: “Imagine what this means, if a terrorist group takes control of a state, with the oil, the weapons, the financial means. (...) This means that it is not only Iraq that would be on fire and bled out, but the entire region, and as a result, Europe and probably the world.”<sup>140</sup> President Hollande also used 9-11 as a reference point, stating that the situation was “the gravest crisis we have known since 2001.”<sup>141</sup>

Chancellor Merkel did not argue for air strikes, but for the delivery of arms to the Kurds by emphasizing Germany’s responsibility and the many connection it had in the world. She reminded audiences that “[w]hen the September 11 attacks happened, Mister Atta had lived and studied in Hamburg. So that one in no case can say ‘we have nothing at all to do with this, leave the people there alone’.”<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Obama 2014ab

<sup>136</sup> Kerry 2014ac

<sup>137</sup> Cameron 2014j

<sup>138</sup> Cameron 2014j

<sup>139</sup> Fabius 2014w

<sup>140</sup> Fabius 2014p

<sup>141</sup> Hollande 2014g

<sup>142</sup> Merkel 2014i

This 9-11 frame meant that transatlantic powers presented ISIS as a direct threat, a group that could stage attacks in Western countries. They were also concerned by foreign fighters, that is, Western citizens who left to join ISIS in Syria or Iraq, but could carry on terrorist attacks once they came back to their countries of origin. Right from the beginning of the crisis, President Obama presented ISIS as a potential threat “to our homeland.”<sup>143</sup> He announced his decision to begin air strikes as an initiative both to protect American personnel in Iraq,<sup>144</sup> and to deny terrorists “a permanent safe haven from which to attack America.”<sup>145</sup> The President stated in his address to the nation that

[o]ur Intelligence Community believes that thousands of foreigners – including Europeans and some Americans – have joined them [ISIL] in Syria and Iraq. Trained and battle-hardened, these fighters could try to return to their home countries and carry out deadly attacks<sup>146</sup>.

According to US Secretary of State Kerry, ISIS is an organization “that has already expressed threats against the United States and the West and about which we have some indication has been plotting and looking for opportunities to take on the West.”<sup>147</sup> He argued that the terrorists in Syria and Iraq “are thinking about how they can hurt people in London or Paris or Berlin or even the United States.”<sup>148</sup>

The German Foreign Minister gave an example of the threat that ISIS represented: “the perpetrator who murdered four people in the Jewish Museum in Brussels earlier this summer had previously been involved in the atrocities committed in the Syria conflict and then moved on to Brussels via Germany.”<sup>149</sup> He was talking about Mehdi Nemmouche, a man who had links with extremists in Syria and on May 24, 2014, killed four people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. The Foreign Minister argued that ISIS mattered because destabilizing the Middle East would mean that “consequences would be incalculable, not only for the immediate area but also for Europe, meaning Germany too.”<sup>150</sup> US Secretary of State Kerry also used the example of the attack at the Jewish Museum to explain how ISIS

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<sup>143</sup> Obama 2014m

<sup>144</sup> Obama 2014r

<sup>145</sup> Obama 2014t

<sup>146</sup> Obama 2014ab

<sup>147</sup> Kerry 2014m

<sup>148</sup> Kerry 2014n

<sup>149</sup> Steinmeier 2014ab

<sup>150</sup> Steinmeier 2014ac

fighters could “travel undetected” to Western countries. According to him, ISIS was an “imminent threat”, they are “training people who have American passports to commit acts of terror.”<sup>151</sup> President Obama expressed similar concerns about foreign fighters “who might potentially launch attacks outside the region against Western targets and U.S. targets.”<sup>152</sup> All the transatlantic powers expressed similar concerns about foreign fighters during the crisis.

The German Chancellor spoke about foreign fighters to emphasize Germany’s responsibility in helping the fight against ISIS, saying that among the fighters who left to join ISIS “2000 fighters come from Europe. One cannot simply say that this has nothing to do with us. Of the 2000, 400 probably come from Germany. This means that we are definitely there. That is not at all that far away from us.”<sup>153</sup> She also highlighted how the advanced of the Islamic State was a direct threat, a danger to Germany’s security.<sup>154</sup>

On July 9, in one of the starkest example of the *War on Terror* rhetoric of the Administration, US Attorney General Eric Holder attempted to persuade European allies to adopt US-style counterterrorism laws and tactics. In order to do so, he employed the rhetoric of pre-emption:

...we need the benefit of investigative and prosecutorial tools that allow us to be pre-emptive in our approach to confronting this problem. If we wait for our nations’ citizens to travel to Syria and Iraq to become radicalized, and to return home, it may be too late to adequately protect our national security.<sup>155</sup>

Bush era’s concepts like homeland security, the fight against terrorism, pre-emption and denying safe-havens for terrorists framed transatlantic allies’ beliefs and rhetoric on how to handle the case of the Islamic State. Yet, policymakers were also acutely aware of the similarity, and attempted to distance themselves from the Bush doctrine.

### *Iraq But Not That Iraq*

Among transatlantic decision makers, the Obama Administration was especially eager to differentiate their positions from the Bush era and the events following the 2003 invasion of

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<sup>151</sup> Kerry 2014ad

<sup>152</sup> Obama 2014u

<sup>153</sup> Merkel 2014i

<sup>154</sup> Merkel 2014h

<sup>155</sup> Quoted from Apuzzo 2014



Iraq. The context at the time was “the overwhelming policy prerogative to get out of Iraq and stay out of Iraq.”<sup>156</sup>

US Secretary of State Kerry had written an opinion letter titled “To Defeat Terror, We Need the World’s Help” where he argued that time was of the essence for the world to unite in order to confront “acts of sheer evil” and the “repulsive savagery and cruelty” of ISIS.<sup>157</sup> Later, the Secretary of State seemed to backtrack and emphasized that although this counterterrorist operation implies “kinetic military action” it should not be labeled as a war.<sup>158</sup> Two days later, he clearly differentiated his approach from the Bush Administration, declaring “this is not a war” because they are no troops on the ground, and then said, “we’re at war with al-Qaida and its affiliates, and in the same context, if you want to use it, yes, we’re at war with ISIL in that sense.”<sup>159</sup> The *War on Terror* label was controversial, and so the Administration wanted to adopt a similar policy without the same tag on it. John Kerry called going into Iraq in 2003 an “enormous mistake” and he reminded reporters that when he ran for President he made it known that he opposed the war.<sup>160</sup> This analogy was constantly used to justify not sending new troops, Kerry declared that the American military would not go back there “because we’ve learned a lot.”<sup>161</sup> He even quoted Edmund Burke to support the fact that the President was careful before using military force: “A conscientious man would be careful how he deals in blood.”<sup>162</sup> President Obama emphasized that American ground troops in Iraq “would only risk fueling extremism even more.”<sup>163</sup>

While they rejected the 2003 Iraq intervention, US leaders adopted another analogy to support building a coalition against ISIS: the 1990 intervention opposing Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait. Secretary Kerry argued that building a coalition is hard work, but still the best way to tackle a common enemy, and he praised how President George H. W. Bush and then Secretary of State James A. Baker III “methodically assembled a coalition of countries whose concerted action brought a quick victory.”<sup>164</sup> According to him, Operation

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<sup>156</sup> Interview with US official, May 22, 2018

<sup>157</sup> Kerry 2014y

<sup>158</sup> Kerry 2014ad

<sup>159</sup> Kerry 2014ag

<sup>160</sup> Kerry 2014al

<sup>161</sup> Kerry 2014am

<sup>162</sup> Kerry 2014aq

<sup>163</sup> Obama 2014ac

<sup>164</sup> Kerry 2014y

Desert Storm was “the gold standard” of modern coalition building.<sup>165</sup> The President was also known for admiring the foreign policy of Bush senior, for instance he often praised Brent Scowcroft, Bush’s national security adviser.<sup>166</sup>

French policymakers referred to the 2003 invasion of Iraq to defend the United States when asked about previous mistakes of the Americans in the region. French Foreign Minister Fabius stated “In 2003, their intervention was completely wrong, but when the United States intervene, we reproach them for intervening, and when they do not, we reproach them for not doing so.”<sup>167</sup> The Foreign Minister defended the United States in this way on several occasions, arguing that it was not fair to attack the US both for intervening and for not doing enough.<sup>168</sup> Fabius also had to defend himself when facing accusations that the situation was similar to 2003, and being compared to a “George Bush junior” for agreeing to air strikes. He argued that the French government was right to oppose the invasion because there were no weapons of mass destruction then, but that now they were right to intervene because ISIS was “not an illusion.” He added that this time the Iraqi government had asked for help.<sup>169</sup>

German foreign minister Steinmeier also discussed Iraq but only in negative terms, he said that the “departure of US troops left a divided and unstable country in its wake” and that “the region is still grappling with the consequences of the Iraq war.”<sup>170</sup> The German Chancellor had to defend both the United States’ intervention and her own criticism of her predecessor for not participating in the 2003 intervention. She focused on the good that American power could do in the world:

The Americans have very different military capabilities. They were maybe the sole nation in the world that could undertake such a rescue mission in the mountains so quickly and employ special forces. We could not do that. The Americans are also a superpower for that. A superpower also cannot solve international problems alone. But it is easy for me to say that we do not have these military capabilities and that Germany will not pursue them either.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Kerry 2014z

<sup>166</sup> Goldberg 2016

<sup>167</sup> Fabius 2014p

<sup>168</sup> Fabius 2014x

<sup>169</sup> Fabius 2014ad

<sup>170</sup> Steinmeier 2014n

<sup>171</sup> Merkel 2014i

British policymakers were the only ones who seemed eager to avoid entirely discussing this analogy. Perhaps Iraq had become a taboo in British politics.

Transatlantic actors thus used or discarded the Iraq analogy whenever convenient. They used it to justify that no ground troops would be sent, and emphasized the difference to 2003 to argue that this time, the intervention was legitimate.

### *Women, Children and Monsters*

The US rhetoric intensely emphasized the ISIS threat and justified taking action to strike down evil enemies. Core transatlantic partners shared this manichean frame of good versus evil. In this section, I show how policymakers employed intense and highly emotional rhetoric to spark outrage and spread fear.

US Secretary of State John Kerry discussed several gruesome and emotional stories to underline the character of ISIS. For instance, he discussed “an iconic photograph that (...) is really one of the most disturbing, stomach-turning, grotesque photograph ever displayed, this seven year-old child holding a severed head out with pride with the support and encouragement of a parent with brothers there.”<sup>172</sup> He also recurrently emphasized violence against girls and women to strengthen his points. He spoke in New York at the *Call to Action Ministerial on Protection from Gender Based Violence Emergencies*, where he discussed the case of Maryam, a young girl from Iraq who was kidnapped, beaten, and raped by ISIS. He presented this story as a “call to action” and a “call to conscience.”<sup>173</sup> On July 28, Kerry condemned “the rape, execution, and use of woman and children as human shields,”<sup>174</sup> and on September 11 “an organization that rapes and brutalizes women and sells even young girls as brides.”<sup>175</sup> Throughout the crisis, President Obama repeated several times how ISIS fighters kill children and “enslave, rape, and force women into marriage.”<sup>176</sup>

After the murder of Hervé Gourdel, the US Secretary of State argued that the sheer evil of ISIS “shocks the world’s collective conscience and it insults our collective sense of humanity.”<sup>177</sup> The American President also had many moments of very intense speech, for

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<sup>172</sup> Kerry 2014x

<sup>173</sup> Kerry 2014an

<sup>174</sup> Kerry 2014v

<sup>175</sup> Kerry 2014ac

<sup>176</sup> Obama 2014ab

<sup>177</sup> Kerry 2014ap

instance when he declared at the UN General Assembly that “[t]he brutality of terrorists in Syria and Iraq forces us to look into the heart of darkness.”<sup>178</sup>

To inflate the danger of ISIS, the organization is usually compared to a monster or some disease that could spread. US policymakers spoke of “the tentacles of radical extreme Islam”<sup>179</sup> a group of “cold-blooded killers”<sup>180</sup> who are “stealing the soul of millions”<sup>181</sup> and have “rampaged across cities and villages.”<sup>182</sup> In comparison to Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab, ISIS is “an animal unto itself.”<sup>183</sup> The spread of “the cancer of ISIS”<sup>184</sup> requires an “antidote”<sup>185</sup> to prevent this disease to continue to “metastasize.”<sup>186</sup> The US Secretary of State even went so far as to say that he was “very encouraged” by the fact that Saudi Arabia called ISIS “the order of Satan.”<sup>187</sup>

In the months following the beginning of the US air strikes, the UK attempted to have a reassuring tone in tandem with their condemnation rhetoric. For instance, even as he raised the threat level for risk of terrorism, the Prime Minister declared in addressing the threat of terrorism “that there will be no knee jerk reactions. We will respond calmly and with purpose.”<sup>188</sup> The UK still strongly and emotionally condemned the Islamic State:

we have all been shocked and sickened by the barbarism that has been witnessed in Iraq this summer: the widespread slaughter of Muslims by fellow Muslims; the vicious persecution of religious minorities, such as Christians and Yazidis; the enslavement and raping of women; and, of course, the beheading of American journalist James Foley...<sup>189</sup>

British Foreign Secretary William Hague declared that “ISIL is the most violent and brutal militant group in the Middle East.”<sup>190</sup> He characterized their “kidnapping, torture, executions, rape, and numerous other crimes” as “heinous behavior.”<sup>191</sup> After the murder of David

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<sup>178</sup> Obama 2014af

<sup>179</sup> Kerry 2014o

<sup>180</sup> Kerry 2014ai

<sup>181</sup> Kerry 2014ao

<sup>182</sup> Obama 2014w

<sup>183</sup> Kerry 2014ae

<sup>184</sup> Kerry 2014y

<sup>185</sup> Obama 2014x

<sup>186</sup> Obama 2014aa

<sup>187</sup> Kerry 2014aj

<sup>188</sup> Cameron 2014j

<sup>189</sup> Cameron 2014k

<sup>190</sup> Hague 2014j

<sup>191</sup> Hague 2014k

Haines, Cameron vowed to “hunt down these murderers”<sup>192</sup> but he also argued that the UK would dismantle and destroy ISIS “in a calm, deliberate way, but with an iron determination.”<sup>193</sup> The British Prime Minister emphasized in his speech ISIS’s barbarity and cruelty, the “beheadings, eyes being gouged out, rape.”<sup>194</sup>

In an article co-written together, the American President and British Prime Minister wrote: “we have a real stake in making them [our children and grandchildren] grow in a world where schoolgirls are not kidnapped, women are not raped in conflicts and families aren’t slaughtered because of their faith or political beliefs.”<sup>195</sup> Similar to the US rhetoric, British policymakers compared ISIS to cancer, a “scourge of extremism,”<sup>196</sup> and also to a “poison.”<sup>197</sup> ISIS fighters were “monsters,” “the embodiment of evil.”<sup>198</sup> They emphasized how ISIS were a “brutal terrorist group whose ideology is alien to this country.”<sup>199</sup> The British Prime Minister was particularly shocked that a British citizen had participated to the execution of the American journalist James Foley. He repeated several times that the beheading was done “with the voice of what seems to be a British terrorist recorded on that video.”<sup>200</sup>

Right from the beginning of the crisis, French Foreign Minister Fabius argued that ISIS was an extremely menacing terrorist group with “unlimited cruelty.”<sup>201</sup> He stated that this group “more cruel than Al-Qaeda” would turn Iraq into fire and blood, and then ultimately the entire world.<sup>202</sup> He presented ISIS as people who “play football with the heads of the people they assassinated.”<sup>203</sup> Fabius presented actions by ISIS against Yezidis and Christians as a genocide, and he stated that on mount Sinjar “1000 people are encircled, 500 women in a jail are threatened to be raped.”<sup>204</sup> According to him, “we cannot remain without reaction when we see hundreds and thousands of people, children and women, die of

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<sup>192</sup> Cameron 2014l

<sup>193</sup> Cameron 2014l

<sup>194</sup> Cameron 2014m

<sup>195</sup> Cameron and Obama 2014

<sup>196</sup> Cameron 2014j

<sup>197</sup> Hammond 2014b

<sup>198</sup> Cameron 2014l

<sup>199</sup> Hague 2014l

<sup>200</sup> Cameron 2014k

<sup>201</sup> Fabius 2014o

<sup>202</sup> Fabius 2014p

<sup>203</sup> Fabius 2014p

<sup>204</sup> Fabius 2014u

hunger.”<sup>205</sup> He emphasized the fate of women at the hands of ISIS in an address to the French national assembly: “they are crucified, they are decapitated, their breasts are cut, they are raped. They are considered as less than beasts.”<sup>206</sup>

Fabius added to the vocabulary of evil ways to call ISIS, labeling the group “the caliphate of hate<sup>207</sup>” and “the caliphate of barbarity and terror.”<sup>208</sup> He described it as a “monstrous outgrowth<sup>209</sup>” and as “the most barbaric of the barbarians.”<sup>210</sup> French President Hollande spoke of the “destructive madness,”<sup>211</sup> a “blood-thirsty group”<sup>212</sup> who stands only for “horror and fanaticism.”<sup>213</sup> During the Paris summit, the French President stated “this terrorist movement attacked the weakest, the most fragile, the women, the children.”<sup>214</sup> He thus explicitly cast women as victims who needed to be saved.

The German foreign minister Steinmeier expressed concerns that Iraq and Syria could become “a new transnational breeding ground for international terrorism.”<sup>215</sup> He referred to the extremists in Syria as “monsters” of “merciless brutality.”<sup>216</sup> He described how images of the “brutal advances of ISIS<sup>217</sup>” spread fear, and he condemned the murder and “systematic expulsion and forced conversions”<sup>218</sup> of religious minorities like Yezidis and Christians. Steinmeier, in his speech at the UN General Assembly on September 27, mentioned that “the terrorists are stamping in particular on the fundamental rights of women and girls.”<sup>219</sup> The German Foreign Minister referred to ISIS as “barbaric<sup>220</sup>” and their behavior as “terrorist savagery.”<sup>221</sup> According to him, “new ghosts are haunting this world (...) who make use of unspeakable brutality and of modern technology and social networks to scare and shock the

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<sup>205</sup> Fabius 2014v

<sup>206</sup> Fabius 2014w

<sup>207</sup> Fabius 2014u

<sup>208</sup> Fabius 2014w

<sup>209</sup> Fabius 2014y

<sup>210</sup> Fabius 2014t

<sup>211</sup> Hollande 2014e

<sup>212</sup> Hollande 2014f

<sup>213</sup> Hollande 2014h

<sup>214</sup> Hollande 2014m

<sup>215</sup> Steinmeier 2014m

<sup>216</sup> Steinmeier 2014o

<sup>217</sup> Steinmeier 2014q

<sup>218</sup> Steinmeier 2014y

<sup>219</sup> Steinmeier 2014af

<sup>220</sup> Steinmeier 2014aa

<sup>221</sup> Steinmeier 2014ad

world.”<sup>222</sup> Chancellor Merkel spoke of the “unprecedented brutality and contempt for human beings”<sup>223</sup> of the Islamic State. According to her, ISIS fighters are “unimaginably cruel”, and such terror “cannot, in any case, leave us cold.”<sup>224</sup>

This overbid of labels and adjectives to characterize ISIS greatly exaggerated the threat, especially since policymakers had indications that this threat was limited in several regards.

### *Exaggerating the Threat?*

During the crisis, the President himself recognized that “our intelligence community has not yet detected specific ISIL plots against our homeland” thus admitting that the threat was not so immediate, and yet he suggested that it was only a matter of time before it became imminent.<sup>225</sup> In a series of interviews much later in 2016, the President declared “ISIS is not an existential threat to the United States.”<sup>226</sup> Jeffrey Goldberg, who interviewed the President for many hours over several days, reports that the President was often reminding his staff “that terrorism takes far fewer lives in America than handguns, car accidents, and fall in bathtubs do.”<sup>227</sup>

At the same time as the President was escalating the strikes against ISIS and broadening operations to Syria, US intelligence agencies concluded that ISIS “poses no immediate threat to the United States.”<sup>228</sup> American counterterrorism experts did not consider the terror group as a top concern because it did not have the ability to conduct an attack inside the US. The Homeland Security Secretary, Jeh C. Johnson, was very clear when he declared “[w]e know of no credible information that ISIL is planning to attack the homeland at present.”<sup>229</sup> The Administration and other politicians were accused of exaggerating the ISIS threat to create panic, and observers remarked that further American involvement in Iraq and Syria actually increased the chance that ISIS would target Americans.<sup>230</sup> Other groups, such

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<sup>222</sup> Steinmeier 2014ae

<sup>223</sup> Merkel 2014h

<sup>224</sup> Merkel 2014j

<sup>225</sup> Obama 2014ac

<sup>226</sup> Goldberg 2016

<sup>227</sup> Goldberg 2016

<sup>228</sup> Mazetti, Schmitt, and Landler 2014

<sup>229</sup> Mazetti, Schmitt, and Landler 2014

<sup>230</sup> Mazetti, Schmitt, and Landler 2014

as al-Qaeda or the Khorasan group were still prioritized by US counterterrorism agencies, as ISIS was more oriented toward defending and consolidating the territory that it held rather than preparing terrorist attacks in the West.<sup>231</sup> The issue of foreign fighters coming back and being a threat was also disputed. Scholars wrote that Western policymakers have an “unrealistic obsession with foreign fighters” and that homegrown terrorists are just as dangerous, therefore the possibility of returning fighters would not change the threat level.<sup>232</sup>

Despite decision makers being aware of all this, they not only presented the threat as an imminent security issue in their home country, but as I have shown in the previous section, they demonized ISIS to exaggerate the threat that it represented. ISIS fighters were no angels for sure, but we might expect policymakers to calm and reassure their constituencies when faced with such an international challenge. They did the complete opposite. Presenting ISIS as evil monsters is not just a dangerous rhetoric because it might prevent Westerners from attempting to understand the group and its motivations, or because it solidifies the case for aggressive military intervention based on emotional reactions. It also plays into the hands of ISIS. With its graphic videos, black suits, and cruel acts of torture, ISIS has “choreographed carefully” their reputation as a “dark unstoppable power” because it emboldens their members to sacrifice their lives for the group, and strikes terror in those who would oppose them.<sup>233</sup> This rhetoric is thus playing the Islamic State’s game.

It is possible that some policymakers truly believed and deeply felt what they said, but also that they employed these terms and images to strike fear and outrage in their audiences. US President Obama is especially hard to follow on this issue. Both in public and in private, he has compared ISIS to absolute evil, a “joker” that needed to be eliminated, but he has also said that ISIS is not an existential threat, and kills less than fall in bathtubs. How do we reconcile these two sides? One possibility is that the President was always calm, in control, and calculating, and in a Machiavellian way, decided to use exaggerated emotional rhetoric to reinforce his leadership and justify his actions, including to convince and mobilize his own staff. Another possibility is that the President changes his rhetoric depending on the moment or the audience that he is addressing, so that he would both at times attempt to

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<sup>231</sup> Mazetti, Schmidt, and Hubbard 2014

<sup>232</sup> Zaougui and Van Ostaeyen 2014

<sup>233</sup> Paasche and Gunter 2016, 12



motivate people with strong emotional metaphors, and at others attempt to reassure or calm them.

I prefer a third option and argue that cognitive-affective leadership can explain quite well the President's behavior and discourse. Like most politicians, President Obama is constantly calculating the political consequences of his positions and generating justifications for them, both emotional reasons and other reasons focused on interests and the knowledge of statistics. Nevertheless, despite his knowledge about the facts that terrorism is not an existential threat, President Obama is driven by his emotions all the same. Furthermore, Cognitive-Affective Theory is the only theory that can explain why the leader might want to exaggerate the threat and employ highly intense and emotional language. In this case, shared beliefs supported by intense emotions allowed him to become the prototypical leader of choice, representative of the American public as well as the transatlantic community.

#### The Emotional Drive to Action

In this section, I look at the motivation for key decisions during the crisis: the US decision to begin air strikes in Iraq, the US effort to lead a broad coalition, the French and British decisions to follow the US lead, and finally the German decision not to participate in the air campaign.

#### *Protect Americans and Rescue Others*

The American approach, as did the approach of their transatlantic partners, emphasized the need for a new and more inclusive Iraqi government for any intervention to bring positive results. Nonetheless, the United States did not wait for the completion of the government formation process before engaging their forces. Two reasons motivated the unilateral US strikes at the beginning of August: the fear of another Benghazi and the need to protect populations from what was seen as an imminent genocide.

In 2012, armed militants affiliated with Islamist groups attacked the US diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya. In the "Battle of Benghazi," the attackers set fire to the buildings and killed four Americans including the US Ambassador.<sup>234</sup> The Obama Administration was

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<sup>234</sup> Kaphle 2014

criticized for not doing enough to protect US personnel in Benghazi and for not responding strongly enough to the events. A little less than two years later, when advances of Islamist insurgents in Iraq threatened the US consulate in Erbil and the Embassy in Baghdad after the fall of the Mosul Dam, US officials still had Benghazi in mind. In private, a senior Administration official declared “We didn’t want another Benghazi” and described the loss of the Mosul dam to ISIS as a “tripwire.”<sup>235</sup>

According to a US Department of State official that I interviewed, there were internal debates before the fall of Mosul as to whether ISIS was really important or not, and the fall of the city on June 9<sup>th</sup> showed the State Department that the Islamic State was a big deal. Although he did not remember if Benghazi was specifically discussed as an analogy, he told me that the threat to installations in Erbil were too great to be ignored:

We had a much bigger presence in Erbil then we ever had in Benghazi, a lot of Americans and a lot of our key allies, Canadians, Germans, and others, a major international presence in Erbil. There was no way we were going to let that city fall to ISIS, there needs to be a viable Kurdistan region in Iraq.<sup>236</sup>

This danger was particularly acute as the Administration saw a risk to the lives of American personnel, knew how a failure of security with American deaths could backfire at home, and could not accurately predict how the events were going to evolve on the ground after the surprise of several ISIS successes.

There was a second source of motivation for American leaders. Members of the Yezidi community, a minority sect in Iraq, were hunted down by ISIS as they intensified their islamization program over the territory that they controlled. Those who escaped being killed or enslaved by ISIS fled their villages to Mount Sinjar in difficult conditions. As the threat to their own worsened, members of the Yezidi community in the US successfully lobbied to meet with top decision makers. They were invited to the White House, where they discussed the brutal attacks against their relatives in Iraq and the difficult situation over there. Obama’s Deputy National Security Adviser Benjamin Rhodes led the meeting in the Roosevelt Room, in which

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<sup>235</sup> Landler et al. 2014

<sup>236</sup> Interview with American Official, May 22, 2018

[o]ne by one, the Yazidis around the table talked about the plight of their loved ones – women raped, children killed, young men enslaved – and pleaded for help. By the time it was the turn of a Yazidi leader, Mr. Rhodes and the other American officials in the room were already in tears. When the old man finished, Mr. Rhodes promised that the United States would not stand idly by.<sup>237</sup>

More than a month later, in a testimony to a subcommittee of the US Congress, Assistant Secretary Tom Malinowski explained how he had organized meetings between Yezidi Americans and the staff of the State Department and the White House so that they could hear their stories first-hand, and he told several of these stories in his testimony emphasizing tragic and violent details. He presented the Yezidi as helpless victims, emphasizing women and children, and cast the US as their only hope. He told the story of a woman and her family, according to him she said that “[a]fter 20 hours of walking from the town of Til Azir to Mt. Sinjar, everyone was terrified, everyone was shaking, crying. We could only calm down after hearing U.S. jets above us. We felt, ‘There is still someone there to save us’.”<sup>238</sup>

President Obama presented the air strikes as part of a humanitarian effort to “help save thousands of Iraqi civilians who are trapped on a mountain without food and water and facing almost certain death.”<sup>239</sup> He detailed how the Islamic State had been “barbaric” toward Christian and Yezidi communities, “rounding up families, conducting mass executions, and enslaving Yezidi women.”<sup>240</sup> The President called their elimination a genocide and described how “children are dying of thirst.”<sup>241</sup> He made the case for the US to act in order to save “innocent people facing the prospect of violence on a horrific scale.”<sup>242</sup> According to the President, “when we have the unique capabilities to help avert a massacre, then I believe the United States of America cannot turn a blind eye.”<sup>243</sup>

US Secretary of State Kerry also presented the need for air strikes in emotional terms. He justified the decision by arguing that “ISIL’s campaign of terror against the innocent, including Yezidi and Christian minorities, and its grotesque and targeted acts of violence bear all the warning signs and hallmark of genocide.”<sup>244</sup> He added that in the midst of a “gut-

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<sup>237</sup> H. Cooper, Shear, and Nordland 2014

<sup>238</sup> Malinowski 2014

<sup>239</sup> Obama 2014r

<sup>240</sup> Obama 2014r

<sup>241</sup> Obama 2014r

<sup>242</sup> Obama 2014r

<sup>243</sup> Obama 2014r

<sup>244</sup> Kerry 2014w

wrenching humanitarian crisis” the Islamic State offered “nothing to anyone except chaos, nihilism, and ruthless thuggery.”<sup>245</sup>

According to *New York Times* journalists Helene Cooper, Mark Landler and Alissa J. Rubin, “the suffering of the refugees on the mountainside appeared to be a tipping point” for the decision in favor of air strikes.<sup>246</sup> My interview with an American official confirmed that the trapped Yezidis were important in the decision, and that the President and his close circle were affected by the plight facing the group.<sup>247</sup>

When the White House was able to retrieve better intelligence of the people on mount Sinjar, it turned out that fewer Yezidis were on the mountain than expected, and that they were in good conditions.<sup>248</sup> Some Yezidis even refused to leave the mountain because they considered it their home,<sup>249</sup> and American special forces on the ground found out that “many pallets of food and water dropped by American planes remained unopened.”<sup>250</sup> While the suffering and the threat to the Yezidi community were certainly real, this discovery and surprise shows that their plight might have been exaggerated, at least in the mind of American officials after hearing the stories from American Yezidi relatives.

The memory of Benghazi combined with emotional testimonies of the horror endured by the Yezidi community provided a strong emotional drive for US to take action. However, this action was a unilateral move rather than an attempt at leadership. As I have shown leadership attempts at rallying a wide coalition began at the end of August and intensified in September.

### *Leading from Indignation*

The publicized beheadings of James Foley on August 20, and Steven Sotloff on September 2, provided the necessary anger to drive US leadership. Although they were not the cause of the airstrikes, they both motivated and permitted US leadership because they showed Western victims, emphasized ISIS’s intense cruelty, and increased general anger against ISIS all at once.

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<sup>245</sup> Kerry 2014w

<sup>246</sup> H. Cooper, Landler, and Rubin 2014

<sup>247</sup> Interview with American Official, May 22, 2018

<sup>248</sup> H. Cooper 2014c

<sup>249</sup> H. Cooper 2014c

<sup>250</sup> H. Cooper, Shear, and Nordland 2014

President Obama said he felt “haunted” by the earlier mission that failed to rescue the American journalists held hostage by ISIS in Iraq. Yet, he specified that the murders were not the drive behind the air strikes. However, he recognized that they had made his argument to intervene in Iraq more compelling. Obama declared to a private group of policy experts that ISIS “made a major strategic error by killing them [American journalists Foley and Sotloff] because the anger it generated resulted in the American public’s quickly backing military action.”<sup>251</sup>

*The New York Times* editorialist Thomas Friedman expressed worries that Obama’s decision “feels as if it’s being done in response to some deliberately exaggerated fears – fears engendered by YouTube videos of the beheadings of two U.S. journalists – and fear that ISIS (...) is coming to a mall near you.”<sup>252</sup> As I have shown, it is the plight of the Yezidi community and the fear of another Benghazi that spurred the US Administration into action, 13 days before the first “execution” video was released by ISIS. However, Friedman may still be right if we argue instead that fears in the wake of the assassinations contributed to US leadership. They provided emotional support for pursuing and intensifying the air strikes as well as broadening the effort against ISIS.

The timing of the first assassination matches closely with reports of when the Obama Administration had taken its decision on building a coalition and reaching partners. Helene Cooper and Mark Landler first reported in *The New York Times* on the diplomatic campaign on August 27.<sup>253</sup> Considering that the effort was already underway when it was reported, this suggest that the beginning closely follows the August 20 assassination of James Foley.

Another indication that the elimination of the hostages changed the game can be found on how it changed domestic influence dynamics. The Chaldean Catholics, a great number of whom now live in the US even as many remain in Iraq and were persecuted during the crisis by ISIS, had been lobbying Washington for humanitarian aid and to facilitate the procedure for refugees to come to the US. However, for quite some time American decision makers did not listen to them. As one of their leader, Bishop Francis Y. Kalabat wrote in an open letter “We wish to scream, but there are no ears that wish to hear.”<sup>254</sup> Despite rallies, prayer vigils

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<sup>251</sup> P. Baker 2014l

<sup>252</sup> Friedman 2014b

<sup>253</sup> H. Cooper and Landler 2014

<sup>254</sup> S. Freedman 2014

and fundraising, it is only after the decapitation of the two American journalists that the public and Washington officials began to hear their cry for help.<sup>255</sup> Again, therefore, it is not quite the lobbying of American citizens itself that had an impact as we would expect from the transmission belt in liberal theory: this lobbying began to have such an impact only when it had emotional resonance for American policymakers.

After the assassination of Steven Sotloff, *New York Times* journalists wrote: “the harrowing images of Americans with knives to their throats have given the threat from ISIS an emotional resonance and stoked calls on Capitol Hill and elsewhere for Mr. Obama to act more boldly.”<sup>256</sup> President Obama’s impression that the assassinations led to a shift in the American public in favor of intervention is also borne out empirically. According to professor John A. Tures, the beheadings by ISIS led to a “dramatic shift” in American public attitudes.<sup>257</sup> The assassinations were widely publicized, 94 % of Americans said they heard the news about the beheadings of the journalists.<sup>258</sup> Although it is difficult to make a before and after comparison because most polling organizations changed their questions after the assassination of James Foley – which is perhaps another indication that this event was significant – some questions can still be used as a basis for comparison. In a poll conducted from August 9 to August 11, 39 % of respondents said that the US had no responsibility to get involved in Iraq as opposed to only 38 % who said they did have a responsibility.<sup>259</sup> In comparison, on a later survey after the assassinations of James Foley, 45 % of polled Americans argued that “the U.S. must destroy ISIS,” and only 27 % said this was a matter for the Iraqis to solve.<sup>260</sup> 40 % of Americans believed that the conflict in Iraq with ISIS was the greatest threat to world peace in a survey conducted from August 16 to August 17;<sup>261</sup> the percentage of Americans considering ISIS an “immediate and serious threat to the U.S.” jumped to 49 in another similar survey conducted from August 23 to August 25.<sup>262</sup> Pew Research Center surveys show even higher numbers: a jump to 67 % of Americans

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<sup>255</sup> S. Freedman 2014

<sup>256</sup> Landler and Schmitt 2014c

<sup>257</sup> Tures 2014

<sup>258</sup> NBC/WSJ 2014

<sup>259</sup> The Economic/YouGov 2014a

<sup>260</sup> The Economic/YouGov 2014b

<sup>261</sup> Moore 2014

<sup>262</sup> The Economic/YouGov 2014b

considering ISIS a major threat after Foley's assassination,<sup>263</sup> and at the beginning of September, 62 % of Americans said they were concerned by Islamic extremism, the highest percentage of such concerns in the US since 2007.<sup>264</sup>

This analysis shows clearly that although the US President was always calculating the strategic and political consequences of the events, his drive to act and the timing to go ahead with leading a coalition were based on emotional reactions to shocking outside events. First, a response to the danger of another Benghazi and the extermination of the Yezidis, and then in reaction to the videos of American journalists killed by ISIS. Obama is thus the typical reluctant leader: cautious and strategic, elected to pull back the US forces from Iraq, but still driven by what he feels to be right rather than what he thinks of it, thus being dragged down the maelström of the fight against the Islamic State.

### French Followership

In his interview to *Le Monde* on August 20, French President Hollande made public his idea for an international conference in Paris on the fight against the Islamic State. His conviction in this project was reinforced when, on the same day, the video of the assassination of James Foley was released. The next day, Hollande – amidst an emotional rhetoric presenting ISIS as a terrorist enterprise known for its “crucifixions, lapidations, amputations” – declared that this showed the need to move forward and prepare the conference.<sup>265</sup>

The purpose of the conference was for France to come on board in the coalition and conduct air strikes, but to do so while appearing as co-leaders rather than followers. These moves of enhancing France's standing included the President traveling to Iraq and meeting the Iraqi President just before the summit,<sup>266</sup> and after the summit, Hollande and Fabius both declared that France had “taken the initiative” with regard to Iraq.<sup>267</sup> Foreign Minister Fabius discussed the assassinations to support his call to action at the Paris summit.<sup>268</sup>

French policymakers had already decided on air strikes when the summit took place. The change in the rhetoric of the French Foreign Minister suggests that this shift occurred as

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<sup>263</sup> Pew Research Center/USA Today 2014

<sup>264</sup> Pew Research Center 2014a

<sup>265</sup> Hollande 2014i

<sup>266</sup> Hollande 2014l

<sup>267</sup> Fabius 2014ad; Hollande 2014o

<sup>268</sup> Fabius 2014ab

early as at the beginning of September. Laurent Fabius first openly considered air strikes just before the Wales Summit, when he stated for the first time that the question of French strikes “is open and we will discuss it in the coming days.”<sup>269</sup> As I have shown, during the summit itself, Fabius also forcefully argued in favor of intervention and compared inaction to “stay[ing] in your slippers.”<sup>270</sup>

My US State Department interviewee confirmed that many allies, including France, were on board much earlier, and the delays were only due to the time that it takes to figure out the logistics of how equipment and troops will be transported to the region. He added “the French feel like they need a summit in Paris, they always feel that.” I asked him if this was grandstanding on the French part, and he answered “yes, France is a wonderful country, but they attempt to be leaders on things when there was already leadership from us.”<sup>271</sup>

The timing shows that after the assassination of both American journalists French policymakers pushed for their idea of a summit in Paris, and that they began air strikes three days after the summit ended. Their economic interests or beliefs did not change, nor did the UN Security Council adopt a resolution authorizing such strikes at the time, which was the justification that Fabius had given earlier in the crisis as to why France was not striking ISIS themselves.<sup>272</sup> The timing for their shifts was therefore a combination of an emotional response to the killing of Westerners and an attempt to present France as leaders as they stepped in.

### Delayed British Followership

On September 24, a day before announcing the UK’s participation in the air strikes, the British Prime Minister began a speech at the UNSC by talking about the most shocking aspects of the conflict in Iraq and Syria, the “beheadings, eyes being gouged out, rape.”<sup>273</sup> He also declared in this statement that “British people are sickened that a British citizen, a British citizen, could be involved in murdering people – including a fellow British citizen who had gone to Syria to help people – in this way.”<sup>274</sup> He was referring to the assassination

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<sup>269</sup> Fabius 2014z

<sup>270</sup> Fabius 2014ab

<sup>271</sup> Interview with American Official, May 22, 2018

<sup>272</sup> Fabius 2014u

<sup>273</sup> Cameron 2014m

<sup>274</sup> Cameron 2014m



of a British aid worker, David Cawthorne Haines, by ISIS on September 13,<sup>275</sup> and to how the ISIS sympathiser speaking in the video had a British accent. The Prime Minister presented the threat of ISIS as direct threat to British citizens, he said that extremists should be prevented “from inciting hatred and intolerance in our schools, in our universities and even sometimes in our prisons.”<sup>276</sup> Although he did not announce any air strikes by Britain in this speech, he ended it on a note that suggested further actions: “We need to act. We need to act now.”<sup>277</sup> This rhetoric is similar to the French rhetoric during the Paris summit: emotional arguments on how action is required just before the announcement of participating in air strikes, which suggests that the decision had already been made.

The next day, when he announced British participation to the air strikes, he renewed his call to action. In his speech at the UN General Assembly, in a veiled reference to the Iraq war, he stated that “[w]e must not allow past mistakes to become an excuse for indifference or inaction.” He added that it was necessary to use “all the means at our disposals – including military force – to hunt down these extremists.”<sup>278</sup>

It remains unclear why British policymakers decided to join the air campaign in Iraq when they did. Although the shocking death of David Haines had prompted the Prime Minister to call a special meeting with his top security advisers, he had at the time reiterated that the UK would not participate in air strikes and this did not change his course of action.

It is possible that Prime Minister Cameron waited for the right opportunity to bring a vote in the Chamber of Commons on the issue. A seemingly unrelated domestic political process at the time may have played a role in delaying this vote. On September 18, when France announced that it would join the US in air strikes against ISIS, Scotland held a referendum for its independence. Prime Minister Cameron was very active in the weeks preceding the vote and this issue demanded a lot of his attention, as polls showed an increasingly close race between the “yes” and “no” options. Furthermore, an important part of the Scottish public opposed air strikes, so delaying the strikes may have ensured that this would not become an argument for the “yes” campaign. A survey just before the Prime Minister announced his intention to seek a vote from Parliament on British air strikes in Iraq

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<sup>275</sup> Callimachi and De Freytas-Tamura 2014

<sup>276</sup> Cameron 2014m

<sup>277</sup> Cameron 2014m

<sup>278</sup> Cameron 2014n

showed that Scotland was the region of the UK where support for air strikes was the lowest, with 49 % who approved while 37 % of respondents who disapproved the Royal Air Force participating in such strikes.<sup>279</sup> It is likely that the Prime Minister wanted to involve the British air force in strikes after September 13 when David Haines was murdered, when he declared “We will hunt down those responsible and bring them to justice, no matter how long it takes.”<sup>280</sup> His declaration hints at the fact that he knew that the UK could not immediately step into the fold, but still wanted to send the signal that it eventually would. He decided to wait for after the referendum to do so. The Prime Minister’s speech at the UN General Assembly on September 25 then provided a good opportunity to announce that the UK were going to consult Parliament to participate in the strikes.

### Germany’s Reluctance to Follow

Throughout the crisis, Germany refused to consider participating in air strikes against the Islamic State. When much later, in response to another emotionally shocking event – the attack in Paris in November 2015 – the Bundestag voted in favor of German air support, it still provided German planes only for reconnaissance missions and transport.<sup>281</sup> Germany’s reluctance to participate in air strikes can be explained by two related factors, a more general strategic culture against interventions, and more specific beliefs related to the situation in Iraq and Syria.

A lot has been written on the strategic culture opposing military intervention in post-Second World War Germany. If Germany is characterized as a security community, strategic culture refers to

socially transmitted, identity-derived norms, ideas and patterns of behaviour that are shared among a broad majority of actors and social groups within a given security community, which help to shape a ranked set of options for a community's pursuit of security and defence goals<sup>282</sup>.

According to Douglas Peifer, the German government feared “a domestic backlash should German aircraft accidentally bomb civilians while participating in coalition operations.”<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> YouGov/The Sun 2014

<sup>280</sup> Cameron 2014

<sup>281</sup> Giegerich and Terhalle 2016, 161

<sup>282</sup> Meyer 2005, 528

<sup>283</sup> Peifer 2016, 269–70

The German public “continues to associate air campaigns with the destruction of cities and the targeting of civilians,” and two-thirds of the public at the time of the crisis opposed an active role of their country in bombardments.<sup>284</sup>

The strategic culture argument could both be understood as a liberal ideational argument, where the ideas of the public and groups in society constrain policymakers, or as a constructivist/cognitive argument of acceptability, where policymakers attempt to remain within the boundaries of acceptability (or appropriate norms) and therefore avoid taking a position that they know will not be accepted. I argue that both conceptions, however, neglect the emotional memories associated with these beliefs, which transform these beliefs into affective norms against air strikes as an unethical way to wage war. German policymakers were emotionally driven to do as much as possible, as illustrated by the fact that they defied popular acceptability by arming the Kurds at the end of August, but this drive was significantly constrained by the dominant German strategic culture.

A second set of beliefs influenced German policymakers. Although transatlantic decision makers emphasized in one way or another that they wanted a more inclusive Iraqi government as opposed to sectarian policies furthering divisions, the German Foreign Minister went further. Germany believed strongly in the idea of a proxy war in the Middle East. Steinmeier emphasized the idea that the conflicts in Syria and Iraq are the result of a wider war for supremacy in the Islamic world, a “struggle over the expansion of Sunni and Shiite sphere of influence.” Although he was not the only observer or decision maker noting that Syria had become a wider battleground for the region, he took it further by using this fact to support the German non-interventionist position. According to him, this proxy war made any possibility of a military solution “really absurd.”<sup>285</sup> Steinmeier declared that the alternative to stabilizing Iraq “is a no-man’s-land teeming with terrorists and Islamic extremists, a battlespace for holy warriors and religious fanatics, where proxy wars between the regional powers can be played out.”<sup>286</sup> He presented the instability as the result of “the Sunni-Shia struggle for hegemony.”<sup>287</sup> More specifically on Iraq, he claimed that “outside intervention will not bring peace to Iraq” and that “the key solution lies within Iraq itself, in

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<sup>284</sup> Peifer 2016, 276

<sup>285</sup> Steinmeier 2014p

<sup>286</sup> Steinmeier 2014n

<sup>287</sup> Steinmeier 2014o

an agreement on a new and inclusive government which represents all religious and ethnic groups.”<sup>288</sup>

There are several problems with the proxy war perspective with regard to the civil war in Syria and its ties to ISIS. According to RAND corporation’s analysts, the Islamic State had long been a self-financing group that does not rely on foreign patrons, but rather on extortion, plunder and selling Iraq’s oil.<sup>289</sup> Even in Syria itself, “the emphasis on the proxy nature of the conflict obscures the fact that local and transnational dynamics remain its prime drivers.”<sup>290</sup> Foreign patrons often have far from perfect control over the groups that they sponsor, and the division does not just run between Sunni and Shia: the Sunni themselves are divided between a coalition supported by Saudi Arabia and closer to Salafist tendencies on the one hand, and on the other another alliance sponsored by Qatar which includes Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>291</sup>

Although simplistic, this rhetoric of a proxy war was either a belief that reinforced the German position that military action is counterproductive and should be avoided, or at the very least it provided German policymakers a justification to international partners for their position.

### The Emotional Saliency of the 2015 Paris Attacks

On the night of September 13, 2015, terrorists struck several targets in Paris. The deadliest of the attacks occurred at the Bataclan theatre during a concert of the Eagles of Death Metal, when gunmen entered the venue and shot down people in the assistance. 130 people were killed and more than 350 injured in the attacks.<sup>292</sup> These attacks were rapidly claimed by the Islamic State.<sup>293</sup> French President François Hollande called the attacks an “act of war perpetrated by a terrorist army,” and referred to it as an act of “absolute barbarity.”<sup>294</sup>

This event was so important for France that when I asked my French interviewees what motivated French policymakers’ decision to conduct air strikes against the Islamic

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<sup>288</sup> Steinmeier 2014r

<sup>289</sup> Johnston and Bahney 2014

<sup>290</sup> Hoyakem 2014, 41

<sup>291</sup> Hoyakem 2014, 46

<sup>292</sup> RTE 2015; Le Monde 2015

<sup>293</sup> Haddad 2015

<sup>294</sup> Haddad 2015

State, they talked to me about the November 2015 attacks. This is not surprising for an event that was so shocking and occurred in their country's capital. Their memory was clearly marked by the attacks. For instance, one French official said that there were "very strong emotions" which motivated "to do the maximum" against the Islamic State in the wake of the attacks.<sup>295</sup>

I found myself in the odd position of having to remind my interview participants that France had begun air strikes more than a full year before the attacks. If anything, causality was the reverse: the Paris attacks were a consequence of France's involvement in the air strikes against ISIS. One of the gunmen at the Bataclan allegedly declared during their attack,

You will see what it is like, the bombardments in Iraq, we do what you did in Syria, listen to the people scream, this is what people in Syria live when they are under the bombs, you kill our women, our brothers and our children, we do the same, we are here for you, we are not in Syria but we act here. You do this to us, we do this to you.<sup>296</sup>

As the interviewees pointed out, France importantly intensified and broadened its anti-ISIS efforts after the attacks. The United States' policymakers and diplomats had been making the case for a long time for more intense action, especially strikes from their partners in Syria. According to the US Department official I interviewed, the Paris attack reinforced the case that the US were already making that more needed to be done in Syria.<sup>297</sup> Although outside of the focus of this chapter, which concentrates on the beginning of the crisis and cooperation on the first air strikes, this intensification following the attacks is consistent with Cognitive-Affective Theory.

### Institutions: Same Old Story

The coalition against ISIS eventually grew to more than 70 countries cooperating and making various contributions to fight the extremist group. Although the fight against the Islamic State was discussed on the margins of the NATO Wales Summit, these talks occurred outside of official NATO meetings. It was convenient that the Summit gathered a great many US allies,

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<sup>295</sup> Interview with French official, March 1, 2018

<sup>296</sup> Seelow, Piel, and Cazi 2015

<sup>297</sup> Interview with US official, May 22, 2018

but the channels to specify the partners' involvement were not official. Similarly, the Paris summit was ad hoc, and outside of institutions like the EU or NATO.

As we have repeatedly seen in previous chapters, transatlantic policymakers often prefer to coordinate their positions using informal channels or newly built institutions with a single purpose. Only when there are clear rules that the institution must be involved, as was the case for EU and the issue of sanctions, then existing institutions are central. Otherwise, and it is the case for this crisis, institutional dynamics and mechanism themselves do not influence transatlantic cooperation.

### *Summary of the Evidence for the Cognitive-Affective Argument*

At the end of my interviews, I always ask my participants whether there is another thing that I should have asked them on my subject, maybe something that they are surprised that I did not ask, or some further information they know that could be interesting for my research. Here is an exchange that I had with a US State Department official when he answered this question.

American official: I think one thing to think about, ISIS in a way was easy, it was easy to generate cooperation. The most important reason is that these guys were so comically evil, so bad in the worst possible ways. It was easy to get support against them. They are burning people alive, beheading Westerners, throwing homosexuals off buildings, killed Iraqi recruits in mass graves. It made our job easier. There is no nuance with ISIS. This other group, Ahrar Al-Sham in Syria are nuanced, they have written editorials. There is no nuance to ISIS.

Me: So, would you say that their provocative behavior made cooperation easier?

American official: Provocative is not enough of a strong word my friend, their evil behavior.<sup>298</sup>

This exchange illustrates how ISIS's behavior was so "evil" that it made cooperation easier. The plethora of labels that I mentioned were not just random names thrown at the Islamic State. Intuitively, transatlantic policymakers knew that revealing ISIS for the monsters that they were could enhance cooperation much more than hiding it or calling for calm and

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<sup>298</sup> Interview with American Official, May 22, 2018

restraint. This was used both by the international leader, and by each policymaker to enhance their lead in their respective domestic spheres.

This case study has shown how policymakers were driven by emotional beliefs, how intense emotional beliefs, like the fear of a worst “Benghazi,” and the protection of ingroup members motivated the leader, and how followers shared the leader’s view of shared norms in this case. It brings interesting nuances to the Cognitive-Affective Argument. First, British policymakers’ followership was delayed because of their domestic situation with the Scottish referendum and their need to obtain approval from the Parliament. Because it may break a country, a referendum is an unusually intense, and highly emotional event in domestic politics, perhaps one of the few events that can significantly affect foreign policy. It only delayed the British announcement of an already made decision. Certainly, after the assassination of David Haines, they were determined to be part of the air strikes.

Second, German policymakers did not follow the US lead because they were pulled in different directions by their emotional beliefs, as was the German public in general. They were horrified by the Islamic State and believed that something had to be done, but they also saw bombardments very negatively as an illegitimate mean. The Foreign Minister also thought that the situation might lead to a regional proxy war in which air strikes would be inefficient. As a result, German policymakers defied their public in accepting to deliver military equipment to the Iraqi and Iraqi Kurds, but did not go as far as to participate in air strikes. This way, they could argue that they were doing something important to counter ISIS, and support their partners’ air campaign without participating in it themselves.

Unique evidence for CAT abounds. The location of the intrastate conflict, Iraq, and the extremist Sunni Islamist character of the insurgents, primed frames of the war on terrorism, 9-11, the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and even the 1990-1991 coalition against Saddam Hussein. Even before they had conducted or claimed a single terrorist attack on Western soil, Islamic State fighters were characterized as terrorists. The leader, and indeed everyone in this case, emphasized ingroup values and difference with the uncivilized outgroup. The plight of the Yezidis and the assassination of Westerners were emotionally resonant events that coincided in time with the first air strikes, and with the American willingness to build a broad coalition. Finally, there is also evidence that domestic groups, like the Yezidis and Chaldean

Catholics in the US, began to influence foreign policy when they made emotional appeals and when their demands were emotionally resonant with policymakers.

## **Conclusion**

The air campaign against the Islamic State shows how an intrastate conflict was transformed into a threat to vital Western interests through the prism of the global struggle after 9-11 against Islamist terrorism. The key turning points in the American willingness to lead occurred when US government staff and innocent civilians were threatened, and the leadership effort was broadened in response to ISIS's attack on American journalists. This emotional drive brought two of the three transatlantic powers on board and willing to participate in air strikes themselves.

Cognitive-Affective Theory emerges as the clear winner in its contest with the Liberal approach in this case. Even for what it explains the best – the German decision not to engage in air strikes – Liberal theory does not explain why German policymakers went beyond the public consensus in delivering weapons. This warrants an explanation as to why policymakers can apparently go against wider public opinion in some cases but not for others. External intervention is an issue where the public “is more likely to punish – and severely so – political elites for a military campaign gone awry than they are to reward elected officials for a military success.”<sup>299</sup> Fully rational decision makers would be expected to point out that they cannot intervene because of their reticent public, and free ride on other transatlantic powers for their security and the handling of Iraq, thus contributing as little as possible. The emotional argument does a better job to explain the German positions: Germans signalled their belonging to the transatlantic community in doing something against the Islamic State while respecting their own reticence toward the use of air strikes.

Several aspects of this case have the features of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Transatlantic policymakers intervene arguing that it is required to defend the security of their own people, but in doing so their countries become the target of terrorist attacks in retaliation for their air strikes in Syria and Iraq. Both the public and European followers knew that they made attacks against their countries and citizens abroad more likely by targeting ISIS, not

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<sup>299</sup> Hildebrandt et al. 2013, 250



less so. Why then take the risk of participating in air strikes when the US is already conducting them, and can strike harder than any other state? From a cost-benefit calculation perspective, even if policymakers are concerned about the interests of their constituencies, this decision makes no sense. The rest of the story shows that ISIS-affiliated terrorists did subsequently conduct attacks in all three European powers. Policymakers need to have strong convictions and be emotionally invested in an issue in order to make a decision when they know that it will likely make their citizens a target for attack. They engage their forces in an intrastate conflict because of these convictions and their feeling of belonging to a transatlantic community of states that requires of them to contribute.

I have shown elsewhere how, during the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya, then German Foreign Minister Westerwelle compensated for his countries' refusal to participate in the aerial operations by emphasizing Germany's military contribution in Afghanistan. He also argued in his rhetoric that Germany was still prepared to assume its international responsibilities.<sup>300</sup> This is also the case here: German policymakers constantly discussed their contribution, and argued that they were doing as much as they could. There is clearly a pressure, overt or not, conscious or not, not to let down the community, and to show that one is doing something important, even when this policy does not go as far as other members. The transatlantic community is real, and it has real consequences for the states' foreign policies.

Although I focused in this chapter on the beginning of the crisis – the decision to launch air strikes and to build an international coalition – policymakers' responses to the events that followed are consistent with the emotional argument. Mai'a Cross, for example, shows how ISIS-affiliated terrorist attacks have been critical junctures where each attack provoked a sense of crisis for European decision makers, both because of the fear and disruption of the crisis itself, and because of how it was recuperated by nationalist and anti-immigrant groups.<sup>301</sup> As Cross argues, this feeling of crisis corresponds to the timing when decision makers decided to act to strengthen the boundaries of Europe. Thus, strong emotions both for the policymakers and in their home population drove them to act.

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<sup>300</sup> Beauregard 2016, 384

<sup>301</sup> M. D. Cross 2017, 613

If emotional beliefs drive policymakers that are more cautious and calculating, and take their time to study the complexity of issues like President Obama, then they should be expected to drive a great number of political actors. Even when actors want to calm the game and relativize the danger, they risk being swept by the current of powerful whirlpools of emotions of outrage, anger, and fear in the media, in their society, among their own advisers, and from their international partners. Therefore, they have to respond emotionally less they alienate allies and appear as insensitive to the suffering of others. Emotions are expected to be particularly salient for issues of national security, although it is the perception of this threat and how it is framed and often amplified that matters, rather than the objective or material danger of the threat itself. ISIS did not have the capabilities nor the intentions of striking Western countries when transatlantic policymakers decided to strike them from the sky. Even after the Islamic State did sponsor terrorist attacks later, terrorism still had killed less than “car accidents, and fall in bathtubs do.”

## Conclusion

*I met a traveller from an antique land,  
Who said—“Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert.... Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, a sneer of cold command  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing besides remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.*

– Ozymandias, sonnet by Percy Bysshe Shelley<sup>1</sup>

*Man can neither create nor direct the stream of time. He can only travel upon it  
and steer with more or less skill and experience; he can suffer shipwreck and  
go around and also arrive in safe harbors.*

– Otto Von Bismarck<sup>2</sup>

After four chapters studying leadership configurations, it may appear as though leaders are inconsequential, adrift in a sea of uncertainty. Leaders' agenda have been at the mercy of faraway intrastate conflicts, ethnic cleansing and the shoot down of planes have shifted their international stances. Leaders' calls have sometimes gone on for months on end without being answered, even by their closest allies. Is all that is left of leaders and their leadership, like Ozymandias, only ruins?

Leaders may never control the stream of time, and yet leaders matter, as does the process of cooperation that they stir in a specific direction. For the transatlantic community to converge on a common position, a leader must take the initiative of arguing for this position. Leaders then attempt again and again to persuade their partners. They deploy an active diplomacy and intense rhetoric seeking to influence their counterparts. It is unlikely that the recognition of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia would have occurred when it did without

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley 1885, 552

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Pflanze 1990, 3

the unconditional support, advocacy, and unilateral recognition of German leaders. French policymakers changed the course of history by rallying transatlantic policymakers behind their ceasefire that limited the Russo-Georgian conflict. President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry constantly pressured European powers to adopt economic sanctions against Russia, so that when circumstances became favorable to the leader's position, transatlantic powers all moved very quickly and in the same direction. In the case of ISIS, US leaders intervened first, but did not stop there, and brought a large coalition on board through diplomatic talks on the margin of summits, remaining open to the sensitivities of many countries who wanted to help without direct intervention, and justifying their actions in a way that could be accepted in the transatlantic community, and even beyond. Leaders waited patiently for their followers to change their mind, but they also, as German policymakers did in 1991, made bold unilateral moves to increase pressure on potential followers.

The processual approach to leadership is my general contribution, but I also forged and tested a new explanation for how this process works. In the first section of this conclusion, I will summarize the test of the two competing theories of international leadership. I then discuss theoretical and political implications of the results, with a view to paths for future research.

### **CAT's Triumph**

Table 7 on the next page summarizes the results of the case studies. Remember that the first three empirical implications are hoop tests, so that negative evidence can seriously invalidate a theory, but a yes merely leaves it still standing. However, implications 4 to 7 are smoking-gun tests, meaning that a "no" does not seriously affect the theory's validity, but if evidence congruent with a theory is found, it strongly confirms it in relation to its rival. I have marked as inconclusive (Inc.) the tests where the evidence is ambiguous or partially in favor and partially against theoretical expectations.

**Table 7. Results of the empirical study**

<b>Liberal Theory</b>	<b>Yugo.</b>	<b>Georg.</b>	<b>Ukr.</b>	<b>ISIS</b>
1. Policymakers will defend international positions in line with influential and intense domestic constituencies' preferences in their own domestic sphere.	Yes	No	No	Yes
2. The policymaker with the most intense relative preference will attempt to lead.	Yes	No	No	No
3. Other policymakers will follow the leader if his or her international position is in line with their dominant domestic constituencies' preferences.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
4. Followers' positions will shift to align with the leader when he or she emphasizes his or her own domestic constraints.	Inc.	No	No	No
5. Less intense policymakers will extract concessions from the leader in exchange for following the leaders' position.	Inc.	No	No	No
6. A shift in the leader-follower process occurs when ideational, business, or ethnic societal groups mobilize to defend their preferences.	No	No	No	No*
7. A shift in the leader-follower process comes from an event in the international environment altering the costs or benefits related to an international position for followers and their domestic constituencies.	No	No	No	No
<b>Cognitive-Affective Theory</b>				
1. Policymakers will be driven by their emotional beliefs to adopt international positions.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. The policymaker with the most intense emotional beliefs will attempt to lead.	Yes	Inc.	Yes	Yes
3. Other policymakers will follow the leader if his or her international position are representative of the community's values and affective norms.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Elements of the situation will prime a way for policymakers to frame the issues.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5. The leader will claim that his or her international positions are representative of the ingroup's ideals and maximize the difference with an outgroup.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
6. A shift in the leader-follower process comes from emotionally resonant events of the international environment or persuasion attempts by the leader.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
7. Domestic groups and the media are also driven by their emotional beliefs and amplify emotionality around events.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Of the twelve hoop tests for the liberal theory, it passes six times, but also fails just as often. Especially serious for the liberal approach is the fact that during the Ukraine crisis, on

economic sanctions, an issue that should be easier to explain for the liberal explanation, all the tests failed. Commentators and scholars at the time were indeed surprised and expected liberal mechanisms to prevent the adoption of sanctions by European powers. Policymakers went against important economic domestic constituencies, the leader had the least, not the most intense preferences among the transatlantic powers, and policymakers did not follow the leader because of liberal mechanisms.

Cognitive-Affective Theory, on the other hands, performs much better. It passes all twelve hoop tests, with one of them remaining inconclusive. Although in the case of the Russo-Georgian war there is clear evidence that the French Foreign Minister was emotional, primed with Yugoslavia and his own life experience, it is less clear what drove the French President. Although President Sarkozy acted in line with his beliefs and was intense in his diplomatic dealings, what motivated him is less clear. He did not employ emotional rhetoric, maximize the community's difference with an outgroup, nor did he seem particularly attached to the region or the protagonists. This is why I marked this test as inconclusive, or maybe a better assessment would be incomplete. Nevertheless, cognitive-affective mechanisms remain more plausible than liberal explanations in this case.

No smoking guns for the liberal theory were found, and in two cases evidence is contested, with some saying that something did happen, while others argue that it never did. For instance, we do not know whether Chancellor Kohl offered concessions on the Treaty of the European Union to the United Kingdom in exchange for their support on recognizing Slovenia and Croatia. I put an asterisk to liberal expectation 6 because although the mobilization of the Yezidi community in the US did coincide with the beginning of the air strikes that was when American action was unilateral, not when they took the lead. Furthermore, Yezidis were not a prominent group that could exert electoral leverage, and they persuaded American policymakers through emotional appeals, not liberal mechanisms of preference transmission.

Overall, I found 17 out of 20 potential smoking-gun evidence in favor of CAT, and at least one such evidence for each crisis. I certainly did not expect such a score when I began my empirical research, nor do I think that my tests were too easy. I would never have predicted that I would discover business leaders arguing that an "awful" plane shoot down changed the situation, and that they accepted economic sanctions because of that. I had not

anticipated how some events could resonate so widely and completely shift transatlantic powers' positions. I underestimated how President Obama, a calm and nuanced leader, would speak so intensely and emotionally of the Islamic State, this “joker” forcing us to “look into the heart of darkness.” Previous wars and interventions were primed by geographical locations, the presence of ethnic groups and former communist leaders, the involvement of Russia, and the type of war that was unfolding. The performance of Cognitive-Affective Theory exceeded my expectations.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

My hope is that the current research can motivate other researchers to contribute to a new research program on international leadership as a cooperation process. However, less ambitiously, I believe that my study also contributes to several existing research projects in international politics. I discuss these contributions in this section. I also address other related issues, such as the applications of my theory to other cases, and the limits of my theory as it stands.

### Emotions in International Politics

For decades, emotions have been remarkably absent from international theories. Research on emotions was in the shadow of powerful forces: rationalism, strict behavioralism, neopositivism, and structural approaches. Fortunately, in the last ten to twenty years, there has been a resurgence of research about emotions in international politics. At first arguing that emotions matter, scholars now seek to understand *how* they matter. I am indebted to several of these pioneers in the field, and their work has often been fascinating and illuminating.<sup>3</sup> Yet, research on emotions has sometimes been ambiguous as far as what were its epistemological basis and ontological view of emotions. There has also often been a feeling that causal mechanisms are not well defined, so that researchers simply jump on any evidence that they can find to argue that emotions work. It is much harder to understand how emotions work in relation to other factors shaping international politics, and when they work

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<sup>3</sup> For those who are interested in this work, see Holmes 2018; Holmes and Yarhi-Milo 2017; Hutchison 2016; Hall 2015; Hall and Ross 2015; Koschut 2014b; A. A. G. Ross 2014; Solomon 2014; Eznack 2012; Sasley 2011; Mercer 2010b; Saurette 2006

differently or maybe not at all. When I spoke about my project with colleagues in the field, they often asked me, “What do emotions do exactly in your theory?”

Janice Bially Mattern, in constructing her practice theory of emotions, has argued that most emotion scholars in IR “have met the challenge by dodging it.”<sup>4</sup> She argues that instead of studying the complexity of emotions, researchers reduce it to one of its constitutive elements, either biological, cognitive, or social. According to her, this makes emotional mechanisms indistinguishable from existing theories emphasizing material factors, cognitive processes, or constructivists account where social structures and discourses constitute the subject.<sup>5</sup>

Cognitive-Affective leadership Theory is grounded on a clear critical realist philosophy of science. CAT accepts all the different facets of emotions without reducing it to one. For instance, although I often focus on cognitive processes, like shared beliefs, priming and overcorrection, I show that cognitions are inseparable from emotions. Emotions drive policymakers and make their beliefs come alive, the need to act becomes prescient in the moment when emotional forces resonate with policymakers, changing the way they perceive issues. German policymakers’ passion for self-determination made a difference in how they interpreted this concept, and in how they defended their beliefs to promote recognizing the Yugoslav republics’ secession. Vivid events directly affecting the ingroup – like the shutdown of MH17 or the assassinations of American and British journalists – resonated and changed the course of transatlantic cooperation. I have shown how a wedding ring became the center of attention in emotional appeals at persuasion in policymakers’ interactions. Polish and Baltic policymakers could not remain cold and detached when they saw Russia invade their neighbor.

While I have clearly emphasized the cognitive and social aspects of emotions, I also agree that emotions are partly made of biological ingredients. I have argued that expressing one’s emotions can lead to feeling them because of biological and cognitive processes. I have shown how cognitions and emotions are grounded in the experience of a physical reality. Policymakers do not even consider some options, they react and constantly adjust to how the material situation changes, even sometimes overreacting or misinterpreting new facts.

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<sup>4</sup> Bially Mattern 2011, 63

<sup>5</sup> Bially Mattern 2011, 68



Perhaps the most surprising, and less evident, is how often they accurately assessed the situation.

Another advantage of CAT is that, unlike most international theories of emotion, it identifies clear mechanisms, how they work, and developed a method to test whether these mechanisms were really activated. To answer the questions posed in the introduction: who emerged as leader and why? The leader takes the initiative because of strong convictions, intense emotional beliefs driving him or her to lead in a given direction. Both the situation and leaders' tactics may then enhance the leader's prototypicality, how representative a leader's positions are for the community. Leaders frame the situation, and the situation itself primes memories important in policymakers' political life. They attempt to persuade their partners, although they sometimes need to wait for the circumstances to be ripe, for the right time for their leadership to prevail. Why do followers come along? They do when they share the leader's emotional beliefs, when the leader is representative of the groups' values and norms, and when the leader acted in appropriate ways. They may also have affective ties to the leader, or be affected by outside events resonating with them. Both leaders and followers are also pressured by their domestic environment, with various societal groups and the media amplifying emotionality around the issues and appealing to them to do something.

Of course, social influence is reciprocal and it goes in both directions. In the case studies, we have seen US policymakers ask their domestic groups not to go to an economic forum in Russia, and they agreed. I have shown leaders and their followers shaping the course of international events, especially in the case of Georgia. Leaders anticipated their followers' responses, as President Obama did when he acknowledged that the issue of gas supply could not be part of a sanction package.

#### Better Explanations: Harnessing the Power of Emotions

In this section, I discuss the case of cooperation during the war in Bosnia, a case related to the first empirical study of recognition, but that I have not previously discussed. I am interested in how Cognitive-Affective Theory could explain other cases, so that the power of beliefs, emotions and identities might shed light on other leadership configurations.

### *Lift and Strike in Bosnia*

Although I discussed how the recognition of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia set the tone for transatlantic cooperation in addressing the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the conflict that followed the events discussed in chapter 4, the war in Bosnia, was far deadlier than the Serb-Croat conflict had been. Casualties of the Bosnia conflict were estimated at nearly 150,000, with 1.2 million refugees, and 1.5 million displaced.<sup>6</sup> What if instead of recognition, skeptical readers might ask, I had focused on the policy that was the most important in putting an end to the conflict?

Bill Clinton was critical of President Bush's Yugoslav policy during the electoral campaign, arguing that Americans should do more. Nevertheless, after his election, he continued with a similar hands-off approach. In the words of Mark Almond, he "intoned the ritual mantra that only a negotiated settlement could resolve the matter and that a settlement would not be 'imposed'."<sup>7</sup> US Secretary of State Warren Christopher justified the Administration's stance by arguing, in a message to US Ambassadors in March 1993, that Bosnia was not a vital interest for the US.<sup>8</sup> According to James Gow, Clinton was held back by the same analogy that had held back his predecessor. Clinton was focused on the domestic economy, and remembered that "Johnson's domestic reform had been sunk by entanglement in Vietnam."<sup>9</sup> The US President also said that he had read Kaplan's book *Balkans Ghosts* in 1993, and believed in the ancestral hate argument. The President later admitted that this argument was false and had misled him.<sup>10</sup>

Several months after entering office, and after much internal debate, on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1993, President Clinton and his advisers finally decided on a new and more active policy.<sup>11</sup> Events on the ground and emotional appeals to the Administration were important to give the impulse for this new policy. The new President was much more receptive to calls for action. In April 1993, the Srebrenica enclave, filled with Muslim refugees from the eastern part of the country, was surrounded by Serb forces. Only UN forces protected the enclave. The devastating artillery attacks on Sarajevo and the events in Srebrenica galvanized proponents

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<sup>6</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 169–71

<sup>7</sup> Almond 1994, 298

<sup>8</sup> David 1994, 147

<sup>9</sup> Gow 1997, 213

<sup>10</sup> Lukic 2003, 5

<sup>11</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 250–51

of US engagement.<sup>12</sup> On April 21, 1993, the President participated in a ceremony to inaugurate the opening of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. At this occasion, holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel made a passionate speech in which he directly addressed the President: “Mr. President, I cannot *not* tell you something. (...) I have been in the former Yugoslavia last fall. I cannot sleep since what I have seen. As a Jew I am saying that. We must do something to stop the bloodshed in that country.”<sup>13</sup> After the speech, Clinton attempted to distinguish between the Holocaust and the events in Bosnia, but this emotional appeal clearly shook the President who went on to accelerate the US policy review.

The new policy adopted at the beginning of May would be known as “lift and strike.” The idea was to lift the arms embargo against all of Yugoslavia so that the Croats and Muslim Bosnians could acquire weapons to fight the Serbs, and to use NATO’s air capabilities to strike Serb forces who threatened civilians. The Secretary of State argued that lifting the arms embargo would actually achieve the objective that it had failed to achieve, “to limit the risk of a widening instability that would lead to a greater Balkan war.”<sup>14</sup> This policy also aimed at weakening the Serbs and stopping their advance in order to bring them to the negotiation table. Lift and strike was adopted at a time when surveys clearly showed that most Americans opposed military intervention, 62 % were against air strikes on Serbian forces, and only 30 % in favor.<sup>15</sup>

Secretary of State Christopher immediately traveled to Paris, London, and Moscow with the mission to convince key powers to support the Administration’s lift and strike policy. British policymakers opposed lift and strike because it would pour weapons in Bosnia with the result of intensifying and extending the war, an escalation which may trap them in a vicious circle with the need to send more troops.<sup>16</sup> The main reason why transatlantic partners opposed lift and strike was because they argued that it would endanger their troops on the ground deployed under the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR). At a NATO meeting on August 2, Canadians, French and British policymakers vigorously opposed the policy in a “bitter and rancorous” discussion.<sup>17</sup> French policymakers were unhappy with the Americans

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<sup>12</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 140–41

<sup>13</sup> Cited in Power 2002, 297

<sup>14</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 252

<sup>15</sup> David 1994, 163

<sup>16</sup> Gow 1997, 178

<sup>17</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 267–68

giving them lessons when they did not even contribute to the troops on the ground.<sup>18</sup> Confronted to such opposition, Clinton backed down.

Christopher seemed to lack conviction and any kind of enthusiasm when he met British and French policymakers to present to them the lift and strike plan.<sup>19</sup> He also presented lift and strike as though he was testing the waters for the idea, and not as a decided and established policy.<sup>20</sup> In the words of the American Ambassador present at the meeting between Christopher and British policymakers, his words “had all the verve of a solicitor going over a conveyance deed.”<sup>21</sup> It is possible that Christopher willingly sought to undermine the policy: he was one of the most skeptical, within the Clinton Administration, on the issue of direct intervention.<sup>22</sup>

Germany, after the “mistake” of recognition, and slowed down at home in constitutional debates as to whether it could directly participate to a military intervention, preferred to keep a low profile. Despite this attitude, German policymakers clearly supported lift and strike, but since they did not have troops on the ground like the United Kingdom and France, they knew that they could not pressure them on this issue. Oddly enough, when Christopher went to Moscow to convince Russian policymakers, unlike close transatlantic allies, they were easily persuaded to support lift and strike.<sup>23</sup>

On April 16 and May 6, the UNSC adopted resolutions 819 and 824 establishing six “safe areas” in Bosnia. The Security Council condemned Serb paramilitary forces attacks on cities like Srebrenica, demanded that these areas be “free from armed attacks,” and that humanitarian aid be allowed to reach the people in these cities unimpeded.<sup>24</sup> Under the pressure of British policymakers, the resolution was toned down from the initial idea of safe “havens” which would require UN forces to protect them; they now would only attempt to deter further attacks with their presence and protect humanitarian convoys.

President Clinton increased pressure on its allies and on the Serbs by declaring in August that he was prepared to use air power unilaterally if necessary.<sup>25</sup> In October 1993,

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<sup>18</sup> Wood 1994, 143–44

<sup>19</sup> Hatto 2006, 165

<sup>20</sup> Lukic 2003, 279

<sup>21</sup> Simms 2001, 88

<sup>22</sup> Lukic 2003, 257–58

<sup>23</sup> Simms 2001, 88

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Security Council 1993a; United Nations Security Council 1993b

<sup>25</sup> Wintz 2010, 63

Clinton announced that the US would “unilaterally stop participating in the enforcement of the arms embargo against Bosnia on November 10.”<sup>26</sup> However, British and French policymakers then responded with anger at the announcement.<sup>27</sup> A more shocking and emotional event was necessary before positions could substantially shift and converge in the transatlantic community.

### *Emotions Shift Partners' Positions*

On February 5, 1994, a shell fell on the Markala Marketplace in downtown Sarajevo. The images of the massacre of civilians poured on the news and drove European leaders to take action.<sup>28</sup> French policymakers took the lead in calling for air power to be used as a threat to lift the siege of Sarajevo.<sup>29</sup> Four days later, NATO gave a 10-day ultimatum demanding that the Serb forces withdraw their heavy weapons twenty kilometers away from the city.<sup>30</sup>

Although the Serbs withdrew their artillery, they did not stop threatening Sarajevo or the other safe areas. In April 1994, the city of Gorazde was threatened by the Bosnian Serbs. The first NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serbs occurred in April to deter them from shelling the city. However, as the British and French had feared, the response of Bosnian Serbs was to take UN personnel as hostages and use them as human shields.<sup>31</sup> Although they eventually released the hostages after negotiations, this move was certainly a mistake as it greatly offended Western elites.

The NATO bombing continued throughout the year, but it was very sporadic and limited, and it did not deter the Bosnian Serbs. After long US-led negotiations, on March 1st, 1994, Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims agreed in Washington to form the Federation of Bosnia. The Washington agreement sealed an alliance between the two communities so that they could work together in fighting back against the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>32</sup> Europeans and Canadians continued throughout 1994 to oppose a more extensive air campaign because they

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<sup>26</sup> Wintz 2010, 65

<sup>27</sup> Wintz 2010, 65

<sup>28</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 145

<sup>29</sup> Gow 1997, 147

<sup>30</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 145

<sup>31</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 147

<sup>32</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 293–94

feared that their troops on the ground would become targets of attacks and be taken as hostages again.<sup>33</sup>

In April 1995, a change at the Élysée brought further pressure on Americans for a more forceful leadership. President Chirac was elected, and unlike his predecessor, he was a strong advocate for intervention in Bosnia. Chirac's new Prime Minister, who was previously Foreign Minister, Alain Juppé, also supported a greater role for NATO. The new French policymakers quickly moved to pressure Americans to help a surge in the efforts, or else they would leave the conflict entirely. According to Burg and Shoup, the most important factor influencing the US Administration in employing force was the outbreak of fighting in March 1995, with the threat of UN withdrawal becoming a clear possibility.<sup>34</sup> Chirac was nicknamed "the bulldozer," and arrived in the US for his meeting with President Clinton demanding decisive American action in Bosnia.<sup>35</sup>

In May 1995, new attempts were made to press Serb weapons out of the exclusion zone, which led NATO to strike ammunition depots. In retaliation, the Bosnian Serbs took 400 UN troops as hostages and used them as human shields.<sup>36</sup> Exasperated, British and French policymakers made it clear that they would not stay in Bosnia indefinitely. Putting pressure on their American allies, they threatened to withdraw in the fall if no progress had been made.<sup>37</sup> In response, Americans launched into shuttle diplomacy to try to negotiate an agreement to end the conflict. The mission led by Special Envoy Robert Frasure had to negotiate with Sarajevo, Zagreb, Pale and Belgrade, and coordinate with international institutions, especially the Contact group on Yugoslavia.

At the beginning of July 1995, the safe area of Srebrenica fell to the Serb forces, who went ahead despite UN presence. After taking the city, Bosnian Serbs let women and girls leave, but under the orders of General Mladic, slaughtered the men and boys. They killed 7000 to 8000 inhabitants who were unarmed.<sup>38</sup> Images of the Serb takeover filled the news media in the West. These events drove American policymakers to act, it gave them "a sense

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<sup>33</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 158

<sup>34</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 322–23

<sup>35</sup> Holbrooke 1999, 67

<sup>36</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 329

<sup>37</sup> Gow 1997, 276

<sup>38</sup> Lukic 2003, 215

of urgency” and, according to a senior official, the President then declared “we’ve got to try something.”<sup>39</sup>

On July 16, NATO allies met in order to decide what to do about the threatened safe area of Goradze. British policymakers argued that it should be abandoned and could not be defended, they mocked the French willingness to protect the enclave as “a large touch of the Dien Bien Phus.”<sup>40</sup> At this time, emotions were intense between transatlantic policymakers, and Chirac compared his allies reluctant to act to Neville Chamberlain.<sup>41</sup> Because of the alignment of the French, Germans, and the Americans on the need to do something, and the emotional strength of their argument, the British rallied to the common position. On July 21, as a prelude to massive air strikes, the dual key arrangement, according to which both the UN and NATO had to approve strikes’ targets, was terminated. This left full discretion to NATO to conduct air strikes like it intended to. Despite this renewed willingness, on July 25, the safe area of Zepa fell to Serb forces.<sup>42</sup> At the UNSC, Ambassador Albright presented pictures as evidence of the mass graves in Srebrenica and Zepa.<sup>43</sup>

#### *When It Gets Personal: Renewed Willingness to Lead*

*[R]eluctance to lead an effort to resolve a military crisis in the heart of Europe has placed at risk our leadership of the post-Cold War world, (...) Chirac’s statement that ‘the position of the leader of the Free World is vacant’ has been chilling my bones for weeks.*

– Ambassador Madeline Albright, in a memorandum to the President<sup>44</sup>

On August 19, Robert Frasure and two members of his negotiating team, on their way back from Belgrade, died in a road accident.<sup>45</sup> After diplomatic talks, Milosevic had refused to guarantee secure landing for the US diplomats at the Sarajevo airport, thus forcing the

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<sup>39</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 325

<sup>40</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 343

<sup>41</sup> Mowles 2004, 119

<sup>42</sup> Gow 1997, 273

<sup>43</sup> Lukic 2003, 285

<sup>44</sup> Cited in Koschut 2016, 181

<sup>45</sup> Gow 1997, 278

American diplomatic team to take the dangerous road through Mount Igman.<sup>46</sup> The survivors would clearly attribute responsibility for the accident to the Serbs.

After the death of Frasure, Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, became the new leader of the US diplomatic initiative. Holbrooke supported a strong policy of pressuring or even punishing the Serbs. In August 1992, he had participated to the mission in Bosnia of the *International Rescue Committee*, an international non-government organization working to help refugees. This trip deeply affected him, and “he came back to the US horrified by the refugees testimonies.”<sup>47</sup> After the trip, he wrote an article in *Newsweek* in which he referred to the Serbs actions as “genocidal policies.”<sup>48</sup> Holbrooke had the support of many in the entourage of President Clinton. First among them was UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright. Albright was born in Czechoslovakia and her family had to escape into exile after the country was overtaken by the Nazis. Albright was very worried by the events in Bosnia, for her the conflict was “something personal and visceral.”<sup>49</sup> Recounting the Mount Igman tragedy, Holbrooke writes, “[t]he loss of three friends infused our meetings with a somber sense that there was no turning back. In addition, the President was now imparting to everyone his own sense of urgency.”<sup>50</sup>

The second shelling of the Markala Marketplace on August 28, 1995 was the last straw. On that day, another shell shot from Bosnian Serb positions killed 37 civilians and injured 85.<sup>51</sup> This event showed that the measures taken a year earlier had no effect, and that Sarajevo was still at the mercy of Serb artillery. This event was the trigger to launch a massive NATO air campaign.<sup>52</sup> According to diplomat Richard Holbrooke, the shelling angered the President and was perceived as a “direct affront to the United States.”<sup>53</sup> Holbrooke himself advocated to the State Department for massive and intensive air strikes, not “pinpricks” this time.<sup>54</sup> On August 30, NATO began its massive air campaign, *Operation Deliberate Force*, against Bosnian Serb targets. The Serbs stopped their attacks and agreed to the conditions

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<sup>46</sup> Lukic 2003, 294–96

<sup>47</sup> Lukic 2003, 255

<sup>48</sup> Holbrooke 1999, 39

<sup>49</sup> Lukic 2003, 261

<sup>50</sup> Holbrooke 1999, 81

<sup>51</sup> Lukic 2003, 297

<sup>52</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 164–65

<sup>53</sup> Burg and Shoup 1999, 349

<sup>54</sup> Holbrooke 1999, 92



posed by the US in Geneva on September 8. The air strikes continued until September 12, and ended only after the Bosnian Serbs had clearly agreed to withdraw their heavy weapons to end the siege of Sarajevo. Having given the Serbs no choice but to negotiate, American mediators brought everyone at the same table. In Dayton, Ohio, in November 1995, American negotiators were able to reach an agreement between the parties in conflict and end the Bosnian war. At the insistence of French policymakers that they should be part of the negotiations and organize some events, the agreement was signed symbolically in Paris on December 14.<sup>55</sup>

Reflecting on what led to the decision of the air campaign, Holbrooke writes in his memoirs:

What, therefore, had caused such a sudden and dramatic change of heart, after months in which there had been no NATO action, even in response to the horrors of Srebrenica and Zepa? (...) When I asked my colleagues later, they cited four factors: the sense that we had reached the absolute end of the line, and simply could not let this latest outrage stand; the grim, emotional reaction of Washington after losing three close and treasured colleagues on Mount Igman; the President's own determination; and the strong recommendation of our negotiating team that bombing should take place regardless of its effect on the negotiations.<sup>56</sup>

Although this case is very complex and I did not dive in it as deeply as I did with the four cases studied in previous chapters, leader-follower dynamics on lift and strike in Bosnia appear in every way consistent with Cognitive-Affective Theory. Emotional appeals and the shocking attack of Srebrenica convinced the President and his team to finally act on their electoral promise. The lack of emotional involvement from the Secretary of State and failure to reassure their allies' concerns stalled the adoption of the policy for a long time. Lift and strike was on hold because allies could not agree, and so leadership was postponed while the war raged. After the behavior of Bosnian Serbs strongly antagonized the West with their attack on the Sarajevo marketplace and capture of hostages, the US Administration deployed a diplomatic team on the ground. When this team was killed in an accident, in a series of events where Americans attributed responsibility for the accident to the Serbs, it became personal. The ingroup was affected. With this emotional death of US negotiators and a new French President who had very different emotional beliefs compared to his predecessor, it

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<sup>55</sup> Gow 1997, 276–77

<sup>56</sup> Holbrooke 1999, 103

was just a matter of time before the United States, in collaboration with their NATO partners, would increase the intensity of their bombardments and force the belligerents' hands in signing peace. A new deadly attack in Sarajevo provided the opportunity to do exactly that.

### *Beyond Intrastate Conflicts*

*Our cooperation with you through NATO, the sword and shield of democracy, can help the nations that once lay behind the Iron Curtain to become part of the new Europe.*

– President Bill Clinton, in a speech at the British Parliament<sup>57</sup>

The example of Bosnia shows the power of emotions for other international leadership configurations in responding to intrastate conflicts. I have no doubt that Cognitive-Affective Theory would apply to several other issues salient during international crises. Further research is required to find out whether this theory is relevant for other moments of international politics.

For instance, could it explain cooperation that is not associated with an international crisis, but slower negotiations about international security and the world's economic architecture? It seems likely that French actors who first argued for European integration were driven by strong convictions. These convictions were grounded in the beliefs in free markets and functionalist integration, and reinforced by the emotional memories of two world wars. Emotional memories which were shared, especially by their continental allies.

Another example of a slower institution-building process is NATO enlargement. Schimmelfennig argues that what best explains the process of NATO expansion in Eastern Europe is rhetorical action: the strategic use of arguments that policymakers use to persuade others, a social influence which is grounded in common values, and norms.<sup>58</sup> Policymakers who have already proclaimed their adoption of some principle or norm are sometimes trapped when these are redefined to apply to a current issue; they feel like they have to adopt a given position less they appear as contradicting their previous position and lose their credibility.<sup>59</sup> In other words, mechanisms of shared beliefs, framing, and persuasion are at work.

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<sup>57</sup> Schimmelfennig 2003, 244

<sup>58</sup> Schimmelfennig 2003, 192–208

<sup>59</sup> Schimmelfennig 2003, 22

Rhetorical action is generally compatible with Cognitive-Affective Theory. Schimmelfennig's approach already discusses leadership and emotions, but without explicitly theorizing these processes or analyzing them in-depth. I argue that rhetorical action would benefit from the addition of cognitive-affective mechanism, and its integration in a more general processual leadership theory.

Schimmelfennig writes that Central and East European (CEE) policymakers portrayed themselves as willing to join the transatlantic community, and attempted to shame transatlantic policymakers for the past behavior. They created strong moral pressure on NATO policymakers: "they used the 'Yalta' metaphor in order to remind the Western countries that they abandoned their allies after the Second World War and tolerated their Soviet domination and communist transformation."<sup>60</sup> This rhetoric resonated with the beliefs of President Clinton and his adviser Anthony Lake, who were strongly committed to the alliance, and regarded NATO as an instrument for the promotion of democracy and freedom in the world.<sup>61</sup> The US Administration had considered NATO expansion for several years before actually moving ahead on the policy. Emotional persuasion played an important role in this shift. On the occasion of the opening of the Holocaust Museum in April 1993, Clinton met privately with President of Czechoslovakia Vaclav Havel, and President of Poland Lech Walesa. They both pressed the President, arguing that their countries needed to join NATO to stabilize their democracy. The President was "impressed ... with the passion with which these leaders spoke" and "inclined to think positively toward expansion from that day on."<sup>62</sup> As Schimmelfennig remarks, "[t]he emotionally charged atmosphere of the day filled with memories of Europe's darkest age may have added special weight to the CEE leaders' arguments on the need of promoting and protecting democracy in their countries."<sup>63</sup>

In this context, President Clinton was impressed by men who had "put their lives on the line for freedom."<sup>64</sup> Clinton then successfully persuaded his partners to align their position with his. Both French and British policymakers were reluctant to follow the US President, but they felt like they had to do so, lest they appear as betraying the community's

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<sup>60</sup> Schimmelfennig 2003, 233

<sup>61</sup> Schimmelfennig 2003, 237

<sup>62</sup> Schimmelfennig 2003, 238

<sup>63</sup> Schimmelfennig 2003, 238

<sup>64</sup> Schimmelfennig 2003, 243

values and, once again, abandoning Central and Eastern Europe. According to James Goldgeier, after the success of Dayton put an end to the conflict in Bosnia, Americans argued that it proved that NATO could play a stabilizing role, and were able to vanquish French, British, as well as some German resistance to the enlargement policy.<sup>65</sup>

Hence, powerful emotional beliefs, emotional persuasion and resonance, and emotional historical memories contributed to US leadership – or to Czech-Polish leadership with American policymakers as powerful champions – on the issue of NATO expansion after the Cold War. Further research could thus adapt the framework and method developed in this inquiry to apply cognitive-affective leadership to other issues beyond moments of crisis during intrastate conflicts.

The discussion on NATO expansion also demonstrates how constructivist scholars, who often emphasize institutional change, norms, and identities, need to take emotions seriously. In the case of Slovenia and Croatia, the European Community agreed to common norms in recognizing new states: democracy, human rights, and respect for minority rights. And then they proceeded to completely disregard these norms in their actual recognition of former Yugoslav Republics. Ideas alone do not drive policymakers nor do they shift international positions. However, in the same case, the principle of self-determination, because it was backed by powerful emotions, acquired a much greater importance. The affective charge of a norm, and policymakers' own emotional memories and beliefs, certainly shape the power and interpretation of norms.

Constructivist scholars who emphasize liberal dynamics, how domestic and transnational groups' ideas influence policymakers, also need to consider affective dynamics. As I have shown, business and ethnic groups are also emotional. Their most successful attempts at influencing policymakers are often emotional appeals. It is likely that Liberal Theory is right when the emotional beliefs of societal groups or wider constituencies align with policymakers, but this alignment does not take its origin from the groups' interests, ideas, or power to shift elections. It is more likely that policymakers and their domestic constituencies share common memories, similar beliefs, and react in emotionally similar ways to outside events. Policymakers listen to business or ethnic groups when they share the same worldview and consider these groups important, which may not always be the case.

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<sup>65</sup> Goldgeier 1999, 96

### Surfing on Affective Waves

In some moments of upheaval, policymakers do not really harness the power of emotions in their sails, but they are carried in one direction by the storm, at the mercy of affective waves. Serbia's war on Croats shocked Westerners. Russia's attack on Georgia sparked fear in Eastern European Countries and memories of the Cold War. The crash of MH17 was a "finger in the eye" for European policymakers. The Islamic State's behavior provoked fear and anger, even more intense and vivid when they killed members of the transatlantic community.

Clearly, skilled policymakers see these moments as opportunities to make something important an even greater thing, tragedies become outrages, insurgents become cruel terrorists, Serbs and Russians become the new Nazis. The reason why emotional dynamics are hard to study is often that the power of these tactics rely on implicit and unspoken affective norms. For example, no one could dismiss the horror of "seeing your husband dead on television, when a drunken separatist is taking off his wedding ring." It would not be appropriate to respond to such a narrative with demands to protect jobs, minimize economic costs, or argue that a country's rational interests are more important. Policymakers have to show that they care, that they are not insensitive, and that they emotionally resonate in ways similar to members of their own international community. Some possibilities are so far out of the range of acceptable conduct that policymakers probably do not even think about saying or acting this way. This is a kind of social influence not dependent upon military force, economic power, or the asymmetry of information. This is power backed by emotional force. The capacity for humans to feel, to understand how others feel, and to understand how they should feel and express the right feelings in a social situation. I have demonstrated in my case studies that this force is real, and cannot be neglected in the study of international politics.

Scholars who study international practices and roles clearly need to integrate these insights into their theoretical frameworks. I argue that practices would gain much more power to explain international phenomena if there was a theory of why policymakers and diplomats follow or resist various practices. How are these practices related to beliefs and emotions? Can external events completely change current practices? If roles are a coherent set of social

behavior, then I would argue that emotional beliefs and social identity is what gives them their explanatory power. Sarkozy adopted the peacemaking role because he believed he could make a difference, needed to be intense and hyperactive in his diplomatic dealings, and sought to enact his Atlanticist and European identities. President Obama established his role as a leader when an outside event provoked powerful emotional beliefs which showed that he had been right in his assessment of the situation and in advocating for a stronger response to Russia's behavior. I call on practice and role theorists to specify the mechanisms through which various practices and roles are adopted, blindly followed, forced upon policymakers, or resisted and discarded at specific moments. I suspect that several mechanisms in CAT would go a long way in explaining these aspects of international politics.

### Creating Cold Monsters

*I was convinced that the gulf which in the course of history had opened between north and south in our country, because of differences in ways of life and dynastic and tribal loyalties, could not be more effectively bridged than through a common national war against the traditionally aggressive neighbor.*

*In the case of alliances, traditions and personalities carry almost more weight than interests, emotions more than calculation...*

– Otto von Bismarck<sup>66</sup>

Prussia's President-Minister Otto von Bismarck sought to expand Prussia's power by uniting Germany as a single state under Prussian leadership. With the 1866 war against Austria, he succeeded in weakening Austrian influence, and united northern German states in a Northern German Confederation, of which he became the powerful Chancellor. However, German states south of the Main, especially Bavaria, were reluctant to join a German union because they feared Prussian hegemony over their affairs. How could Bismarck convince southern German leaders to willingly join a united Germany under the constitution that he had drafted for northern states?

After 1868, the Spanish throne in Madrid was vacant following a revolution that removed Queen Isabella II, and the provisional government in replacement was looking for a new monarch. This new cabinet offered the crown to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-

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<sup>66</sup> Pflanze 1990, 366, 440

Sigmaringen, the son of Prince Karl Anton. The Sigmaringen-Hohenzollern were a branch of the Hohenzollern ruling family in Prussia, and related to Wilhelm, the King of Prussia. Accepting this offer expanded the ruling dynasty in Prussia with a new throne. King Wilhelm agreed to the ascension of Leopold to the crown of Spain.

News of this broke out in public on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1870. The French leaders and their people strongly opposed the candidacy of the Hohenzollern prince, and protested vehemently. The French demanded the withdrawal of the prince's candidacy. Conciliatory, King Wilhelm sought to calm things down and avoid war. Eventually, Leopold's father, Karl Anton, on his own authority, removed his son's candidacy. If this calmed the situation down, Bismarck would miss his opportunity to make France an aggressor, and mobilize German national sentiment behind Prussia.

On July 13, Count Benedetti, the French Ambassador to Prussia, approached King Wilhelm in Ems, where the king was having his summer retreat. He spoke to the king in public, in the Kurgarten, demanding that the King confirm his support for Karl Anton's withdrawal of the candidacy, and give France the assurance that the candidacy would not be renewed. Annoyed by the Ambassador's insistence, and aware that the public conversation was gathering the attention of the people present, Wilhelm cut the talks short by tipping his hat and declaring that he had nothing more to say. Later that day, Bismarck received a dispatch that was recounting the event of that day, presenting them as the King not wanting to dramatize the situation. Bismarck modified the dispatch before transmitting it: he removed words so that it would appear as though the French Ambassador had been coldly turned away, shutting him off from further negotiations. He basically removed all conciliatory language from the text.<sup>67</sup>

The modified provocative Ems dispatch was received as a "slap in the face" in Paris, with crowds in the streets chanting for war against Prussia, and sparking outrage among the deputies in the national assembly. In the words of Otto Pflanze, French ruler Emperor Napoleon III "dreading the consequences, yielded to the force of the hurricane."<sup>68</sup> Bismarck's strategy worked, France mobilized against Prussia, and appeared as the aggressive party, but still lost the war. In November, treaties were signed with the southern German states for a

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<sup>67</sup> Pflanze 1990, 467–69

<sup>68</sup> Pflanze 1990, 469

political union on the formula of the Northern German Confederation, in December the parliament of the Confederation accepted the constitutional change, and on January 18, 1871, barely more than six months after the beginning of the war, King Wilhelm was proclaimed Kaiser of the German Reich in the halls of mirror at the palace of Versailles.

Todd Hall has studied in detail how Bismarck skillfully used provocation to attain his goals. Hall defines provocation as “actions or incidents that state actors perceive as intentionally or wrongfully challenging or violating their values and goals, thereby eliciting outraged reactions that spur rash, aggressive responses.”<sup>69</sup> As he writes, popular outrage can exert pressure on policymakers to respond forcefully, which is what happened in the case of France.<sup>70</sup> The case of Bismarck’s creation of a foreign monster to bolster cooperation is a mechanism that has been found again and again in this research. In three out of four cases, leaders and their followers constructed and constantly condemned such an antagonist to increase their own community’s cohesion. Yesterday’s slap in the face is today’s finger in the eye. This process is coherent with social identity theory, where a leader attains leadership by boosting prototypicality.

Interestingly, in one case, peace mediation required to engage with both parties, so that the leader engaged with outgroups instead of condemning them. This confirms that leadership is issue-specific, and suggests that there are other paths to cooperation. This is especially important for contemporary politics, when intrastate conflicts tear countries apart, and international politics is made of various socioeconomic blocs that compete with one another. Scholars need to further study the cognitive-affective mechanisms of leadership when mobilizing followers is not achieved by creating an outside enemy.

Several examples of this come to mind in the history of international relations. Perhaps the most spectacular is the peaceful end of the Cold War and how the Soviet Union and the United States came to an understanding after years of casting each other in the role of the villain. Yet, very few studies actually focus on the international cooperation processes that I have argued should be the most important ones. Several authors have emphasized structural factors, like economic constraints and changes in the international environment,<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Hall 2017, 2

<sup>70</sup> Hall 2017, 3

<sup>71</sup> Nau 2011; Brooks and Wohlforth 2000; Brooks and Wohlforth 2007; Deudney and Ikenberry 1991



while others focus on domestic leadership and national factors.<sup>72</sup> Other authors have combined both approaches, and argued that a combination of transnational and domestic influences explain the Soviet shift.<sup>73</sup> The main debate has been between explanations emphasizing material factors against more ideational theories. But in emphasizing structural and domestic processes, international processes of cooperation have been comparatively neglected.

What motivated Gorbachev to be so passionate, and take enormous risks in engaging the West? How did Gorbachev persuade the antagonistic Reagan Administration as well as other Western policymakers to take his willingness seriously? How did he build ties and transformed an outgroup, which had been reinforced after years of anti-capitalist rhetoric, into a trustworthy counterpart? Furthermore, Gorbachev needed allies in the East for his reforms to work. He had to convince communist East European neighbors to follow through with reforms and embrace perestroika, which was easy for some states already ahead (such as Poland) but more difficult for others (like Romania). As Gorbachev's adviser Shakhnazarov wrote in a memorandum in October 1989, the countries that did not follow the Soviet lead posed serious problems and could have set back attempts for change:

Those who stubbornly refuse to heed the pressures for change are just intensifying the ills they face and are greatly complicating matters for the future. This affects us in the most direct way. Even if we are not authorized to be an "elder brother" in the socialist world, we cannot reject the role of a leader, a role that objectively belongs to the Soviet Union as the most powerful socialist country.<sup>74</sup>

Some authors did answer these difficult questions from the point of view of international cooperation as a process of interaction. Alexander Wendt argued that Gorbachev's ideas spread through "altercasting," that is, treating other actors as if they already had the identity that you wish them to play.<sup>75</sup> Tuomas Forsberg studied the building of trust between West German and Soviet leaders.<sup>76</sup> This trust-building played an important role and explains why USSR-Japan relations did not follow the same path as relations did in the Western Bloc.

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<sup>72</sup> English 2011; M. Kramer 2011; J. Snyder 2011; A. Brown 2007; Haas 2007; Goldgeier 1994; Stein 1994

<sup>73</sup> Evangelista 1995; Risse-Kappen 1994

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in M. Kramer 2011, 812

<sup>75</sup> Wendt 1992, 421

<sup>76</sup> Forsberg 1999

Another example is how Thomas Risse, in developing his logic of arguing, discussed two moments when US leaders persuaded Soviet decision makers to change their positions in favor of a more liberal perspective.<sup>77</sup>

These approaches likely hold a few pieces of truth, but they lack an integrated theory of leadership to explain Gorbachev's leadership of East and Central Europe, and the power of his initiatives to transform the East-West rivalry. How did the various mechanisms and processes contribute to the wider leadership configuration? Furthermore, these approaches neglect how emotional and intense policymakers were at the time. Mechanisms like trust-building, altercasting, or rational arguing all seem very cold and detached, when I suspect that events went down much more emotionally. This is just one example of many cases on which further research in the framework developed in this thesis might contribute to our understanding of international events.

### Social Identity and Leadership

Throughout my inquiry, I have addressed criticism of social identity theory and how it is usually applied to international politics. For instance, Christian Reus-Smit raises the problem of actors living in a world where multiple groups with fluid boundaries overlap.<sup>78</sup> How do we know which group is relevant on a given issue? I have argued that elements of the situation, priming mechanisms, and the framing of leaders themselves combine to construct a definition of the problem selecting an identity as relevant to the issue at hand. This does not mean that this definition cannot be contested, but strongly contested framing would make leadership difficult. This is why leadership configurations arise more rarely outside of closely-knit international communities.

Leonie Huddy criticizes social identity theorists for neglecting individual-level differences in the adoption of group identity and the development of outgroup antipathy.<sup>79</sup> Cognitive-Affective Theory can accommodate and contribute to understanding these differences. Policymakers have different experiences, memories and emotional beliefs. Sometimes their religious faith, their participation in a war, their ideology or worldview, or

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<sup>77</sup> Risse 2000, 26–27

<sup>78</sup> Reus-Smit 2014, 570

<sup>79</sup> Huddy 2004, 954, 963

some salient international event that occurred when their political ideas crystallized may explain divergent emotional responses and the focus on different identities. I have often been able to find evidence of such different emotional beliefs in moments of disagreements, and how policymakers' trajectories shaped these convictions. For example, Genscher's experience in being conscripted during Nazi Germany, in fleeing East Germany because of Soviet domination, and his role in the reunification of Germany gave him intense emotional beliefs regarding self-determination and the use of violence against civilians in conflicts. These emotional beliefs were quite different from French President Mitterrand. Mitterrand had fought in the Second World War and seen the heroic resistance of Serb forces. He was much less sympathetic to Germany and Croatia's point of view. CAT allows researchers to focus on a few individual differences that matter, and to relate these differences to collective action, as emotional beliefs may be shared by a wider group, national or international, or at least consistent with the wider community's values and norms.

As Huddy argues, after several studies have found evidence of social identity dynamics, the central question is "not whether, but under what circumstances, group membership is translated into ingroup political cohesion, divisive intergroup behavior, political conflict, and political action."<sup>80</sup> The current research contributes to this endeavor in several ways. First, it suggests that the issue at stake and the goals pursued by policymakers matter. They influence whether an outgroup will be antagonized to increase social cohesion. As I have shown, the case of peacemaking in Georgia did not reveal the same kind of dynamics as the other three cases.

Second, many cases show a dynamic where at first, some ingroup members attempt to engage the outgroup and convince it to change its course, while others within the group reject the outgroup and seek to maximize differences with it, usually the leader attempting to boost prototypicality. As the outgroup, however, continues to behave contrary to the ingroup's affective norms, negative emotions that resonate within the ingroup eventually make engaging with the outgroup more difficult, if not outright impossible. Serbs' brutal war on Croat cities, the Russian arms delivery and support of Pro-Russian secessionists in Ukraine, and the deliberately cruel and publicized acts of the Islamic State all undermined anyone who would want to engage with the outgroup or stay on the sideline rather than follow

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<sup>80</sup> Huddy 2004, 949

the leader in opposing it. The case of Georgia may have been very similar if Moscow had not quickly stopped its offensive on Georgia and, in the end, accepted to withdraw its troops.

Finally, another interesting finding for social identity theory is that ingroup social influence tactics are markedly different from ingroup-outgroup tactics. President Sarkozy threatened to exit the negotiations when Russian negotiators demanded unacceptable compromises, and he pushed Georgian policymakers hard, threatening to leave them alone with their problems if they refused the current deal. The French President never employed such harsh and coercive tactics with members of the community. Despite the fact that I have found evidence of criticism and disagreements between transatlantic policymakers, arguing that their ally is wrong to adopt some policy or position, I have not seen any example of threats between them. No one has threatened to exit the community, or to leave the problem to another state if they did not accept their view of the situation. They were clear moments of tension between transatlantic policymakers, but there seems to be implicit norms prohibiting certain types of pressures and threats between members. Tactics like time pressure and unilateral actions are better accepted, and more easily forgiven, than direct threats or threats of exit. No one has threatened to break community bonds or demanded the ejection of a member from the group.

### Completing the Theory

Cognitive-Affective Theory is not without its flaws and limits. Because it is a new approach, we do not know yet how broad its empirical implications will be. It is certainly plausible that in certain circumstances, the mechanism of the theory may not activate, such that different dynamics will prevail.

The theory appears partly incomplete, especially as far as the case of peace-mediation in Georgia is concerned. Clearly, we need a better way to conceptualize and assess affective ties between policymakers. How personal are these ties, and how much do they rely on more general social beliefs, like the belief of a special relationship between American and British policymakers? What are the mechanisms and strategies for potential leaders to improve and maintain these ties? Sarkozy was clearly successful and skilled at maintaining such ties with a broad range of actors, but how he did so, and how these pre-established ties influenced the course of the leadership process remains to be specified.

Another issue is the importance of the stereotypical aspects of leadership. Could it happen that a leader is prototypical, that is representative of the community's norms and values, but not stereotypical? What would happen then? How do leader stereotypes help or hinder the success of leadership? I consider these questions to be interesting for further research. One reason is that leaders may appear as representative, sharing their groups' emotional beliefs, but may be very unrepresentative in other aspects. For instance, women may be the majority of the population in most Western countries, but leaders on the world stage are overwhelmingly men.

This question is related to the issue of policymakers' skills. I have often alluded to a policymaker saying or doing something that appeared as skillful, as efficient in the game of social influence. While competence was not the focus of this study, nor was it a central mechanism as it is in practice theory, it probably matters for how cognitive-affective mechanisms work. More competent leaders may achieve better results, and make fewer mistakes in their attempts at social influence. This is very hard to measure or to assess. We cannot rerun history with the same parameters, but an incompetent leader instead. This is also not a straightforward issue of the appropriate behavior in a community of practice. Something that is an asset in a situation, a useful skill, becomes a liability in another situation. Scholars have often studied what skills they think leaders had, or should have to be "good" leaders. I argue that we should instead develop ways of studying what skillful moves leaders actually make in the course of historical events, think about the wider skill set of which this move is one part, and search for evidence of how policymakers developed such skills that proved useful at the right moment. This has often been done in isolation, but is not an easy thing to do when we study policymakers' interactions, when many skillful actors interact with one another, and yet one may still be more competent than the others. Doris Kearns Goodwin's recent book, for example, does a great job at detailing the leadership experiences and skills of several US presidents. But it would be interesting to go beyond individual presidents to see how they interacted with other skilled policymakers on the international stage, and through which mechanisms were they able or unable to bring about cooperation.<sup>81</sup>

Finally, I did find evidence for persuasion mechanisms. Nevertheless, the evidence for such mechanisms has been scarce and underwhelming at best. While there is strong

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<sup>81</sup> Goodwin 2018

evidence that leaders often attempted to persuade potential followers, both in public and in private, these attempts failed much more often than they succeeded. In some cases, like ISIS, the case for opposing them in some way and possibly with military means was so strong that persuasion appears barely necessary. In other cases, like Slovenia-Croatia-Bosnia and Ukraine, leaders attempted for months to convince their partners, at first without much success. This is likely because persuasion broke the dam of inertia and provoked change when outside events empowered the leader's position, not when the leader him or herself employed some persuasive tactics or argument. Furthermore, persuasion is difficult to study, as it often depends on some private or even secret interaction between policymakers that is not easily accessible. Further work is clearly necessary on the various mechanisms which might explain why a policymaker persuades another, when they activate, and when they fail.

### **Social and Political Implications**

As far as policy advice goes, obviously, I would recommend that policymakers do not neglect the power of shared beliefs, intense emotions, and social identities. Nevertheless, I do not consider policy advice very useful or helpful. Policymakers who have navigated the storms and have years of experience in the actual practice of international politics certainly know what to do better than me, a student who has never been involved in political action and has studied it at a distance. Of course, policymakers can and often make mistakes in their assessment of a crisis, because such quick analysis with limited information is very difficult. But many policymakers have social and emotional intelligence skills that they have developed over years of involvement. International leaders are leaders among leaders, they not only managed to earn the leadership of their state, they now lead among peers, among policymakers who are tried and tested and know the game.

More interesting in this section is to consider the social and political implications of Cognitive-Affective Theory. Throughout this inquiry, I have attempted to be as objective as possible in assessing how competing theories of leadership do a good job of corresponding to the empirical facts. In this last section, I adopt a different perspective, asking instead, if CAT is indeed accurate, what would be the ethical implications? I thus consider issues of violence, social justice, and sensitivity to other people's suffering.

Perhaps most worrisome is the finding that leaders create enemies to bolster cohesion within their group. At the national level, this could mean populist and intolerant leaders who accuse a scapegoat to rally the rest of their citizens behind them, thus undermining tolerance and pluralism. At the international level, this could mean fierce economic competition, strained relations, and even war. The silver lining is that this needs not be so: I have shown how institutions like the EU have fundamentally changed cooperation dynamics and identities so that it now seems normal for EU members to coordinate their positions on some international issues. Clearly, group boundaries are neither natural nor fixed. The Russo-Georgian case also suggests that there are other ways to cooperate without creating an outside enemy.

Another worrisome implication of this study is how leaders and followers depict women. Cynthia Enloe has shown how the media often make women visible as a symbol of victims. She coined the term “womenandchildren” to illustrate this narrative where, during international crises, women and children are presented as helpless victims who need to be saved by Western statesmen.<sup>82</sup> Policymakers also contribute to this narrative. In the cases of Ukraine and the Islamic State, transatlantic policymakers presented women as helpless victims at the hands of dangerous villains, damsels in distress that need a Western hero to save them. In this sense, girls are the quintessential victims, symbolizing innocence and purity.<sup>83</sup> President Hollande even explicitly declared that ISIS targeted the “weakest,” thus also promoting the idea that women are weaker, childlike, and in need of protection. A “pink children book” became the affective symbol of a girl victim of uncivilized foreigners who shot down a civilian plane. Discourse about violence against women and children were used to elicit emotions of disgust, fear, and anger.

There is no doubt that many women have suffered at the hands of ISIS or been killed in the downing of MH17. This portrayal of women, however, is reductive and dangerous. First, it neglects how Ukrainian and Middle East women are more than symbols, they are diverse and take active roles in the region. Second, this narrative leaves many women in the dark. How about women who shared the Islamic States’ ideas and supported the organization? Many women, both in the region and in the West, flocked to join the Islamic

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<sup>82</sup> Enloe 1993, 166

<sup>83</sup> Burman 1994, 242–43; See also Hutchison 2016, 190–94

State. Early on, ISIS had a female-only brigade, and women voices promoting its ideology on the internet.<sup>84</sup> Although women were not expected to fight directly, they held crucial roles in the working of the Islamist organization, like recruitment, online propaganda, household work, raising funds, birthing the next generation of fighters, as well as administrative work.<sup>85</sup> Women were thus both victims and perpetrators. But they were also heroes. In the period studied in my content analysis, for instance, I have found no mention in policymakers' rhetoric of the women-only unit of the Kurdish Peshmerga.<sup>86</sup> Kurd women have been fighters for a long time and have an important historical role in the defense of their community.<sup>87</sup> When transatlantic policymakers argued that they needed to help Kurdish forces who were valiantly fighting ISIS, this would have been a good opportunity to show that women were not *only* victims. Against the portrayal of women from ISIS as subordinate and enslaved, Western policymakers could have emphasized women who fought bravely a war that was broadly considered righteous.

Another issue with this depiction of women is that it focuses on the killing and rape of women as the actions of foreigners while downplaying violence against women inside the community itself. It paints such violence as the acts of oriental Others to be fought by superior and more civilized Westerners. The West has not solved the problem of sexual violence, including in their own forces participating to foreign intervention. Reports of sexual assault in the US military increased by 50 % in 2013.<sup>88</sup> A Rand Corporation study conducted in 2014, at the same time as the crisis in Iraq and Syria, estimated that 20,300 US military personnel were sexually assaulted only in the precedent year. In the US military, women were five times more likely to be the victims of sexual harassment, with 22 percent of women reporting being sexually harassed, again including only events of the previous year. 60 percent of the time, sexual harassment was committed by a superior or unit-leader.<sup>89</sup> At the beginning of 2014, the French Defense Minister launched an internal investigation on sexual crimes in the French military after the publications of a book, *La Guerre Invisible*, revealed that there was a complete omerta in the French forces against discussing and punishing sexual

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<sup>84</sup> Lahoud 2017, 62; Spencer 2016, 83

<sup>85</sup> Lahoud 2017, 65–70; Spencer 2016, 74–79, 85–86

<sup>86</sup> Dehghanpisheh and Gregory 2016

<sup>87</sup> Dirik 2014

<sup>88</sup> McVeigh 2014

<sup>89</sup> Morral et al. 2015



assault and harassment.<sup>90</sup> A 2015 government report on sexual harassment in the British military revealed that, according to a survey, servicewomen are more likely to be the target of sexual behaviors, 12 % of women experienced other servicemember's unwelcome attempt to touch them, and 2 % sexual assault.<sup>91</sup> The results of an internal study in the Bundeswehr, published in 2014, found that one in two servicewomen were the victim of sexual harassment, and 3 % of sexual assault.<sup>92</sup> Most transatlantic powers' militaries, in 2014, were in the process of developing strategies to better address these issues in their forces, and the reported statistics were in decline. Yet, these statistics shows that rape did not just occur at the hands of Islamic State's fighters, but was a problem in the West's own ingroup as well.

Feminist considerations are not just interesting to critically analyze policymakers' discourses and actions. The fact that violence against womandandchildren is used so often as the ultimate emotional motivator for Western publics and international counterparts also reveals something deeper about Western culture, about the gendered values and affective norms in the transatlantic community. There is something of a possessive masculinist superhero mentality in that idea that the most vivid, emotionally shocking and worthy of heroic deed is the damsel in distress archetype, so much that it can contribute to motivate foreign policies like economic sanctions or air strikes. Clearly, emotional beliefs about women stereotypes and emotional appeals to defend them play a role in international cooperation.

As I have repeated throughout this study, feeling emotions is not in itself a bad thing. We may sometimes want our policymakers to be emotional, sensitive, to show empathy. But when foreign policy decisions are driven by emotions, this brings important ethical questions. Should the transatlantic community intervene everywhere whenever their own emotions demand it? Should an accidental plane crash shift international positions? What about regions where Western policymakers pay little attention, but equally shocking and tragic events take place? Is it fair to act decisively when ingroup members are affected, but not as much or as fast when people outside of this community are suffering? Are some actors left in the dark when others are brought to light by intense emotions? If Cognitive-Affective Theory is accurate, then such questions are inevitably raised. The pursuit of these questions are outside

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<sup>90</sup> Bordenet 2014; Raynaud 2014

<sup>91</sup> United Kingdom Government 2015

<sup>92</sup> Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA) 2014

of the scope of the current study. I would argue that by presenting identities as fluid and open to (re)definition, and emotional beliefs as also open to change, CAT makes room both for positive and negative social change: policymakers can be persuaded by new ideas which might completely change how events are framed and what positions they adopt.

I began my inquiry with a discussion of US President Donald Trump. How commentators criticized his lack of willingness and lack of skills to lead. Existing approaches to international politics have a hard time in explaining the Trump anomaly. How can the superpower fail to lead if it depends on structural conditions? Likewise, scholars of leadership style may have a hard time categorizing the chaotic and sometimes strange management style of President Trump. Constructivists should be equally puzzled by a man who puts America first and proudly disregards international norms. If he can do it, why could other Presidents not do it as well? Liberal explanations would find it hard to explain the behavior of a President who sought to impose tariffs leading to trade wars that were costly for several important American businesses, and renegotiate trade deals when business associations did not ask for that.<sup>93</sup> In fact, in response to the President's policy, trade and business associations launched *Tariffs Hurt the Heartland*, "a multimillion dollar campaign that includes television advertisements, rallies in targeted congressional districts, and online persuasion efforts."<sup>94</sup> Their call to avert trade wars fell on deaf ears. Cognitive theorists can at least explain the Trump difference by showing how his different life experience and beliefs mean that he is totally unlike other policymakers in the transatlantic community. But cold cognition would definitely miss something of the man making several accusations on Twitter and mean remarks often directed at close allies.

Although in-depth analysis of Trump's leadership – or failure to lead – would be required to say more, Trump is not a problem for Cognitive-Affective Theory. If even President Obama acted on his emotions and had emotional beliefs guiding his international positions, Trump's emotionality is not a problem. Trump is not different in that sense. He is probably different as far as the substance of these emotional beliefs are concerned. His

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<sup>93</sup> On the costs of Trump's policies for many important American companies, see Bryan 2018; Newmyer 2018; Volodczko 2018; On US trade groups opposing the Trump Administration's tariffs, see Edgecliffe-Johnson 2018

<sup>94</sup> Tankersley 2018

convictions are so divergent from other community members, and his behavior and positions are often so unrepresentative, that CAT can explain why his leadership is unlikely to be successful. Trump may also be unmotivated to lead on some issues that commentators consider crucial, because he is unaffected emotionally by them. Someone who does not even believe that something is a problem and pays no attention to it, like Trump does for climate change, is not going to be motivated in doing anything about it. In that sense, Trump is not a hard case or an enigma for Cognitive-Affective Theory, more like an easy case, at least for the emotional part. He appears more as an extreme case of someone with outlier beliefs and intense emotions, possibly coupled with low self-control and little understanding of the social norms of diplomacy.

Trump is thus another cautionary tale, making us wonder what might happen when a new leader steps into office. As of writing these lines, Trump is still President and this has not lead to a global catastrophe. Like many people around me who are idealists, I feel good when I argue that our politicians are incompetent, should rise to the occasion and preach more noble and human values, and stop the petty fights and partisanship. But with Trump in the Oval office, I feel glad that leaders do not entirely control the stream of history.

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## Annex A – Population of Cases: Internationalized Intrastate Conflicts since 1989

The following list is drawn from the UCDP/PRIO Dataset.<sup>1</sup> The number of conflicts vary depending on when we separate the different cases: for instance if Boko Haram pledges allegiance to the Islamic State, is it a new conflict because one party to the conflict has changed its name? I have tried as much as possible to merge cases to minimize the number of total cases and redundancy.

Note that the conflict years are counted when they reach the minimum number of casualties and when they are internationalized. For instance, many conflicts in 1990 and 1991 in the USSR were considered internal conflicts at the time. Similarly, conflicts in Yugoslavia could be categorized as only internal but not internationalized in 1991, before the recognition of secessionist republics. I highlighted in **bold** the most relevant conflicts for the current thesis.

**Table 8. List of internationalized intrastate conflicts since 1989<sup>2</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Conflict</b>
1985-1990	Mozambique	The conflict between the government of Mozambique and Renamo
1989-1990	Lebanon	The government forces of Lebanon against the forces of Michel Aoun
1990	Rwanda	War between the government of Rwanda and the Front patriotique Rwandais (FPR).

<sup>1</sup> UCDP/PRIO 2018b

<sup>2</sup> I exclude 1989, there has to be at least one year in the 1990s during the conflict for it to be part of the list.

1991-1993 1997-1998 2005 2008 2012 2014-2017	Azerbaijan	The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh
1991-2000	Sierra Leone	The Sierra Leone civil war
<b>1992-1995</b>	<b>Bosnia Herzegovina</b>	<b>The three-way war between Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian forces on Bosnia Herzegovina's territory</b>
<b>1992-1993</b>	<b>Croatia</b>	<b>The government of Croatia against Serbian irregulars and the forces of the Republic of Krajina</b>
1993-1996	Tajikistan	The Tajik civil war
1996-2001	Democratic Republic of Congo	The government of DRC versus various groups
1997-1999 2002	Congo	The government of Congo against various groups.
1998-1999	Guinea-Bissau	The Guinea-Bissau civil war
1998	Lesotho	Uprising in Lesotho leading to the intervention of South Africa.
1999-2002	Angola	The government of Angola against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)
1999	Serbia (Kosovo)	The war between the Serbian forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army (UÇK) that led to NATO air strikes.

2000	Uzbekistan	Counter-insurgency against the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
2001 2003-2017	Afghanistan	The government of Afghanistan and their allies against various groups, most importantly the Taleban.
2001	Central African Republic	The government facing the forces of André Kolingba
2001-2017	United States	US Counterterrorism operations against Al-Qaeda
2003	Sudan	The government of Sudan opposed to various groups
2004	Algeria	The Algerian government opposed to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM)
<b>2004-2017</b>	<b>Iraq</b>	<b>Insurgency in Iraq with the government opposing various forces, most of all the Islamic State group</b>
2005 2008-2011 2017-2017	Uganda	The government of Uganda fighting the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Allied Democratic Resistance (ADF)
2006	Central African Republic	The government against the Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR)
2006-2017	Somalia	The government of Somalia versus Al-Shabaab
<b>2008</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>The conflict over the control of South Ossetia between Georgian and South Ossetian forces, with the involvement of Russia</b>
2009-2012 2016	Rwanda	The government of Rwanda against the Democratic Forces of Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)
2009-2017	Yemen (North Yemen)	Civil war in Yemen opposing the government to various forces (Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Ansarallah, forces of Hadi)
2010	Mauritania	Mauritania's fight against Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM)

2012-2013	Democratic Republic of Congo	Government of DRC versus various groups
2012-2013	Central African Republic	Civil war between the government and various rebel groups
2012-2017	Nigeria	The government of Nigeria fighting Jama'atu Ahli Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (Boko Haram)
2013-2017	Mali	The government of Mali's fight against Islamic insurgents from various groups as well as the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA)
<b>2014-2017</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>The Ukrainian government forces war against secessionist forces in the Donbass (Luhansk, Donetsk)</b>
2014-2015	South Sudan	Conflict over the control of South Sudan
2015	Afghanistan	The government of Afghanistan against Islamic State affiliated groups.
2015	Cameroon	Fighting between the government of Cameroon and Jama'atu Ahli Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (Boro Haram)
2015-2017	Niger	Fighting between the government of Niger and Islamic State affiliated group.
2015	Pakistan	The fight of the government of Pakistan against the Taliban Movement of Pakistan (TTP)
2015-2017	Syria	Syrian civil war: the government of Syria against Syrian insurgents
<b>2015-2017</b>	<b>Syria</b>	<b>War between the Syrian government and the Islamic State group</b>
2016-2017	Libya	The Libyan government confronts Islamic State affiliated groups
2017	Philippines	The government of the Philippines against the group Abu Sayyaf

## Annex B – Compilation of data gathered for the CCCA

The first table shows the repartition of declarations collected for each source and crisis. The second table illustrates the number of coded segments in the content analysis, again by source and by crisis.

**Table 9. Number of declarations collected and analyzed in QDA Miner**

	US		UK		FR		GR		Total
	DOS	WH	FCO	10DS	MAE	ELYS	FFO	FGG	
Ukraine	81	53	51	32	118	43	100	93	571
ISIS	89	77	32	36	82	50	52	21	439
Total	170	130	83	68	200	93	152	114	1010

**Table 10. Number of text segments coded in QDA Miner**

	US		UK		FR		GR		Total
	DOS	WH	FCO	10DS	MAE	ELYS	FFO	FGG	
Ukraine	1400	1297	830	578	1398	553	1123	1659	8838
ISIS	1450	1181	301	619	1228	801	571	275	6426
Total	2850	2478	1131	1197	2626	1354	1694	1934	15264

Legend

Countries	Sources
US : United States	DOS : Department of State WH : White House
UK : United Kingdom	FCO : Foreign and Commonwealth Office 10DS: 10 Downing Street (Office of the Prime Minister)
FR: France	MAE: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministère des Affaires étrangères) ELYS : Élysée (President of France)
GR: Germany	FFO: Federal Foreign Office of Germany (Auswärtiges Amt) FGG: Federal Government of Germany (Bundesregierung Deutschland)



## Annex C – Codebook

The codebook provides the rules and codes that were used for the comparative chronological content analysis.

### General rules

Coding by themes	If a sentence has one theme (code), the entire sentence is coded according to the corresponding code.
Code zero	All sections of declarations not related to the crisis under study are coded 000 Irrelevant
Code separation	A code stops when it meets another sentence where the code is not present or an irrelevant section. General insignificant sentences such as “I think you’ll understand that.” do not end the code.
Non-temporal Coding	Text segments are coded no matter what verb tense the sentence is written in.
Neutral coding	Texts segments are coded no matter the form of the sentence (interrogative or negative).
Extended coding	When the declaration discusses a regional or more general matter that is outside of the crisis in question, it is coded if it appears in a section relevant to the coding.
Content coding	Titles, journalists’ questions and declarations of other officials are not included in the coding. They are coded 000 Irrelevant.
Inclusive coding	Codes are mutually inclusive and may overlap. For instance, a sentence discussing a UN Resolution may be coded in Multilateralism as well as UN Resolutions.
Coding answers	Answers to questions that are clearly asked about a code are coded according to the corresponding code, even if this code is not explicitly mentioned in the answer.

<b>Code Repertoire</b>	
<u>0 : Irrelevant</u>	
000 : Irrelevant	All segment of text not related to the crisis under study or questions from journalists
<b>General Themes</b>	
<u>1 : Democracy</u>	
101 : Democracy	<p>Any mention of elections or democracy in a country, or reform toward elections at the most general level.</p> <p>Keywords: electoral reform, fair elections, democratic values, democratic development, greater openness, dialogue, inclusive process/functioning, representative government, broad-based government</p>
102 : Self-determination	<p>Any mention to give to a people the right to choose its government, or give a voice or participation in the way it is ruled. Any desire to respect the will of a people or its aspirations</p> <p>Keywords: It's up to X people, aspirations/will of the People, self-government, participation, right to choose, give a voice to X people, have a say in their government, respond to the political desires/wishes</p>
103 : Freedom & Human rights	<p>Any mention of political freedoms or fundamental human rights.</p> <p>Keywords: political freedom, freedom/right to assembly/speech/peacefully assemble/expression, universal human rights, fundamental rights, protect the rights, the right of the people to, free societies, liberty</p>
104 : Specific Rights	<p>Any mention of the rights of a specific group such as women, LGBT, or religious and ethnic groups. Any mention of “minority rights” in general.</p> <p>Keywords: minority rights, religious rights, women rights</p>

105 : Open Media	<p>Any mention of the freedom of the press, of the necessity of open media without censorship, demands of not blocking access to communications. Any mention of acts committed against journalists.</p> <p>Keywords: attacks on journalists/reporters, block communications, news media censorship, social media, freedom of press</p>
106 : International Law	<p>Any mention of international law or rights, does not include the United Nations Resolutions.</p> <p>Keywords: international law/norms/obligations, International criminal court, legal basis, Treaty</p>
<u>2 : Relations</u>	
201 : Multilateralism	<p>Any mention of cooperation with more than two countries, inside international organizations or not, or of demands addressed to many actors.</p> <p>Keywords: EU, NATO, UN, G8, P5, Secretary General, international community, like-minded partners, cooperation/collaboration with our allies, consensus, coalition, talking to other countries, with others, talking to all parties, urge all parties, Kofi Annan</p>
202 : Unilateralism	<p>Any mention of the will to act alone, independently of other countries</p> <p>Keywords: unilaterally if necessary, alone if we must, act on our own</p>
203 : Partnership	<p>Any mention of a special relationship or partnership with another country or people. Any mention of a discussion or meeting with another country or its leaders. Mention of the need for bilateral talks between two parties. Coded in multilateralism if there are more than two states involved.</p> <p>Keywords: special relationship, always been close to X country, partner with, committed to working with, friends with, solidarity with, talking with X country, we are in touch/contact with, had a meeting with X leader, a common position with X country</p>

204 : UN Resolutions	<p>Any mention of a UN Resolution.</p> <p>Keywords: security council resolution, UN resolution, implement resolution</p>
205 : NATO	<p>Any mention of NATO or NATO-related actors or organisations.</p> <p>Keywords: NATO, NAC, NRC, transatlantic alliance</p>
206 : EU	<p>Any mention of the European Union or its institutions and representatives.</p> <p>Keywords: EU/UE, European Union, European Council, Javier Solana, European High Representative, group of 27/25, European Commission</p>
207: OSCE	<p>Any mention of the OSCE or CSCE.</p>
<u>3 : Economy</u>	
301 : Economy	<p>Any mention of elements about the economy of a country or the international economic system. Any mention of the financial situation.</p> <p>Keywords: economic reforms, open economy, financial stability/security, financing, open to business, banking reforms, open markets, banking sector, economic opportunities, WTO</p>
302 : Specific Resources	<p>Any mention of specific resources or concepts referring to these resources, like energy security.</p> <p>Keywords: gas, oil, pipeline, energy security, energy independence</p>

<u>4 : Condemnation</u>	
401 : Condemn	<p>Any explicit condemnation of a leader, a group or of some actions and behavior.</p> <p>Keywords: unacceptable behavior, we strongly condemn, bloodthirsty dictator, reckless regime, outrageous abuse, tyranny, appalling, grave crimes, against his own people, iron fist, violation, intimidating, disproportionate force, outlaw, nasty things, irresponsible behavior, cold-blooded killers, hateful ideology, fanatics, carnage, slaughter of the innocents, wrong, hideous, oppressive, indignation, threat, enemy.</p>
402 : Accountability	<p>Any mention that a government or the people close to it must be held accountable, be responsible or imputable for their actions.</p> <p>Keywords: be held accountable, be criminally responsible for, will face justice for, cannot act with impunity, carry serious consequences, be referred to the ICC</p>
403 : Sanctions	<p>Any mention of the will to impose or the announcement of the imposition of sanctions</p> <p>Keywords: sanctions, arms embargo, assets freeze, blocus</p>
<u>5 : Approbation</u>	
501 : Legitimacy	<p>Explicit recognition of a group or a government, or of the legitimacy of its actions, needs or interests, or enunciation of the conditions necessary for recognition. Includes declarations of support for a specific people or government.</p> <p>Keywords: conditions, we recognize the legitimacy of, the legitimate grievances, address the legitimate needs and interests, legitimately demanding, stand with/by the people of, support the government of.</p>

502 : Assistance	<p>Any mention of help whether it is moral or humanitarian help. Any mention of the humanitarian situation in a country or the need to protect the civilians.</p> <p>Keywords: humanitarian aid, assistance to those in need, protect civilians, medical needs, donating to charitable organizations, assistance, provide help, accompany the people of</p>
<u>6 : Security</u>	
601 : Intervention	<p>Any mention of the will or the decision to intervene militarily in another state. Any mention of the situation of occupation or ongoing intervention. Discussion about using a “military option”.</p> <p>Keywords: intervention, must intervene, take military actions, deployment, to get a force in X country</p>
602 : Terrorism	<p>Any mention of the problem of terrorism.</p> <p>Keywords: terrorists organizations/groups, terrorism, Al-Qaeda</p>
<u>7 : Sovereignty</u>	
701 : Non-interference	<p>Any mention of the principle of non-interference or will not to interfere with the internal affairs of another country.</p> <p>Keywords: non-interference, do not interfere in another country, free of foreign interference, without invading, attack on a country’s sovereignty, occupation of another country</p>
702 : Territorial integrity	<p>Any mention of secession, secessionist groups, or preserving the unity and territorial integrity of a country.</p> <p>Keywords : territorial integrity, separatists, secessionism</p>

703 : Regime change	<p>Any declaration that a leader must leave his/her position of authority, or that a regime cannot remain in place. Any mention of a change in government or leaders, such as the fact that a leader has fled a country or resigned.</p> <p>Keywords : Must go, must leave, must vacate his position of authority, regime change, the government would basculate</p>
<b>8: Crisis Specific</b>	
801 Must Withdraw	Any mention that a country must withdraw its troops from the territory of another country or withdraw them from a border.
802 Air Strikes	Any mention of air strikes, bombardments.
803 Radicalism	Any mention of sectarianism, radicalism, extremism, radical islam, islamists, jihad, jihadis, fundamentalism.
804 Kurd question	<p>Any mention of the Kurds as a group, or of their actions, of the region controlled by Kurds in Iraq.</p> <p>Keywords: Kurds, Barzani</p>
<b>Tracking Explanations</b>	
<u>90: Leadership</u>	
900: Leadership claims	Any mention of being the leader or exerting leadership, or of attributing a leadership role to other actors.
<u>91: Liberal explanation</u>	
911: General interest	Any mention of public opinion or the general opinion or interest of the citizens, constituency or people of a decision maker's own country. Includes mention of protests or wide movements of the people.

912 : Specific interests	Any mention of the importance or positions of interest groups, lobbies, or specific constituencies.
913: Bargaining	Any mention of bargaining with allied policymakers, any mention of side-payments or links to another issue. This does not include threats toward other countries like Russia.
<u>92 : Intensity of emotions and metaphors</u>	
921: Emotional drive	Any mention of a specific emotion or feeling by a decision maker regarding the situation. Includes expression of shock.  Keywords : anger, pride, shock, disturbing, deeply moving, fear
922: Historical metaphors	Any analogy or metaphor referring to a past event in history.
923: Intense metaphors	Any metaphor comparing the situation to death, sex, extreme violence, or disease. The use of intense language.  Keywords : brazen act, huge risks, tyranny, suffer, severe, worst
<u>93 : Persuasion</u>	
931: Consistency	Any expression of the will to remain consistent with past behavior or community norms, ideals or values. Includes pressures on others to change to be like 'us'. Directly expressing the will to be consistent with others' behavior is not included and goes in the next code Social Proof.
932: Scarcity	Any mention of being short of on time, of wanting to be on the right side of history or of the necessity to move fast. Any sense of urgency or of a 'special' moment or window of opportunity.
933: Expertise	Any mention of the special skills, competence, or knowledge of a decision maker or state regarding an issue.



## Annex D – List of Interviews

All the interviews were realized by phone or through Skype. Because of the small number of interviewees and the worries that they expressed, I have decided to make sure that they all remain anonymous. Interviews were conducted in 2018.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Date</b>
NATO official	February 22
French official – Ministry of Foreign Affairs	March 1
EU official	May 11
American Official – Department of State	May 22
French official – Élysée	May 30