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Editorial Note

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Almost exactly twenty years ago, the first issue of *IAPSS Politikon* saw the light of the day. It was introduced by an Editorial note with the following words: 'Politikon, first of many issues. Politikon, first of many years. Politikon, first step of a long, long way that will become a tradition in short time. Politikon, the first edition of the first international political science students' journal' (Sanguinetti 2001, 2). Twenty years later, with dozens of collaborators and hundreds of manuscript authors and reviewers, and shortly before the publication of the journal's fiftieth issue, this prediction has been validated by history. The journal's journey has certainly not been straightforward, and, as any project that grows over time, it has undergone several transformations towards professionalisation of the editorial and peer review process and, more recently, towards embracing the model of a 'junior journal' instead of a 'student journal' that is not restricted to publishing the works of students and junior scholars and, indeed, pursues quality standards comparable to senior journals in the discipline.[1] Furthermore, while *IAPSS Politikon* remains unique in its model of organisation (not based at a particular university with global editorial board membership),[2] students and junior scholars have become increasingly involved in the academic publishing process, as evidenced by new journals managed by student editorial boards.

IAPSS Politikon has maintained its unique focus on welcoming submissions from students and scholars of all levels and subject them to an equal assessment process. The academic 'rank' of the scholar has no impact on the peer review process, to which all sections of the journal (except the Editorial Notes) are subjected (with book reviews receiving at least an editorial review, research notes and review essays at least one, and articles at least two external reviews). In the twelve-month period ranging from June 2020 to May 2021, 69 manuscripts were evaluated by the Editorial Board, out of which 43 (62 %) were desk-rejected. While this represents an increase compared to the 2019-2020 period, all desk-rejected manuscripts receive a substantive feedback that in most cases enables the authors to submit a new version of the manuscript, should they decide to do so. An encouraging trend may be observed in relation to the manuscripts that are subject to external peer review (some of which proceed to this stage when being submitted anew after an earlier desk-rejection): of

[1] An American Political Science Association webpage continues to list *IAPSS Politikon* among 'graduate and undergraduate student journals.' As it is clear from the journal's current profile, this is no longer an accurate categorisation for *IAPSS Politikon,* if it ever was.

[2] This model is shared with *Encuentro Latinoamericano,* the IAPSS journal focused on Latin American politics, that specializes in multilingual publishing (English, Spanish, Portuguese).

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the 26 such manuscripts, eleven were accepted and only eight rejected (the remaining ones were withdrawn by the authors). This means that manuscripts proceeding to external peer review are of standards strong enough to have high prospects for publication, should the authors decide (and be in circumstances allowing) to perform a revision.[3] Combined with the journal's format-free submission process, which requires the authors to reformat the manuscript into the journal's house style only when they are submitting a revised version after external review, this means that undesirable instances of authors investing extensive effort into revising their manuscript and then getting rejected after a later round of peer review are rare. In fact, most manuscripts rejected at this stage were due to the authors failing to demonstrate that they have engaged and given due consideration to reviewers' comments; frequently, such authors submitted very brief and superficial review responses. Although a few instances when, despite the authors' clear motivation and the advice from the Editorial Board, a manuscript did not meet the quality standards required for publication have regrettably occurred, they are rare and the extensive interaction with the Editorial Board still holds high prospects for the authors to benefit from the experience in the long term. The present trends illustrate the success of *IAPSS Politikon* to combine the key priorities of academic excellence with authors' empowerment through a responsive feedback system (if sometimes prolonged, due to the high number of mansucripts being processed).[4]

The *IAPSS Politikon* Best Article Award, now in its third year, is one of the initiatives aimed at fostering academic excellence in the content submitted to and published in the journal, as well as at recognising the talent and qualities in the contributions of the journal. All original articles published in a given year are eligible and are read by an Award Committee composed of senior and junior scholars. To further increase the visibility of the Award and to acknowledge the significance of senior scholars' mentoring in the professional growth and development of junior scholars, the Award is given each year in the honor of a senior scholar. In 2021, the Honorary Chair of the Award Committee was Professor Maria Herminia Tavares de Almeida (University of São Paulo and Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning

[3] A guarantee of publication already after the first round of external peer review (with or without minor revisions) is very rare in *IAPSS Politikon,* due to the combination of the external reviewers rarely recommending it and the Editorial Board wishing to encourage the authors to improve their manuscripts, even if their initial version is already of high quality. Illustratively, articles that received the *IAPSS Politikon* Best Article Award were often among those undergoing multiple rounds of revision as a result of external peer reviews and editorial reviews.

[4] More work remains to be done on achieving a similarly empowering effect towards reviewers for the journal, many of them being also junior scholars. However, two steps have already been taken in this direction: Firstly, the possibility for reviewers to receive anonymized reviews of the other reviewers for the given manuscript, after the completion of a particular review process, was introduced. Thus, reviewers may compare their review with those of fellow scholars. Secondly, the Best Reviewer Prize aims to recognize some of the most dedicated and thorough reviewers for the journal.

(CEBRAP)) for her academic contribution to the fields of public opinion, political culture and political institutions, but also to the significant support provided to students and junior scholars through the institutional positions she has held at various academic institutions.

The Committee was furthermore composed of Senior Members Professor Christopher Isike (University of Pretoria; Vice President, International Political Science Association and Editor-in-Chief of *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*) and Dr Theresa Reidy (University College Cork; Editor of *International Political Science Review*), and of Junior Member Mr Andrew Devine (Tulane University, Editor of *IAPSS Politikon*). The Committee presents the results of their assessment as follows.

"While last year's articles demonstrated high quality, there is one article in particular that stood out to the committee: 'Rising Ottoman Nostalgia in Turkish Popular Culture: An Analysis of Turkey's Europeanization Process and Ottoman-Themed Soap Operas' by Ceren Çetinkaya (Vol. 46). The committee agreed that Çetinkaya's article deserved this year's Politikon Best Article Award for its innovative and novel approach to understanding national identity and discourse in Turkey. Drawing on Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, Çetinkaya's article adds a new perspective to understand shifting political discourse through the unique lens of soap operas. An honorable mention goes to 'Spatial Realignment of German Voters and Germany's Regional Cleavage: The Case of the Green Party in the 2019 Elections' by Ilia Viatkin (Vol. 45). This quantitative piece used data from the German General Social Survey to provide explanations for shifts in voter support for the Green Party based on an East-West cleavage. The article demonstrated methodological rigor to unpack the recently emerging puzzle of voter shifts."

The Editorial Board congratulates the authors of the recognised manuscripts and extends its gratitude to the work of the committee members which gave due consideration to each of the twelve eligible manuscripts published in Volume 44 to 47.

The contributions in this volume, as usual, span several regions and political contexts and are based in several subfields of Political Science, with disciplinary contributions prevailing over interdisciplinary ones. The issue opens with a novel argument for improvements in political representation via an analysis of media speeches on gender parity in Canada. Carol-Ann Rouillard and Mireille Lalancette contribute also to studies on the effects of mediatization on political preferences and decision making, offering a research design that may be used in future studies on different jurisdictions.

The article by Esther Ng K. H. prompts readers to think about the challenging question of possibilities of change in International Relations. It argues that a better

understanding of state decisions to retain its existing practices rather than adopt new ones can be gained via ontological security. This constructivist account builds on the significance of the states' 'sense of Self' in determining their decisions and invites further studies that would empirically examine the explanatory potential of this theoretical framework.

The European Union's subsidiarity principle priotitises decision making by national parliaments over the European Parliament if diversification and localisation are beneficial to the outcomes of the process. The principles are the subject Oxana Pimenova's article that asks whether it can be conducive to consensus-building in the EU multi-level polity. Her answer is derived from a variant of deliberation theory and an examination of documents that arose from the interaction between the EU institutions and national parliaments during the subsidiarity control mechanism. Her article argues that, if recognising the validity of deliberation theory, the subsidiarity principle indeed provides an opportunity for enhanced dialogue and understanding, however, there is room for improvement in its implementation.

The research note by Fernando Ursine Braga Silva offers and provides preliminary empirical support for a new explanation for the split of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), with the aim to contribute to the discussions of the development of the Japanese party system more generally. The core of his claim emphasies that a combination of factors, including several opposition realignments and the structure of the electoral system, placed the DPJ into an unfavourable position. In turn, based on the status quo at least, the split favours the hegemony of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

Last but not least, Paul Fricker presents an up-to-date picture of the cooperative as well as conflictual patterns of interaction between China and the US in Djibouti. The US base on this territory, the author argues, is key to US counterterrorism operations in the region, but has been impeded by Chinese actions following their interests in the region. In the background of the tensions are broader considerations of the development of the Belt and Road Initiative as well as relationships with third countries such as India. Mapping a range of sources, Fricker notes that global counterterrorism efforts might suffer the consequences of this new normal.

There are many avenues left for the journal's development. Today, *IAPSS Politikon* has become a hub for students and junior scholars not only within the IAPSS community, that contributes to the public debate on junior scholarly publishing via its webinar series and research initiatives. The journal embraces inclusiveness, at all levels and forms of involvement, though more internal research is needed to gain an even more thorough picture

on the journal's representativeness and capacity to be welcoming towards underprivileged or disadvantaged members of the student and junior scholarly community.

The editorial team remains the driving force behind the journal's sustainability and progress, and its members contribute substantially not only to the editorial process, but also to the journal's strategic development, promotion and dissemination. As of June 2021, the journal's Editorial Board has six members, and is supported by ten Editorial Assistants. Compared to the previous issue, there are three changes in their composition. Dr. Ana Figueroa has concluded her engagement as Senior Editor and remains an external collaborator for the journal, working on the historically first analysis of *IAPSS Politikon's* contributions to the academic careers of its authors and collaborators. Dr. Figueroa deserves special recognition for her contributions over the past five years, that have been essential for the timely and quality completion of the assessment of over thirty manuscripts as well as for advancing the journal's profile on several fronts. We also thank Caroline Dufour, former Editorial Assistant, for her support and wish them both success in further endeavours.

As of August 2021, two more changes will come into effect, alongside the relocation of IAPSS as an organisation from the Netherlands to Canada. Firstly, Dana Rice will also conclude her engagement in the Editorial Board. As with Ana Figueroa, she has contributed substantially to the regular editorial process of the journal, having been in charge of fifteen manuscripts and developing several other porfolios, including the journal's webinar project and sponsorship prospectus. Secondly, but no less importantly, the Editorial Board will be led by the incoming Co-Editors-in-Chief, Dr. Rafael Plancarte Escobar and Jesslene Lee. As long-term Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Board member respectively, they will continue the strategic development and management of the journal in its 21st year of existence, starting with the 50th anniversary issue to be published later this year.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all current and former members of the editorial team, the *IAPSS Politikon* International Advisory Committee, the IAPSS Executive Committee and the IAPSS Boards as well as to authors and reviewers who contributed to the journal over the past five years of my involvement, as Head of the Academic Department and as Editor-in-Chief. Space constraints do not allow to name them all. It was a privilege to collaborate with such a knowledgeable international and interdisciplinary community of junior scholars and academics, who will be shaping social science of tomorrow and beyond.

The Editorial Board

Max Steuer, Editor-in-Chief

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Gender Parity in Cabinets: Towards the Mediatization of a Public Problem in Canada?

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Mireille Lalancette is currently a full professor in political communication at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. She has published on the construction of the mediatized image of politicians, gender, and representation and has studied the use and impact of social media by citizens, grassroots organizations, and Canadian political actors. Researcher for the Groupe de recherche en communication politique (GRCP), she authored, with Marie-Josée Drolet and Marie-Ève Caty, ABC de l'argumentation pour les professionnels de la santé ou toute autre personne qui souhaite convaincre (PUQ). She also edited What's #Trending in Canadian Politics? Understanding Transformations in Power, Media, and the Public Sphere with Vincent Raynauld and Erin Crandall (UBC Press, 2019). Her work has been published in Canadian and international research publications in French and in English. She is the principal investigator in a SSRCH project about digital media, controversies, and social acceptability. E-mail: Mireille.Lalancette@uqtr.ca.

Abstract

This article focuses on the media coverage of gender parity in cabinets in Canada and three of its provinces. It paints a portrait of the Canadian discourse on women's political representation issues and reveals the way in which the arguments put forward focus both on the ideal of parity and on the rules for its implementation, gender quotas. The study is based on an argumentative analysis of the media discourse (Amossy, 2018) of ten cabinets. Our results show that media coverage is generally favorable, although counterarguments are more numerous when the novelty of parity has faded. Analysis of the results at the premium of media coverage provides a better understanding of how media coverage could influence political parties and their leaders to appoint more women to cabinet.

Keywords

Argumentative Discourse Analysis; Cabinets; Canada; Gender Parity; Political Representation; Women and Politics

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Introduction

In 2007, Jean Charest appointed Canada's first Joint Council of Ministers. The announcement was welcomed both by women's groups who welcomed this political breakthrough for women, and by his political opponents. Columnist Michel Vastel, while expressing reservations about quotas, called it a "feat" and "a first in North America that will put pressure on other governments in Canada, the federal government in particular" (2007, 14, translated by the authors).

Eight years later, Canada had its first parity cabinet at the federal level. Justin Trudeau's announcement received extensive media coverage. His phrase, "Because it's 2015!" in response to journalists who asked him to justify his choice of parity was repeated around the world (La Presse canadienne 2015).

This article focuses on the mediatization of gender parity in Canadian politics. More specifically, it aims to highlight the various argumentative strategies (Amossy 2006 and 2018) used in the media speeches published following the announcement of the appointment of cabinet ministers in Canada and some of its provinces (n=218). Three aspects are studied: 1) the reaction given to the distribution of women and men in the cabinet; 2) the different positions expressed about parity and quotas; 3) the advantages invoked to demand a greater presence of women in politics.

The research provides a portrait of the Canadian discourse on women's political representation through a ten-year period and shows how arguments for and against quotas are intertwined with the more general argument for women's political representation. Through the lens of mediatization (Hepp et al. 2015; Strömbäck and Van Aelst 2013), the study documents the role played by the media in influencing prime ministers to nominate more women in the cabinet (Annesley et al. 2019).

Women and politics

Since 1995, the United Nations has recognized the importance of addressing women's political underrepresentation by adopting measures to promote greater participation of women in power and decision-making structures around the world (Tremblay 2005). Actions taken can range from incentives for women to enter politics, to those offering support for elected women, to legislative quotas (Krook and Norris 2014).

Women in Canadian politics

In Canada, women are still in a minority position: the number of women elected to office in Canada is just over 29 % (Montpetit 2020) and there are 34.5% women in municipal politics, of which only 19.4% are women mayors in Canada (Sullivan 2019). Moreover, the

issue of women's presence is not the subject of any law or policy (Tremblay 2015), but rather of initiatives by the parties or their leaders. In fact, few parties have adopted measures aimed at implementing changes to improve women's political representation.

Public support for quotas is mixed. Only a minority of Canadians support measures requiring political parties to run a minimum number of women candidates in federal elections (Everitt and Gidengil 2013) and 45% of Canadians believe that parity should be a goal when composing Cabinet, but not a priority (Angus Reid Institute 2018).

Gender parity and gender quotas

Two concepts are used in this article regarding the under-representation of women in politics: gender parity and gender quotas. While gender quotas refer to binding measures adopted to ensure a critical mass of women in decision-making bodies (Tremblay 2005), gender parity, a concept that originated in France, refers to the ideal of equality resulting from a more balanced political representation between women and men. It refers both to the measures taken to achieve it and to the effects of these measures on gender dynamics within institutions and society (Sénac-Slawinski 2009).

Joni Lovenduski (2005) classifies the different arguments for increased political representation of women into three categories: 1) the representational justice inherent in women's citizenship; 2) pragmatic electoral considerations; and 3) the different approach that women would bring into politics.

In her view, these arguments would be distinct from the arguments for and against gender quotas, since there are different ways to achieve parity. A synthesis of the main arguments for and against gender quotas has been drawn from the literature. For those in favor of quotas, they are perceived as a solution to the systemic exclusion of women from the political sphere. In a system that does not recognize or leave enough room for women's merit, quotas are seen as a means of recognizing the contribution of women's specific experiences and interests. In the long run, it is believed that they could help increasing the legitimacy of the democratic system and set an exemplarity character for collective norms and projections about women's place in the society. On the other hand, others believe that skills are independent of sex and/or gender. Thus, quotas would contravene the merit-based competition process and constitute a form of unfair favouritism towards men. Some argue that they could lead to the recruitment of incompetent women because they are women. For these reasons, women themselves wouldn't want these favouritism measures that could lead to women's skills being questioned (about quotas arguments, see Lovenduski 2005; Bacchi 2006; Krook et al. 2009; Sénac 2013; Tremblay 2005 and 2015).

Gender parity in the cabinet is a strategy to ensure better political representation of women in legislative bodies, but it does not necessarily constitute a quota. Indeed, while some prime ministers, including Justin Trudeau, have announced their intention to appoint a parity council of ministers before the election results are known, this is not the case for all the people behind the parity councils of ministers studied. In the case of Rachel Notley, in particular, it was even pointed out that her ministers were appointed because of their competence and not because of their gender (Markusoff 2015).

According to Claire Annesley and colleagues (2019), the barriers to women's appointment to cabinet and the reasons why they are appointed remain little known. They argue, however, that the appointment of more women to cabinet would contribute to putting pressure on subsequent cabinets, under the concept of a "concrete floor" that "describes the minimum proportion or number of women required for that ministerial team to be perceived as legitimate" (3).

Media coverage of gender parity and quotas

In particular, political science studies have demonstrated the key role in the adoption of quotas of stakeholder groups such as women's groups and the political community as well as international organizations (mainly in developing countries) (Krook et al. 2009; Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005).

Rainbow Murray (2012) identifies the media as important potential actors in bringing about change: "Popular mobilization in favour of women's representation would need to be brought about by a well-orchestrated campaign by the women's movement and pressure groups. Such mobilisation, if facilitated by a sympathetic press, would provide the ideal conditions in which to garner public support for quotas and place pressure on politicians to take action" (736).

The impact of the media on mobilizations in favour of a greater place for women in politics has also been put forward in the work of Virginie Julliard (2012). In France, the media coverage of the parity cause from its beginnings in 1990 until the adoption of a law has made it possible to understand the relationship between the interventions and demands of feminist and political circles, in addition to the role of citizen opinion in the evolution of the debate.

In this sense, the study of the discourse and argumentation about gender parity in cabinets in the media not only makes it possible to document the arguments used by the various groups, but also serves to apprehend how the various arguments, mobilized in context, can help guide the debate with a view to convincing the population. Knowing the possible impact of media discourse, this article aims to provide an overview of gender

equality arguments used in Canadian media. While a few studies have emphasized the important role the media can play in pressuring political parties to nominate more women (see Praud 2013; Annesley et al. 2019), little has been written about what they actually say on the issue.

Argumentative discourse

According to Ruth Amossy (2006, 37, translated by the authors), argumentation is "the verbal means that a speech authority uses to act on its speakers by trying to make them adhere to a thesis, to modify or reinforce the representations and opinions that it lends them, or simply to provoke their reflection on a given problem". Argumentative discourse analysis is part of a broader conception of argumentation that is not limited to the traditional study of arguments, but also proposes to consider the emotional dimension and the persuasive dimension as components of the argumentation (Amossy 2018; Bernard Barbeau 2015).

To operationalize this conception, Amossy proposes the notions of argumentative dimension and argumentative aim. The first, present only in a certain number of speeches, constitutes an "enterprise of persuasion supported by a conscious intention and offering strategies programmed for this purpose." (Amossy 2006, 33, translated by the authors) Arguments in this dimension are subject to prescriptive rules of construction that determine the validity of the arguments. The second, present in all texts, even those that do not have a clear project of persuasion, considers argumentation in a broader way, that is to say, as "an approach that aims to intervene in the opinion, the attitude" of people (Amossy 2018, 2, translated by the authors).

The advantage of this approach is that it makes it possible to consider alternative forms of argumentation present in so-called information texts, such as journalistic articles, which contribute to argumentation by "trying to share opinions, views, questioning, through discursive procedures that are not formal 'arguments" (Amossy 2018, 2, translated by the authors). Thus, it allows us to study a set of discursive elements that can guide conceptions of parity. In addition to focusing on arguments for or against an issue, it allows us to look at the discourse of "shared knowledge and social representations [which] therefore constitute the basis of all argumentation" (Amossy 2006, 99, translated by the authors).

Data and methodology

Regarding the data collected for this paper, the corpus is made up of texts that appeared in the written media within the first 10 days following the announcement of the appointment of the Council of Ministers. Of the 10 targeted councils of ministers, seven are

parity or in the "parity zone"[1] cabinets (Jean Charest, Parti Libéral, Quebec, 2007 and 2008; Rachel Notley, New Democratic Party, Alberta, 2015; Justin Trudeau, Parti Libéral, Canada, 2015 and 2019; John Horgan, New Democratic Party, British Columbia, 2017; François Legault, Coalition Avenir Québec, Quebec, 2018) and three have not reached gender parity (Pauline Marois, Parti Québécois, Quebec, 2012; Philippe Couillard, Parti Libéral, Quebec, 2014; Jason Kenney, United Conservative Party, Alberta, 2019). The documents were retrieved from *Eureka* and *Canadian Major Dailies*[2] search engines.

A total of 11 media outlets, mainly print and online newspapers, but also the radio and TV news website, were used for the collection. The three main French-language newspapers in Quebec (La Presse, Le Devoir, and Le Journal de Montréal) as well as the news site of the state-owned corporation Radio-Canada were used as a basis for the study of provincial cabinet meetings in that province and to provide a French-language perspective on the coverage of federal cabinet meetings. The national newspapers The National Post and The Globe and Mail, as well as the state-owned corporation English-language counterpart, the CBC News website, were used to collect data on federal councils of ministers and the three other councils of ministers in the English-speaking provinces. Local newspapers also completed the data set for each of these provinces: The Calgary Herald and The Edmonton Journal for the Alberta cabinets; The Vancouver Sun and The Province for British Columbia[3].

A keyword search[4] yielded a wide range of texts (more than 800) dealing with the composition of the cabinets and the various issues facing the new government. A selection was then made to retain only those texts that explicitly addressed the presence of women in cabinet or the distribution of women/men in cabinet. A total of 218 texts, mainly articles and columns (79.8%), but also letters of opinion were collected for analysis.

The number of documents collected varies for each Council of Ministers – see Graph 1. The number of documents dealing with the parity issue is much greater for Justin Trudeau's first federal cabinet in 2015 than for the second in 2019 (107, compared with 12).

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[1] The term "parity zone" [zone paritaire] is generally used to refer to a composition of 40 to 60 per cent of men and women.

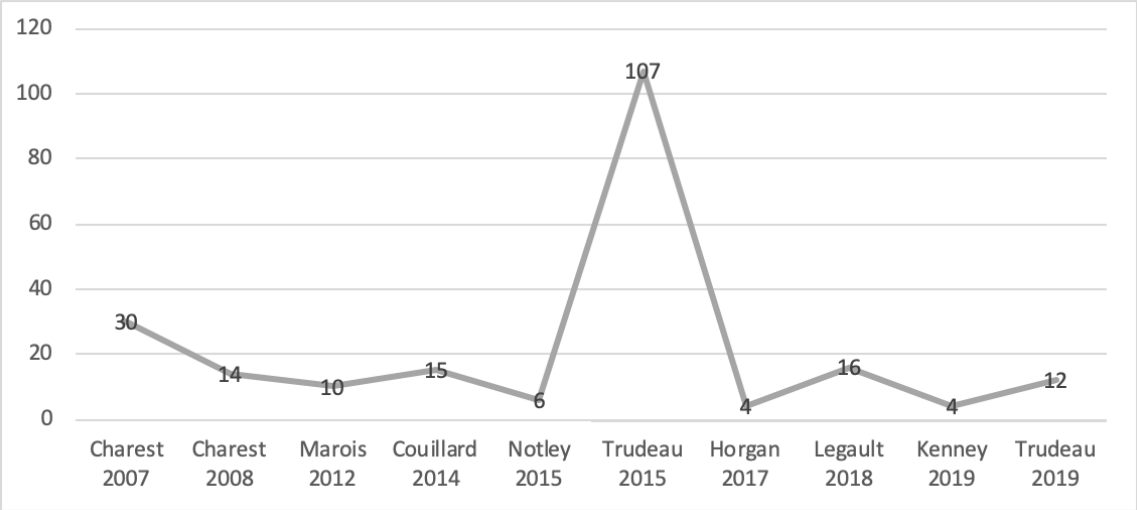
[2] The following media were used for the collection: La Presse, Le Journal de Montréal, Le Devoir and Radio-Canada Nouvelles (Quebec cabinets and French coverage of the Trudeau cabinet); The National Post, The Globe and Mail, CBC News (Notley, Trudeau, Horgan and Kenney). The Calgary Herald and The Edmonton Journal are also among the newspapers collected for the Alberta firms. The Vancouver Sun and The Province completed the British Columbia cabinet corpus.

[3] It should be noted that Le Devoir is known for its independence positioning, but that other newspapers do not necessarily present their editorial approach.

[4] In addition to the name of the head of government, the keywords employed are "cabinet" (French/English) and "et/ou conseil" (French).

With respect to provincial cabinets, interest is greater in Quebec, where the number of documents is always higher than in the English-speaking provinces, regardless of the place occupied by women in these councils of ministers. In the French-speaking province, the same trend can be observed as for the federal cabinets: interest is more pronounced for the first parity-based cabinet where almost twice as many documents deal with this aspect.

Graph 1: Time graph of the corpus.



Source: Authors.

The media discourse was analyzed using a mixed methodology, both quantitative and qualitative, following the two dimensions of discourse mentioned above. As such, it should be noted that disparities in the number of documents collected from one cabinet to another make it more difficult to conduct a quantitative comparison between all cases. This aspect is the subject of an overall analysis, with the exception of the Charest 2007 and Trudeau 2015 cases, for which the higher number of documents allows for more nuanced comparisons.

Argumentative dimension

For the study of the argumentative dimension, all the discourse units that contributed to qualifying the proportion of women and men appointed were collected. They were classified according to their positioning: positive, negative or neutral. The classification is based on a set of collective images from which political decisions are qualified positively or negatively. Thus, the mention of "first" or of having kept a "promise" were considered to have a positive connotation. Conversely, associations with negative traits, such as rigidity, or a facade, were seen as units with a negative tone. Neutral units, such as "remains to be seen if..." or "the subject is far from new" were coded as neutral. The content of the message conveyed in these units was then analyzed qualitatively.

Argumentative aim

The study of the argumentative aim is based on the analysis of the argumentative sequence, the basic unit of argumentative analysis according to Marianne Doury (2016). It consists of "(at least) an argumentative statement and (at least) a concluding statement, the passage from one to the other being based on a *law of passage*" (29, translated by the authors). For instance, the two statements "The adoption of parity is a desirable thing" and "Equality is an important value in our society" (29, translated by the authors) acquire their argumentative function only if they are placed in relation: "The adoption of parity is a desirable thing because equality is an important value in our society."

The argumentative sequences were first analysed quantitatively, according to the position with regard to parity and quotas they helped to defend. The positions defended could be of four types: 1) a position in favour of parity as embodied in the context of parity and its implementation measures in general; 2) a nuanced favourable position, i.e. a position in favour of parity in general, but not entirely satisfied with the parity proposed in the cabinet; 3) a position against parity and its implementation measures in general or against parity implemented in one of the three cases studied without proposing alternative measures or solutions; 4) a position against parity in certain forms that proposes solutions or alternative measures.

These categories, which are mutually exclusive, were established in an inductive way – through an iterative process consisting of a series of back-and-forth movements between the data and the analysis categories (Allard-Poesi 2003) before being used to code all the argumentative sequences identified. A qualitative analysis of the ideas and arguments used to justify each position was then carried out.

Results and analysis: a generally favourable coverage

The results show that the media coverage is not neutral and objective with regard to the parity issue. Both the study of the argumentative dimension and the study of the argumentative purpose of the speeches reveal a tendency to portray the issue favourably.

The argumentative dimension: between innovative premiere and rigidity

The analysis of the argumentative dimension present in the speeches gives an account of discursive representations that contribute to orienting the audience's perception of gender parity. The following table shows the distribution of discursive units with argumentative dimensions according to the positioning adopted.

Table 1: Positioning of discursive units with argumentative dimensions (%)

Cabinet	Positioning			% Total discourse units
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	
Charest (2007)	97.3	2.7	0	22.8 (75)
Trudeau (2015)	81.0	17.6	1.3	46.5 (152)
Entire corpus	80.4	14.7	5	100 (341)

Source: Authors.

Overall, the positioning is mostly positive (80.4%). It is interesting to note, however, that this proportion is higher in the case of Jean Charest's first parity cabinet (97.3%), the first parity cabinet in Canada. This novelty is put forward, in addition to being seen as a sign of a new era for women in politics: "Parity between men and women is an achievement, a first in North America, which will put pressure on other governments in Canada, the federal government in particular."[5] (Vastel 2007, 14, translated by the authors).

The announcement is particularly well received by women's groups, who are very optimistic and do not hesitate to express their emotions when they speak about the composition of the cabinet, as illustrated by the words reported by the president of the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ), Michèle Asselin: '"It's impressive!'. 'It is a page in our history that must be highlighted. Now we can't go back,' she added, emphasizing how 'happy' the FFQ is."[6] (Lévesque 2007, A3, translated by the authors)

The historical side is also reflected in the positive elements used in the texts that appeared shortly after Justin Trudeau announced the composition of his first cabinet, but it is his response, "Because it's 2015!", that attracts attention. Taken up by many, it associates parity within the cabinet with something obvious, a sign of modernity. Globe and Mail columnist Tabatha Southey even uses sarcasm to illustrate: "Gender parity in cabinet can strike at any time-well, any time that is not psychologically stuck in the 1950s - and, when something like this happens, the likelihood that it will happen again increases" (Southey 2015, F2).

[5] "La parité entre hommes et femmes est un exploit, une première en Amérique du Nord, qui mettra de la pression sur les autres gouvernements du Canada, le fédéral en particulier."

[6] [" 'C'est impressionnant!' […] 'C'est une page de notre histoire qu'il faut souligner. Maintenant, on ne peut plus reculer.', a-t-elle ajouté, soulignant à quel point la FFQ est 'heureuse'."]

Contrary to expectations expressed in the media, not all subsequent Quebec councils of ministers have been equal. This did not prevent people from criticizing the lack of parity in the cabinet of Philippe Couillard, who was criticized for having initiated the "return in force of the 'boys club' in the cabinet."[7] (Elkouri 2014, A9, translated by the authors)

The discursive units with a negative tone towards parity and quotas (14.7% of the units), for their part, revolve around two main axes: the false symbol of equality inherent in parity and the rigidity that underlies the quotas imposed by the prime ministers. One will not hesitate to speak of "cosmetic" measures[8] (Trudeau 2018, 27, translated by the authors), of "the cult of diversity"[9] (Bock-Côté 2015, 34, translated by the authors) or to congratulate Pauline Marois, who "has not, moreover, succumbed to the obsession with parity between men and women"[10] (Samson 2012, 18, translated by the authors).

They are more present in the case of Justin Trudeau's first law firm (17.6%), which is associated with a "postcard"[11] (Bock-Côté 2015, 34, translated by the authors) that relies solely on the appearance of equality. Some even go so far as to accuse the Liberal team of trying to distort the public's perception: "Mr. Trudeau and his team are masters of symbol manipulation" (Wente 2015, F9).

Thus, while the media coverage is overwhelmingly laudatory of prime ministers who choose to appoint parity councils of ministers, it also reflects a number of more severe criticisms of parity and the symbol it represents.

Argumentative focus - changes in discourse and strategies

A study of the persuasion strategies deployed through the arguments reveals a more nuanced, albeit still more favourable, trend towards a greater presence of women in the cabinet (see Table 2).

Overall, the arguments put forward are generally in favour of parity (46.5%). As is the case with statements with an argumentative dimension, the arguments are particularly favourable when Jean Charest's announcement in 2007, where 72.2% of the arguments express a favourable position.

[7] ["retour en force du 'boys club' au Conseil des ministres"]
[8] ["cosmétiques"]
[9] ["culte de la diversité"]
[10] ["n'a, par ailleurs, pas succombé à l'obsession de la parité hommes/femmes"]
[11] ["carte postale"]

Table 2: Positions expressed in the arguments (%)

Cabinet	Defended position				% Total of the arguments
	Favorable	Favorable nuanced	Unfavourable	Unfavorable nuanced	
Charest (2007)	72.2	16.7	11.1	0	14.0 (36)
Trudeau (2015)	52.0	16.4	22.4	9.2	59.1 (152)
Entire corpus	46.5	21.6	23.1	8.8	100 (273)

Source: Authors.

An initially positive and optimistic reaction

A number of arguments are used to justify the merits of equal representation in the Council of Ministers, in particular the emphasis on the values of equality inherent in parity and, in the case of the Charest cabinet, the insistence on the competence of women appointees:

> If the value of equality thus becomes inescapable, according to her, it is the sensitive positions entrusted to women that demonstrate the extent of the gesture. The return of a Deputy Prime Minister with Nathalie Normandeau; Monique Jérôme-Forget at Finance and Treasury; Michelle Courchesne at Education and Family; Line Beauchamp at Environment, are a few examples.[12] (Beauchemin 2007, A5, translated by the authors)

The arguments in favour demonstrate at the outset a concern about the division of power between women and men, since women have traditionally been camped in ministerial roles that gave them less power (Trimble et al. 2013). The justifications in favour of a greater presence of women in politics also do not escape some form of essentialization on the specific contribution of women in politics, as illustrated by the comments of columnist Lise Payette in Le Journal de Montréal, who used her experience in politics to justify her remarks:

> He [Jean Charest] won't say it, but he knows that women work more and better than men in politics. I can say this because I have been able to see men botching issues

[12] [Si la valeur d'égalité devient ainsi incontournable, selon elle, ce sont les postes névralgiques qui sont confiés aux femmes qui démontrent l'ampleur du geste. Retour d'une vice-première ministre avec Nathalie Normandeau; Monique Jérôme-Forget aux Finances et au Trésor; Michelle Courchesne à l'Éducation et à la Famille; Line Beauchamp à l'Environnement, en sont quelques exemples.]

> very often by inflating their egos in the same proportions. Women are more demanding of themselves.[13] (Payette 2007, 29, translated by the authors)

The difficulty of articulating the benefits of a greater presence of women without entering into comparisons between their work methods and those of men is not unique to Quebec. A study of the discourse calling for parity in France has revealed the difficulties of demanding a greater presence of women in politics without casting the role of women politicians (and politicians in general, for that matter) in an essentialist and heterocentric perspective (Scott 2005).

The concern that equality in numbers or "places" must also be accompanied by equality in "power" and thus be based on a sharing of responsibilities (Sénac 2013) persists in the other councils of ministers. However, the prevailing personalization by emphasizing the important positions entrusted to women and the competence of women to take up such positions will give way to more general arguments refuting the idea that competence and quotas do not go hand in hand.

Changes in argumentative strategies

There has been a significant change in the media coverage of subsequent firms. As the proportion of counterarguments increases, the argumentative strategies deployed by those taking a favourable or nuanced favourable position also change, giving way to more rational argumentation. Arguments of authority, focusing on the systemic barriers experienced by women who wish to enter politics or on solutions that would ensure better political representation of women in all political spheres, not only in cabinet, are among the argumentative strategies deployed.

The following excerpt illustrates a nuanced favourable position in which one seeks to present positively the sustainable gender parity measure that one wishes to see achieved:

> What does parity consist of? It is about ensuring that men and women are properly represented in decision-making bodies. To achieve this, we must first recognize that we have a problem of systemic discrimination in politics and take major steps to address it.[14] (Elkouri 2018, online, translated by the authors)

[13] [Il [Jean Charest] ne le dira pas, mais il sait bien que les femmes travaillent plus et mieux que les hommes en politique. Moi je peux le dire parce que j'ai été à même de voir des hommes bâcler des dossiers très souvent en s'enflant l'ego dans les mêmes proportions. Les femmes sont plus exigeantes avec elles-mêmes.]

[14] [En quoi consiste donc la parité? Il s'agit de s'assurer au sein d'une instance décisionnelle que les hommes et les femmes soient représentés correctement. Pour y arriver, il faut d'abord reconnaître que nous avons un problème de discrimination systémique en politique et prendre les grands moyens pour s'y attaquer.]

This kind of strategy is consistent with the findings of research by Drude Dahlerup and Lenita Freidenvall (2005), who have shown that the implementation of quotas is not enough to increase the number of women in parliaments, in addition to insisting on the importance of accompanying the legislation surrounding quotas with sanctions and rules in the event of non-compliance, so that quotas are not just a symbolic gesture.

The organization of the "discourse against"

Arguments against parity, less present in the speeches on the first Charest firm (11.1%), will more than triple in the coverage of subsequent firms (42.8% for the average of the nine other firms). The appointment of a non-parity cabinet by Quebec's first woman premier was used as a pretext to address the idea that women appointed to a cabinet with quotas would be appointed only out of favouritism:

> At least we know that the women who will find themselves around the ministerial table, far from being women-potato or women-alibi, have been chosen for their competence and their record of service. It took a woman to refuse to sacrifice merit to the empty concept of parity, a concept that only serves to throw smoke and mirrors in the eyes of the gogos.[15] (Gagnon 2012, A35, translated by the authors)

The counterargument of jurisdiction is a frequently used argument. On the one hand, resistance to quotas is justified because of the importance of politics in the lives of Canadians: "When a thing really matters to us, like, say, a hockey team, we tend to resist the imposition of quotas, insisting on merit as the sole criterion" (Coyne 2015, B5). On the other hand, the equality argument raised by pro-equality advocates is mobilized in favour of men:

> By definition, when you decide in advance, and arbitrarily, that you need a certain proportion of men and a certain proportion of women in cabinet, you make a conscious decision to leave out a number of qualified candidates because they are of the wrong sex. It is a form of reverse sexism.[16] (Bock-Côté 2015, 34, translated by the authors)

This type of argument against quotas is particularly mobilized in the case of the Trudeau cabinet (2015), which is blamed for having itself initiated the wave of criticism about competence: "It's just a shame that Trudeau diminished it by predetermining the outcome

[15] [Au moins, on sait que celles qui se retrouveront autour de la table ministérielle, loin d'être des femmes-potiches ou des femmes-alibis, ont été choisies pour leur compétence et leurs états de service. Il fallait une femme pour refuser de sacrifier le mérite au concept vide de la parité, un concept qui ne sert qu'à jeter de la poudre aux yeux des gogos.]

[16] [Par définition, quand on décide à l'avance, et de manière arbitraire qu'il faut telle proportion d'hommes et telle proportion de femmes au cabinet on décide consciemment de laisser de côté plusieurs candidats compétents parce qu'ils ont le mauvais sexe. C'est une forme de sexisme inversé.]

rather than portraying it as the natural result of the talented people available to him in his abundant caucus" (Sutcliffe 2015, A12).

The expression of unfavourable positions is thus mainly based on the notion of quotas. In a few cases, however, such argumentative sequences raise questions about the criteria on the basis of which elected persons can do a better job of political representation.

Adopting nuanced positions

Such comments are also made by individuals who defend a nuanced unfavourable position, but who show a certain sensitivity to the differentiated experience of women. The following quote from Philippe Couillard's firm illustrates this phenomenon: "True, we do not name women just because they are ... women. But between incompetent men and unknown women, we had proof again yesterday that it is the former who win more often than the latter."[17] (Marissal 2014, A5, translated by the authors)

The expression of this position does not necessarily mean that those proposing it are against an increased presence of women in politics. In the following excerpt, the author questions the effects of more women in the political sphere on the achievement of greater equality for all women:

> If it were axiomatic that gender informs policy, then former prime minister Christy Clark would likely have brought in universal childcare and enhanced spending on education. She opposed both. What will likely prove more important for women than Horgan's gender-balanced cabinet is his promise that every ministry's spending will be put through a gender lens. (Bramham 2017, A1)

This echoes the concept of substantive representation (Pitkin 1967), which is measured by the achievements of elected officials with respect to certain groups, by putting forward policies or considering their reality in decision-making, rather than their gender or sex. In summary, the study of the argumentative footage also reveals a generally positive media coverage of parity in the councils of ministers, but the debate is changing over the period studied.

Discussion and conclusion

An analysis of media coverage of the cabinets provides a better understanding of the argumentative strategies mobilized on the subject of parity in Canada over the past decade or so. Broader questions are raised in speeches on the composition of the councils of

[17] ["Vrai, on ne nomme pas des femmes juste parce qu'elles sont… des femmes. Mais entre des incompétents hommes et des inconnues femmes, on a eu encore une fois la preuve hier que ce sont les premiers qui l'emportent le plus souvent."]

ministers, the context in which the announcement was made by the heads of state partly influences the arguments raised and these change over time.

Cabinets and political representation

Media speeches following the announcement of ministerial councils express both positions on the choice of prime ministers and their choice of cabinet appointees and the proportion of men and women in her cabinet, and positions on broader issues such as gender quotas in politics, political under-representation, and the characteristics of good political representation. On the one hand, the number of women appointed to the cabinet is used as a pretext for presenting more sustainable measures. On the other hand, the representation structures and the impact of the individual characteristics of elected persons on the decisions that are taken are questioned.

The results thus reveal a tangle of frequently invoked arguments in favour of better political representation of women (Lovenduski 2005), as well as different positions on quotas (e.g. Bacchi 2006 and Tremblay 2015). They also reflect a dilemma between different forms of political representation and the criteria for adequate political representation, as raised by Hannah F. Pitkin (1967). While some studies have argued that it is better to elect feminist men than nonfeminist women (Tremblay 2005), the general position in favour of parity is more in favour of descriptive representation as a way of increasing the chances of representing the interests of more women.

A matter of political context

However, the role of the context in which each cabinet is appointed on the debates and positions adopted should be stressed. The appointment of Jean Charest's cabinet in 2007 appears to be a victory resulting from several years of feminist mobilization to ensure that women can invest public space – and not specifically parity – and thus augurs new gains for women in the near future. The questioning of women appointees following the announcement of the first Trudeau cabinet is not unique to Canada. However, the personalization of Justin Trudeau, both by the media and by his team through social media – a phenomenon that began long before his election (Lalancette and Raynauld 2017) – and the high-profile announcement may have helped fuel criticism of a cosmetic ad.

In their study on the reasons for a greater female presence in the high places of political power, Stockemer and Sundström (2018) attribute an important influence to the willingness of party leaders to mark a change from their predecessors. Three of the four prime ministers who have appointed gender equal ministerial councils were in their first term (Rachel Notley and Justin Trudeau in 2015, John Horgan in 2017). In 2007, Jean Charest was

not in his first term, but was in a more difficult position following the election of a minority government. Parity and the appointment of women to key positions was therefore not intended to mark a change from his predecessor, but from his previous administration. Thus, the media coverage and the generally more favorable argumentation to first-time gender parity cabinets could contribute to giving a more positive image to the government and, more specifically, to the prime minister in charge of the composition of his cabinet.

The study of non-parity councils of ministers, particularly that of Philippe Couillard, illustrated the coexistence of opposition to quotas and a certain understanding of the systemic issues that hinder women's entry into the political sphere. The counter discourse that is more present once the novelty effect has faded can be associated with a form of backlash (Mansbridge and Shames 2012) against women's greater access to the sphere of political power. Indeed, the counterarguments put forward claimed that such measures would run counter to appointment principles based solely on merit and competence. Yet appointments to the cabinet, a place of symbolic representation, are largely based on criteria of symbolic representation of social groups, helping to demonstrate the importance accorded to them by party leaders (Annesley et al. 2019; De Winter 1991).

Mediatization and its influence on political decisions

While Claire Annesley et al. (2019) assert that the media are among the actors who can influence party leaders to appoint joint cabinets, little attention had been paid to studying the media treatment of this issue when appointing cabinet ministers. The study of the arguments deployed provides a deeper understanding that goes beyond previous findings on the number of women or the novelty of the first gender equal cabinets (Stockemer and Sundström 2018).

According the mediatization theory (Hepp et al. 2015; Strömbäck and Van Aelst 2013), the media could lead to a certain adaptation of the political environment to the media logic. First, the greater difference in interest in the first joint cabinets of Jean Charest and Justin Trudeau is part of a media logic that influences the coverage of political decisions. Indeed, beyond the context specific to the parity issue, media logic (Altheide and Snow 1979) could explain the significant media coverage of the first parity firms of Jean Charest and Justin Trudeau and the subsequent lesser interest in this notion, particularly for the firms of Jean Charest in 2008, François Legault in 2018, and Justin Trudeau in 2019. The "newsworthiness" is the criterion by which what is considered newsworthy and worthy of attention and interest (Lilleker 2006). A trend toward greater media coverage can also be observed among politicians who are out of the norm, as evidenced by various works on the

mediatization of politicians (Lalancette and Tremblay 2019) or when the socio-political context lends itself to greater interest in certain groups (e.g., women, racialized people) (Lucas 2017).

Secondly, the study showed that media interest goes beyond the mention of the number of women and that it also includes and is based on a generally favourable argument. Knowing the important role of the media as mediators of political issues among the population (Strömbäck and Van Aelst 2013), media coverage can influence party leaders who would like to avoid unfavourable media coverage at a time as important as the announcement of the first council of ministers following their election. While generally favourable coverage would explain why prime ministers tend to appoint more women in their first cabinet, it would be interesting to document the impact of media criticism of non-parity cabinets on the policy decisions that lead to cabinet reshuffles. For example, Philippe Couillard appointed a higher proportion of women during the cabinet shuffle. Is this an isolated case? It would also be compelling to examine the political trend of each party and the number of women it has nominated. While the decision to appoint more women to key political positions was traditionally made by the more left-wing, male-led political parties (O'Brien et al. 2015). François Legault's right-wing political party runs counter to this observation. What role might favourable media coverage over the past decade have played in the decision to appoint more women to government? A larger scale study, combining different countries, would allow a deeper understanding of the influence of the media on politics.

The transformation of argumentative strategies

The constitution of a corpus over a period of more than 10 years has made it possible to study the evolution of the arguments deployed, both in the argumentative strategies mobilized by people in favour of parity, but also in the organization of the "discourse against".

In view of these changes, it seems relevant to draw a parallel with the findings of Virginie Julliard's study on parity in France (2012). Parity was proposed as a solution to a public problem, namely the under-representation of women in politics. According to the definition proposed by Louis Quéré (2001), she considers that a public problem is a social problem that "is thematized, that is to say that it is publicly configured from a certain point of view, that this thematization is debated in public arenas and that public action is undertaken to resolve this problem" (10, translated by the authors). The history of a public problem has four stages: the first thematizations of the problem; the controversy between the thematizations; public action; and the sanctioning of political action (Céfaï 1996).

The announcement of Jean Charest's parity cabinet, which comes at a time when the issue of women's political representation is less present in the public arena, would have helped to raise the first thematizations of the problem around the values of equality. The more important expression of unfavourable positions that followed would be part of a period of "controversies" where the "counter discourse" is more present. At the same time, we are witnessing the emergence of a thematization that is unfavourable to quotas, but which recognizes specific obstacles to women. Public action would manifest itself in the increased demands and mobilization of women's groups for better political representation of women.

Limits and research avenues

Admittedly, the large variations in the number of documents from one case to another make quantitative comparisons between each case more difficult. It also makes it difficult to analyze the arguments deployed in each media. In this respect, it would be interesting to verify whether some media tend to present a more positive or negative picture of the parity issue than others. Moreover, the study focusing solely on the cabinets ministers does not take into account all the debates that have been taking place in the media in recent years on the representation of women in the political sphere. A more in-depth study and a comparison of the thematizations and arguments could allow a more thorough analysis to verify whether the current social debate corresponds to the model of the history of a public problem.

In this regard, further research should study other times when parity has been in the media, particularly through the "vigie parité" initiative of the newspaper Le Devoir, which regularly reported on the number of candidates nominated by the various political parties in the last Quebec provincial and federal elections. The rhetoric about the loss of parity as a result of government reshuffles could also be relevant to study. This is notably the case of François Legault's cabinet, which replaced MarieChantal Chassé as Minister of the Environment after she was severely criticized following her first media appearances for her lack of ease in addressing journalists.

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Accounting for Change in IR: The Application of Ontological Security Considerations to IR Theory

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Abstract

Most theories of International Relations (IR) are cautious, if not pessimistic, about the potential for change in IR. In this regard, the concept of ontological security holds promising yet oft-overlooked prospects. This article argues that applications of ontological security to IR theory thus far have been limited due to the narrow conceptualisations of practices and how they contribute to one's attempts to preserve their ontological security. As such, this paper seeks to expand the theoretical framework through which ontological security is applied to IR, which involves a more comprehensive conceptualisation of practice that considers reflexivity as key. Accordingly, the theory demonstrates that a state, faced with threats to their sense of Self, can respond either by rigidising or changing their practices rather than being limited to the former. This allows one to account for change—especially big change—in world politics such as the increasingly inward-looking turn of the West.

Keywords

Change; Constructivism; International Relations Theory; Ontological Security; Practice; Social Theory

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Introduction[1]

Most theories of International Relations (IR) are cautious, if not pessimistic, about the potential for change in IR. In this regard, the concept of ontological security holds promising yet oft-overlooked prospects. Ontological security has, for good reason, become increasingly attractive to contemporary IR theorists today. The concept's appeal lies in its helpfulness in framing alternative approaches that address the theoretical gaps dominant neorealist and neoliberal traditions have yet to satisfactorily fill. In particular, the application of ontological security in IR theory has proved beneficial to the study of state identity and its influence on security dilemmas and intractable conflicts (Mitzen 2006). Even so, this paper argues that the current employments of ontological security in IR theory become much less productive if used in an attempt to explain other phenomena in international relations, especially those to do with change in international norms and practices. I argue that this is due to the narrow conceptualisation of practices and how they contribute to one's attempts to preserve their ontological security, in the scholarship thus far.

This paper seeks to expand the theoretical framework through which ontological security is applied to IR so as to improve its capacity to examine more issues within the study of international affairs. The first section provides a recapitulation of the concept of ontological security as developed by Giddens (1991)—the theory that states, in order to remain secure in their sense of Self, will tend to be rigidly attached to their established practices—and how it has thus far been applied in IR theory. In doing so, I point to certain aspects of the concept that have been neglected in its transplant to IR theory, particularly the neglect of considerations of reflexivity in one's actions. The second section establishes the critical nature of this oversight in IR theory's failure to account for change and demonstrates that a more faithful exegesis and application of Giddens's concept of ontological security will produce a richer theoretical framework.

With this in mind, the third section provides my reconstruction of the theory, featuring an expanded framework through which one understands the state's pursuit of ontological security, and explains how this framework might account for change in international practices. I argue that the understanding of change as a product of both practice and reflection suggests that states tend to remain attached to routinised practices under limited disruptions (as Mitzen (2006) theorises), but will be incentivised to make considerable

[1] I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and helpful suggestions. Readers should be aware that this manuscript makes reference to material produced by Ted Hopf, who was dismissed from his university in 2020 for sexual misconduct. The engagement with his scholarly work in no way constitutes any support or acceptance of his unlawful activities. All remaining errors are mine.

changes under severe disruptions so as to resolve the suffering of chronic cognitive dissonance. Lastly, the fourth section presents cases through which my reconstructed theory finds preliminary empirical support, focusing particularly on an examination of the West and its increasingly inward-looking turn and the resulting divergence from established international norms and practices over trade, migration, and so on.

Ontological security presently

The concept of ontological security originates in Laing's psychoanalytic account (Rossdale 2015, 2) of schizophrenia which he demonstrates is a manifestation of one's experience of personal, existential alienation. This concept was then adopted by Giddens into his sociological account of "the social narratives and routines in which we are embedded and through which our self-identity is constituted" (Rossdale 2015, 4) before it was picked up by IR theorists. In essence, Giddens (1991, 47) tells us that ontological security lies in one's ability to "possess, on the level of the unconscious and practical consciousness, 'answers' to fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses". Answers to these questions—relating to one's existence in itself, her place in the external world, relations with other persons, and her self-identity (Giddens 1991, 48–52)—are notoriously elusive but threaten the integrity of the Self. Therefore, in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed or paralysed by such existential anxieties, one requires a stable external world that provides some 'answer' which individuals can treat as matter-of-fact so that they can 'go on' with life (Giddens 1991, 37).

How is this stable external world established? Giddens argues that our everyday activities create a "framework of reality" out of the "infinite range of possibilities open to the individual" (1991, 36). Without a bracketing of the countless possibilities open to us, Giddens argues that we would not be able to "answer even the simplest everyday query, or respond to the most cursory remark" (1991, 36). In other words, our everyday routines are based on (and impose on us) a certain conception of reality that we are then able to take for granted as true, even if closer examination would reveal to us that this reality is much less definitive than we would like. Thereafter, as one continues to engage in these routines, she also inevitably reproduces this specific conception of reality, forming a "protective cocoon which 'filters out' many of the dangers which in principle threaten the integrity of the self," and allows her to "keep a particular narrative going" (Giddens 1991, 54). In this way, one's day-to-day routines become "coping mechanisms" that allow her to maintain a coherent sense of self-identity.

This behaviour, which Giddens terms "practical consciousness" (1991, 36), is what anchors one's ontological security such that one can 'go on' even in the face of disruptions or crises. Where disruptions may potentially snowball into the "loss of a sense of the very reality of things" (Giddens 1991, 36), practical consciousness serves to maintain a system of basic trust that keeps existential questions at the peripheries of our reflection. Without this, crises may drive us to question our reality to the point that it undermines our confidence in even the cognitive stability of our environment. With established routines, disruptions are then less likely to cause significant emotional turmoil. Altogether, having routines to fall back on allows us to proceed with a 'business-as-usual' attitude and prevents any disruptions from triggering an existential crisis or downward spiral.

At this point, it should be noted that though these everyday practices are routinised, it does not mean that they are carried out automatically, as if in a "dogged adherence to habit" (Giddens 1991, 40). Rather, the "constant vigilance" and "creativity" of the actor is necessary to manage disruptions "innovatively in relation to pre-established modes of behaviour" (Giddens 1991, 40–41). Reflexivity is necessary for such processes. In fact, Giddens tells us that reflexive awareness is "characteristic of all human action" (1991, 35) while "a blind commitment to established routines, come what may, is a sign of neurotic compulsion" (Giddens 1991, 40). Therefore, one's sense of Self is seen not as something that is simply maintained through practical consciousness, but as an identity that is continuously "created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual" (Giddens 1991, 52).

Ontological security in international relations theory

Ontological security was first brought into the study of IR through scholars of security studies who believed that states—beyond the pursuit of physical security—also experience a need for ontological security and that such a need motivates and shapes their foreign policy. Of course, one might question whether the application of ontological security onto states can be justified; surely individuals and states are not the same. Here, Mitzen (2006, 352) argues that states are likely to "act at least 'as if' they are ontological security seekers" because a coherent national group identity is arguably consequential to the preservation of its members' ontological security. In other words, states are motivated to preserve their distinct sense of Self because it is necessary for their citizens' ontological security. Importantly, this marks a divergence from mainstream IR traditions that typically only consider matters relating to states' physical security.

Mitzen (2006, 342) argues that states have to be secure in their sense of Self, "as being rather than constantly changing—in order to realise a sense of agency." Here, she sees agency

as the ability "to know how to act and therefore how to be herself" (Mitzen 2006, 347). Essentially, a state must be able to know what to expect so that it can systematically relate its ends to its means (Mitzen 2006, 342). Without this, the state would essentially be *paralysed* by the infinite possibilities and dangers it has to process. In this way, just as routines bracket the infinite range of possibilities available and serve as coping mechanisms for individuals, routines governing interstate relations create a "stable cognitive environment" (Mitzen 2006, 342) where international actors are endowed with "automatic responses to stimuli [that] bound the arena of deliberate choice" (Mitzen 2006, 347). This "bring[s] uncertainty within tolerable limits" (Mitzen 2006, 346). In this way, they are imbued with some level of confidence in knowing what to expect and, therefore, what to do.

One should note that this is possible only because state identities are not taken to be the product of any intrinsic qualities of their own (Mitzen 2006, 354), but rather intersubjective roles that come to constitute the actor through their expression in practices that then come to be recognised by other actors as fulfilling those roles (Mitzen 2006, 358). Routinised practices reproduce and sustain a state's identity, which allows other states to have some certainty as to how it might act and, therefore, what they should do. For instance, under an anarchic international system, Mitzen (2006, 360) argues that "each state sees itself privately in the role identity of a security-seeker, but each is recognised publicly in the role of a potential aggressor" due to tendency towards "worst-case thinking." Consequently, states engage in a vicious cycle of competitive behaviour that comes to form the "basic trust system" (Mitzen 2006, 361) that reinforces their identities as competitors.

Once there is a certain level of cognitive certainty, Mitzen (2006, 347) predicts that actors will become attached to these practices due to the sense of agency they derive from it. As mentioned, practices impose the narrative through which one's sense of Self is maintained, which implies that the stability of one's self-identity is dependent on the continual engagement in said practices. This, however, leads actors to become rigidly attached to particular practices—even when they are harmful or self-defeating—because not doing so threatens the ability of states to *even 'go on'*. Against this backdrop, a state seeking to determine its course of action would likely prioritise its ontological security considerations over physical security ones, thereby contributing to the 'intractable' nature of some interstate conflicts.

Theoretical gaps

While the predictions of Mitzen's theory prove to be somewhat consistent with the empirical cases she advances, this may not be so if one were to move beyond the study of

security dilemmas and their homeostatic tendencies. This is by no means a failing of her theory since Mitzen's aim is precisely to explain stability. Even so, while the intractable nature of many interstate conflicts is surely a key feature of international relations, one must take care not to neglect the phenomenon of change. To be sure, we are interested in (and also observe) change in international relations. In this regard, I argue that Mitzen's IR theory does not give a satisfactory account of how change—*big change*—might happen in world politics.

A comparison of Giddens's original conception of ontological security and Mitzen's application provides some insight as to why this is so. At its core, the theoretical gap left by Mitzen's theory of ontological security is a neglect of the role of reflexivity in one's actions. While she is successful in demonstrating that state actors, guided by ontological security concerns, may often choose to privilege the status-quo, why might we still observe change in international relations? In other words, does the pursuit of ontological security necessarily preclude the possibility of change? Without proper consideration of reflexivity, one is led to conclude that one's response to disruptions or crises are largely limited to the rigidisation of one's established behaviours even though—as I will demonstrate—actors could very well respond to disruptions by changing their practices.

Recall Gidden's "practical consciousness," which is the mechanisms for which one maintains a system of basic trust that safeguards the integrity of one's sense of Self (1991, 36). Giddens emphasises that reflexivity is vital to this system as "constant vigilance" and "creativity" are still needed to respond to disruptions based on the pre-established practices available. In this manner, one's identity, though partly constituted and maintained by established routines, is not simply a matter of blindly adhering to such routines but also involves a continuous process of reflection by the individual. After all, to harken back to Mitzen's empirical case, surely the state does not just adopt unthinking automatic responses to the security dilemmas that they are embroiled in. Even if pre-established routines incline the state to engage in "worst-case thinking" (Mitzen 2006, 360), reflexivity is necessarily involved in shaping how it applies such thinking to policy analyses and practical responses. Furthermore, one may also question whether the empirical support, in pointing to the inflexible nature of responses to security dilemmas, may find its explanation in the particularly intractable character of Prisoner's Dilemmas rather than the state's rigidity in securing their sense of Self.

In sum, any attempts to transplant the theory into the study of IR cannot neglect this aspect of reflexivity, for doing so would be to leave out an essential element of an actor's preservation of the Self.

Conceptualising practices and change

Reflexivity in practices

In his theory, Gidden emphasises that the reflexive awareness of individuals is "characteristic of all human action" (1991, 35). Reflexive awareness is inextricable from any action because some degree of interpretation and improvisation is always necessary, even in the most established routines. As aptly summarised by Hopf, "necessarily all of us must act in situations under-specified by the necessarily non-existent rulebook" (2018, 692). In all important respects, the necessarily nonidentical nature of every situation we encounter means that routines—and even established rules—cannot completely determine our actions. Instead, we inevitably make improvisations, however minor, in each routine act (Hopf 2018, 693). Of course, this has little bearing on our critique of Mitzen's theory, which does allow for practical agency and the incremental changes it brings.

What Mitzen's conceptualisation of ontological security lacks is the critical understanding that "habit frees up the reflective mind to consciously deliberate about the world" (Hopf 2018, 689). Instead, the role of routinised practices in Mitzen's theory seems to be limited simply to the prevention of actor paralysis. This is not a trivial difference. Mitzen (2006, 343) herself acknowledges that although all actors engage in routinisation, they necessarily vary in their "mode of attachment: some actors rigidly repeat routines, while others participate more reflexively." Even so, Mitzen (2006, 361) maintains that states are likely to rigidly repeat routines rather than engage reflexively due to the diminishing of basic trust that change brings, taking away one's ability to even 'go on'—an option untenable for states.

Even if one allows her this, systems of basic trust are likely to be much more nuanced than suggested by Mitzen's depiction. As previously established, basic trust is necessary for the purpose of "bring[ing] uncertainty within tolerable limits by taking most questions off the table" (Mitzen 2006, 346). According to Giddens (1991, 36–37), these are the fundamental existential issues—concerning our existence, place in the world, relations with others, etc.—which hold no easy answers. In comparison, one questions the extent to which such existential issues apply to states as international actors and whether all their attempts at change will, in fact, induce crises of such existential proportions that they are eventually paralysed. Of course, this is not to say that states are immune to the anxieties that one experiences when change is made. The question is simply whether states will indeed become as impotent and vulnerable as Mitzen suggests. Indeed, it is not hard to imagine that the U.S., with its discursive and material power, would have enough confidence—if not in the

international system, then at least in their own abilities—to embrace change without completely destabilising itself. One could see that a good number of countries can be characterised in this way as well. If so, Mitzen greatly underestimates states' capacity for reflexivity and change.

Hence, I have demonstrated that Mitzen's conceptualisation of reflexivity in practices is fairly underdeveloped, which greatly limits her theory's ability to account for change in state behaviour. This leaves us with a significant theoretical gap for a few reasons. Firstly, this misleadingly privileges securitisation practices over desecuritisation practices, where states are shown to invariably "reassert established patterns of behaviour, routines, and identities rather than embrace change" (Browning and Joenniemi 2017, 31–32). In doing so, we may end up conflating the achievement of ontological security with "the ability to uphold stability and defend the prevailing state of affairs" rather than the more accurate understanding which has to do with one's "ability to cope with change" (Browning and Joenniemi 2017, 35). Although the preservation of ontological security may indeed require securitisation practices, i.e. rigidising routines, it is not always the case. On the contrary, Browning and Joenniemi (2017, 39) assert that "securitising practices have just as much potential to generate ontological anxieties as desecuritising practices." What is key, then, is not simply "a question of stability but also adaptability" (Browning and Joenniemi 2017, 31), and one finds the answers to this through reflection.

By extension, Mitzen's theory also offers no solution to the problem of insecurity *arising from* rigidising practices. Giddens (1991, 59) warns that a rigid attachment to established routines may well lead to further insecurity and existential anxieties due to its disembodying effect. Using the example of a cheating husband who has to maintain a false persona to his unaware wife, Giddens (1991, 58–59) states that the husband's established routines of a faithful partner—now a false performance, a staged routine—becomes discrepant from his actual biographical narrative. Eventually, this inconsistency between his self-identity and his day-to-day routines, if left unaddressed, dislocates and detaches him from his sense of Self because "the narrative by means of which [he] sustains a coherent biography is no longer adequate" (Giddens 1991, 65). Eventually, his "effort to keep up normal appearances" might become so burdensome that he ends up "literally unable to 'go on'"(Giddens 1991, 60–61). This shows that, beyond the pursuit of stability, one needs to achieve coherence in their identity, narrative, and actions so as to maintain a consistent sense of Self. If established routines become discordant within this relationship, a rigidisation of routines ends up creating further insecurity.

In summary, the idea that routinisation is the only route to preserving one's ontological security lies in the faulty premise that feelings of insecurity automatically trigger one's tendency towards an unconscious rigidisation of practice as means to avoid the anxieties that a closer examination of the present state of affairs—and the unsatisfactory answers we usually take for granted—inevitably evokes. However, rigidisation is never free from reflexivity and, hence, does not provide the insulation from anxieties that one might desire. As a matter of fact, rigidisation can further increase one's sense of insecurity if the established routines become forced and contrived, detaching one's sense of Self from her reality.

Understanding change

Rather than focusing solely on rigidisation, a conceptualisation of practice cannot possibly leave out the consideration of reflexivity. I define practices, then, to be socially meaningful and organised patterns of activities that are routine in their day-to-day nature, but reflexive in how they are "produced and reproduced by the agent as part of 'going on' in the variegated settings" of life (Giddens 1991, 35). With this in mind, we can observe how this deeper understanding of practice influences our theorisation of change.

The power of practice lies in its proselytising and reproductive functions. This means that social practices have the capacity to impose and reproduce "the intersubjective meanings that constitute social structures and actors alike" (Hopf 1998, 178). I have already shown that practical agency brings about what Hopf (2018, 692) calls the "changes in practice through practice". At the same time, the reflexivity of agents means that there can also be "changes in practice through reflection" (Hopf 2018, 692). Hopf (2018, 697) states that such changes are triggered when one is confronted with prolonged and extreme non-routine problems that challenge the contingent yet taken-for-granted ideas that determine the way we live our lives. Similarly, Flockhart (2016, 804) points out that though the "routinisation of practice and a stable identity may be preferred by agents, action that changes established routines is sometimes a necessary undertaking in response to disruptive events" that can be dislocating for our sense of Self (2016, 804). The need to maintain a continuous, coherent biographical narrative requires reflexivity to address disruptive events by determining their impact on one's identity and the necessary actions that shall be undertaken which include making changes to one's practices, and so on.

One therefore understands the pursuit of ontological security as reflexive endeavours aimed at maintaining one's Self. Such endeavours compel deliberate action through routinisation or change—as opposed to simply routinisation, suggested by Mitzen's theory—

as possible means to this end. Consequently, one can provide a more comprehensive conceptualisation of practice that considers reflexivity as key in producing a richer IR theory that can explain both continuity and change in world politics.

An expanded framework for IR theory

I now proceed to construct an IR theory based on an interpretation of ontological security that is more faithful to Giddens' initial conceptualisation. Before that, though this has been treated as tacit knowledge thus far, it should be stated that this IR theory is built upon the theoretical commitments of constructivism, which takes the institutions, practices, and identities that make up our social reality to be intersubjective phenomena that come together to form an "intersubjective social context" (Hopf 1998, 173) or "shared framework of reality" (Giddens 1991, 36). This means that each state understands others through the identities it attributes them and responds accordingly to this understanding, which is likewise perceived by others to be fulfilling a certain identity, thus creating a framework where all are "simultaneously reproducing [their] own identity" (Hopf 1998, 175) and thereby "organising predictable social interaction"(Giddens 1991, 52).

Our social reality—the prevailing order for affairs in the international arena—is then socially emergent and contingent, negotiated through the interactions of actors rather than derived from certain intrinsic qualities of states or their interactions. This order guides our perception of the international system, produces "norms, institutions, procedures, [and] rules" that prescribes a range of appropriate social practices (Hopf 1998, 173), and is sustained through the routinised relations and actions of states. At the same time, once a given order is established, it is thereafter also policed and continually reproduced by the established patterns of practices. Therefore, we can understand international phenomena as the product of actions by agentic actors within the constraints of "the webs of understanding of the practices, identities, and interests of other actors that prevail in particular historical contexts" (Hopf 1998, 177). Yet, because of the agentic capacity of the actor, the existing norms may constrain but not determine one's actions, and this leaves open the possibility that the "constancy of structure" may also be disrupted by practice (Flockhart 2016, 800). We might then see practices as both *structured*—due to the constraints imposed upon them—and *structuring*—based on the changes and adjustments one's practices might beget.

With that in mind, one might observe that states, *ceteris paribus*, tend to be attached to routines due to the cognitive stability and stable sense of Self they maintain. While this allows states to preserve their ontological security, this inadvertently fuels the processes through which order and the status quo are constantly reproduced. Even so, the previous section

shows that the rigidisation of routines is not the only method through which states can preserve their ontological security. Instead, states can also change their practices in order to preserve it. How might we then understand change in world politics?

Change seems to come in two forms: practice and reflection. Change through practice, as mentioned previously, happens through continuous, minor modifications that agents inevitably make in applying norms designating appropriate behaviour to their unique situations. This change is "mostly unintentional, non-directional, and unpredictable in their consequences"(Hopf 2018, 705). Modifications are mostly marginal and hence unlikely to impede the reproduction of a given order. On the other hand, change through reflection has the potential to induce great change. As Giddens (1991, 59) notes, certain external stimuli or disruptions may induce a cognitive dissonance so severe that the adherence to routines comes at the risk of eroding one's ability to even 'go on,' compelling considered reflection and resulting in changes to their practices.

To this end, cognitive dissonance is experienced when there is a clear "disconnect between the ideational structure and agents' experience of who they are and what they do" (Flockhart 2016, 807). The most obvious source of this lies in the exogenous disruptions that crises bring. Examples include "war, revolution, or economic depression" (Hopf 2018, 700) which tend to pose extended, non-routine, and extreme disruptions to one's way of life and therefore provide the impetus for big change. Furthermore, they, more than any phenomena, also have the capacity to change production relations, unmask previously overlooked underlying power relations, and offer plausible alternatives to the status quo (Hopf 2018, 700). Hopf (2018, 700) argues that the need to "survive or endure" the challenges posed by exogenous shocks requires serious reflection on the individual's part since minor adjustments to established habits or routines are unlikely to be sufficient in managing the new circumstances.

Another source of cognitive dissonance worthwhile considering points to the uncertainties that liminars present to individuals. Liminars, as Hopf notes, "are entities that are simultaneously partly us and partly them, partly self and partly other" (2018, 699). These could pertain to individuals, identities, ideas, or even events, and they prompt conscious reflection because they are undesirable but inextricable from the Self such that one is simultaneously presented with the undeniable similarities *and* differences to herself which she must then confront and resolve (Hopf 2018, 699). In considering the possibilities for big change, one focuses on the fundamental need for one to maintain a consistent sense of Self, achieved through a coherent account of one's identity, narrative, and actions. The power of

crises and liminars lie in the discordance they wreak upon one's biographical narrative and their capacity to keep 'going on', which prompts the reflexivity necessary for big change.

Such extreme disruptions prompt considered reflection and action, not just to make minor adjustments to one's habits, but to make considerable changes in order to adapt to the extraordinary circumstances one is confronted with. In other words, states that encounter significant threats to their sense of Self may realise that changing their routines is better suited for their efforts to preserve ontological security. In fact, states may find that routinisation, rather than pushing existential anxieties back to the periphery, further dislocates them from their sense of Self and reality. Just as the adulterous husband who rigidly adheres to the routines of a faithful, loving husband may experience cognitive dissonance between his actions and sense of Self (Giddens 1991, 58), a declining superpower state that sticks to the expansive economic, military, and diplomatic policies of a superpower may find it increasingly difficult to reconcile its activities and its current sense of Self.

In fact, a failure to diverge from previous routines, beyond producing chronic cognitive dissonance, also tends to further dislocate the state from its sense of Self. Going back to the example of the superpower in decline, the policies characteristic of a superpower are likely to be extremely burdensome to a flagging state and can end up accelerating its decline. In such cases, the state will eventually be forced, internally or externally, to accept a completely new sense of Self and the new routines and practices that come with it. Thus, states facing significant cognitive dissonance will diverge from the practices that were previously routinised. In these cases, a change in practices is usually aimed at safeguarding and restoring the state's sense of Self, though it may sometimes serve to adjust the state's policy to a new sense of Self. Since practices are critical in the shaping and reproduction of the intersubjective social context in which states relate to one another as well as the framework of reality through which states see themselves, their external environment and their relations with others change with their practices and have the potential to cause fundamental change in the international arena.

How might this relate to our study of IR? This expanded theory can provide predictions or—at the very least—explanations for certain phenomena observed in world politics. Under cases of limited disruptions, states will remain attached to their routinised practices, focusing on making minor adjustments in order to 'go on' with life. However, severe disruptions and the experience of the chronic cognitive dissonance they impose surely incentivise change. A failure to change in the face of such a situation simply pushes existential anxieties back from the periphery, making them much more pronounced and threatening to

one's sense of Self. Conscious reflection is the only way through which a state can determine the changes they need to take for their day-to-day actions to be reintegrated with their reality and sense of Self (Giddens 1991, 60) and their confidence in the cognitive stability of the world to be restored. We thus gain a better understanding of the security calculations states make when seeking to determine their actions within a given range of options.

One might also be able to extrapolate that divergences, if made by a state with significant discursive and material power or carried out by many states in quick succession, may induce a system-wide shift away from established practices. This is because a state's initial divergence from its routinised behaviour changes the range of possible actions it may thereafter take, as well as the identity that others will then attribute to it. As expectations of what the state might do change, other actors inevitably have to prepare and respond accordingly to the new expectations. These states then come to adopt new practices through which they engage with one another and are eventually assigned new identities that these new practices will thereafter reproduce. If these changes are significantly widespread, the practices which the international system operates through inevitably change and this produces new norms, institutions, procedures, and rules that come to form a new status quo.

Empirical support: Change in the West

My expanded theoretical framework finds empirical support in many Western industrialised societies, including Europe and the U.S. and their increasingly inward-looking turn and divergence from international norms and routinised practices. Importantly, the case of the West is highlighted due to its traditionally clear sense of Self, the historically well-established knowledge of its international outlook and policies, as well as its noticeable shift in norms and practices in recent years. This makes for a clear explication of the empirical support it provides to the theory, though other empirical cases can surely be found. Furthermore, though this phenomenon is observed across the West—and my anecdotal evidence will include European countries in a general sense—the concrete empirical evidence will be specific to the U.S. Even so, there are strong grounds to believe that this inward-looking turn is common to the West for similar reasons and, thus, the paper will continue to refer generally to the West.

The West, once the champions of free trade, international cooperation, and—to some degree—internationalism, has become increasingly inward-looking. Economically, countries like the U.S. have become more protectionist, imposing tariffs on goods from China, the European Union (EU), Mexico, and so on. Elsewhere, rising Euroscepticism has highlighted concerns over the economic integration of Europe. In terms of immigration, a

rise in xenophobia and greater support for further restricting migration have been observed. Commonly cited concerns include fears of cultural dilution, a decrease in job security, terrorism, and so on (Grzymala-Busse 2019, 36–39; Homolar and Scholz 2019, 348–49). In particular, the 2015 refugee crisis in Europe highlighted the anti-migrant policies of the West. This inward-looking turn has also affected regional and international cooperation for the West, which can be observed in the rise Euroscepticism and in Brexit itself as well as in America's growing hostility and withdrawal from the UN and its norms along with its persistent disputes over NATO funding.

How might considerations of ontological security account for this change? The existing order, which espouses neoliberal values, is sustained by practices in adherence to the norms of free trade and international cooperation. In turn, the intersubjective framework of reality it imposes on states is one that proclaims neoliberal values to be the best route to prosperity and security. For example, the justification of free trade rests on the argument that the efficiency brought about by the capitalisation upon comparative advantage and the deregulation of competition increases the economic welfare of all countries. In common parlance, free trade 'increases the size of the pie for all'. However, the inherent tension implicit in free trade is that its mechanisms inevitably create 'winners and losers' on both the international and domestic levels. This means that though the size of the pie shared by the world is larger because of free trade, 'losers' of the free-market process may end up with a slice that is smaller than if there was less trade. This, perhaps, is indicative of the liminal nature of free trade as an idea, which inevitably positions states as cooperators but also as competitors.

Once the greatest beneficiary of free trade, the West now finds that its slice of the pie is getting smaller. Strong economic growth across regions such as Asia and South America have eroded the economic competitiveness of Western states. While free trade remains beneficial on the whole, particular subgroups within states may be disproportionately affected by it. For example, the rust belt of the U.S. highlights how free trade has contributed to offshoring leading to the demise of the American steel and heavy production industry, leaving many from this industry unemployed. This means that subgroups within the population are now experiencing a vast discrepancy between the economic benefits or 'good life' that free trade 'promises' and the reality of their economic hardships. Since members' ontological security contributes to the national group identity that is a state's sense of Self (Mitzen 2006, 352), if those experiencing this cognitive dissonance come to form a significant

proportion of the population, their anxieties will inevitably have negative implications for the state's sense of Self.

Furthermore, Homolar and Scholz (2019, 350) point out that an ever-increasing number of citizens hold the view that "America's best days lay in its past." Given that the U.S.'s sense of Self is at least partially built on its status as a great power, the 'leader of the free world,' 'city on a hill,' and so on, it is not difficult to see how these developments might threaten its ontological security. Similarly, declining competitiveness across Europe may also trigger anxieties and feelings of insecurity due to the international state of affairs that has thus far imposed a hierarchy that privileges Western countries and the norms defined by them. Experiencing a loss of eminence as leading or 'inspiring' models for civilization—the parameters of which it was responsible for defining—the West might find that it can no longer sustain the narrative on which its biographical continuity has thus far depended on.

Faced with such threats to their ontological security, why might Western states choose to change their practices rather than rigidise them? One recalls that, above all, a state's interests lie in maintaining the stability of its sense of Self and preventing existential paralysis. A state's choice over whether to continue or change its established practices then depends on whether these ends are achieved. In this case, rigidising its practices, i.e. maintaining free trade, international cooperation, and open borders, is unfeasible as it exacerbates the economic hardships faced by the already affected groups, which further dislocates them from reality and worsens their anxieties. Instead, one can observe a trend of Western states engaging in a process of "Othering" and shifting away from international practices for the sake of maintaining their ontological security.

Scholars note that the process of "Othering" is a common strategy engaged by actors in their bid to safeguard their self-identities. For example, Rossdale (2015, 2) argues that the processes of achieving or maintaining ontological security often involve "forms of exclusion and othering that are both violent and counter-productive." Mackay (2016) also notes that imperial Chinese elites pursued a deliberate strategy of "Othering" steppe societies in order to provide a stable source of identity to China. In fact, ontology security at its core can be said to revolve around questions of "how narratives shape not only the self, and who gets to belong, but also the Other and who gets excluded" (Steele and Homolar 2019, 216).

In this particular case, the process of "Othering" allows states to assert that they continue to possess the qualities and capacities for global eminence and domestic prosperity which have been constitutive of Western states' sense of Self in modern history. Instead, the blame for any discrepancy experienced by the citizenry is placed on these "Others." For

instance, Trump points to "foreigners who either flow into the country or lead countries that want to exploit the US for economic and security reasons" as the cause of America's decline (Homolar and Scholz 2019, 351). Mälksoo, focusing on Europe, points out that deep anxieties arising from recent shocks from Brexit, the refugee crisis, the Euro crisis and so on, have brought back the 'Othering' of 'Eastern Europe' as the "troublemakers of European unity and peace" (2019, 365). Effectively, this process of creating a 'scapegoat' allows the West to escape the paralysing effects of ontological insecurity against the backdrop of the economic and cultural upheavals it faces. By shifting 'blame' to other countries or external factors, the state is then able to address the anxieties of its citizenry and yet—in attributing its cause to the 'exploitation' or problems caused by other countries rather than any internal failure—maintain that it remains fully capable, therefore protecting its identity.

Interestingly, studies of political actors such as Trump also highlight the use of 'crisis stories' to "simultaneously instil ontological insecurity within the public [to] transform this anxiety into confidence in [their] policy agenda as the effective route back to normalcy" (Homolar and Scholz 2019, 347). Other attempts to restore ontological security may also include "promises of restoring what once was—to a retrospective recasting of the past as stable, predictable and comforting" (Homolar and Scholz 2019, 357). In any case, this process of 'Othering' and shifting blame initiates the process through which states move away from established practices, since such practices are now deemed to facilitate one's exploitation and harm at the hands of other states. Some divergences in practice could then include increasing protectionist trade policies, paying less heed to international rules, or even the complete withdrawal from international organisations.

For instance, former President Trump imposed stiff tariffs on goods from the EU, Canada, Mexico, and China, citing the international community's long-term exploitation of the U.S. through unfair trade practices and offshoring as responsible for the country's trade deficit and economic woes (Pramuk 2019). Similarly, Trump's support for a variety of limits on legal immigration, guest-worker visas, and skilled foreign workers was said to be a response to the depressed wages and unemployment rate brought about by an influx of foreign workers (Sink, Banjo, and Carville 2020). In this manner, the Trump administration was able to paint the US's economic competitors and foreigners as 'Others,' blaming them for the country's economic decline while ignoring the internal root causes such as the currency and tax policies that incentivise offshoring, inadequate investment in infrastructure, and the decline in American manufacturing (Scott 2020). This then allowed the state to continue asserting its sense of Self as the most powerful and advanced country in the world

and take up increasingly inward-looking international policies that seek to realign its reality with its sense of Self.

This phenomenon is not unique to the U.S. Across Europe, states are increasingly inward-looking in terms of economic, migration, and other international policies (Mehta 2019; Anandhika 2017). As established routines change, they no longer support the reproduction of the same norms, practices, and institutions. In this way, the values that once governed international relations may change and allow for different values to take their place. As states increasingly perceive interstate relations to be competitive or exploitative in nature, there may be less incentive for cooperation. Existing regional and international bodies such as the EU and the UN may lose their appeal. Such a development is possible largely due to the significant role that the West plays in sustaining these bodies. Similar divergences by less powerful states may not have any meaningful impact on international practices or norms. In any case, if such changes to practice are wide-ranging and sustained across the West, the entire framework that governs international relations at present may change.

Conclusion

I have argued that current applications of ontological security considerations in IR have been limited due to their narrow conceptualisation of practices and how they impact one's sense of Self. In particular, the current theoretical framework's neglect of practices as necessarily reflexive activities—a key element of Giddens' original conceptualisation—limits a state's response to a rigid attachment to previously established routines. I have demonstrated that though rigidisation is indeed a possible route through which states can alleviate anxieties and restore their sense of security, states can also choose to respond by changing their patterns of behaviour. My expanded framework suggests that both the adherence to and divergence from pre-established routines have the potential to further destabilise one's sense of Self and trigger greater anxieties if inappropriately exercised. In this, reflexivity is vital to the state's response to assess whether change or continuity allows one to restore a stable sense of Self. In most cases, states will fall back on their routinised practices when experiencing minimal disruptions but will be inclined to diverge from such practices when experiencing significant or sustained crises. This prediction finds preliminary empirical support in the recent inward-looking turn of the West, which I argue is the result of their divergence from previously held internationalist norms due to the internal economic decline that threatens their sense of Self.

In sum, considerations of ontological security have major implications and offer important opportunities for the study of international practices and IR in general. Therefore,

it might be helpful to identify further areas of interest in the conceptualisation of ontological security which will surely benefit the study of IR. Firstly, applications of ontological security in IR largely presume that states will invariably seek to hold on to the existing identities that constitute their ontological security. Indeed, both my theory and Mitzen's take this for granted. However, Browning and Joenniemi (2017) challenge this notion, arguing that states can also choose whether to preserve or change their self-identities. This also makes relevant Lupovici's (2012) argument that states hold many identities rather than just one, which necessitates a multi-layered analysis of state behaviour especially in cases where some or all of its identities are threatened. Secondly, one might also consider whether ontological security is only achieved through 'doing,' or if it can also include strategies of 'being' as suggested by Flockhart (2016).

Finally, we might question whether the application of ontological security in IR is but an elusive and fruitless endeavour. Indeed, the concept of ontological security itself remains one that cannot be fully articulated. Adding to this difficulty, Flockhart notes that "neither the 'self' nor 'the world' are ever solidified but are constantly evolving" (2016, 803). In the face of such difficulties in articulating and operationalising what one calls the 'Self,' will any attempt to apply the concept of ontological security in IR be found wanting?

At the risk of undoing all that this paper has established—and possibly even triggering the deep existential anxieties lurking within us—a harken back to Giddens suggests that even our most basic assumptions about life might very well end up appearing fallacious and ill-founded when closely examined. Even if this were the case, I do not intend or wish for us to then embrace existential nihilism or abandon our scholarly endeavours. The suggestion I offer is this: even if it is impossible to fully articulate what the 'Self' entails, we still have—*at the very least*—some understanding of its role in helping us 'go on' and how our need for it motivates and shapes the actions that we take when it is undermined. I expect that simply understanding the driving forces of this elusive concept is sufficient for us to glean valuable insights into the motivations that influence state behaviours and the resulting state of affairs that they may produce.

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Discussing Subsidiarity in Terms of Justification: Some Practical Issues of the EU Legislative Process

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Abstract

This article attempts to study the inter-institutional dimension of the practical implementation of the subsidiarity principle in the EU legislative process. The main research question is whether the subsidiarity principle could be a real communicative tool in the EU's multi-level regulation policy used to seek consensus between EU institutions and national parliaments on the justification of an appropriate level for EU actions (subsidiarity justification). The short answer is 'yes'. Through the content analysis of the published documents and with the help of the theory of deliberation, the author argues for a subsidiarity justification procedure occurring at the beginning of each instance of the EU legislative process to provide an inter-institutional setting to move away from confirming (one-way) to deliberative (two-way) reasoning over the issue of potential subsidiarity violation in the EU legislative process.

Keywords

Consensus; Deliberation; EU Legislative Process; 'Green Card' Procedure; Inter-institutional Dialogue; Subsidiarity Control Mechanism; 'Yellow Card' Procedure

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Introduction

The subsidiarity principle has been widely adopted in various sectors of public policy including economics, environment, education, and social policy. However, the main lines of research related to this principle are traditionally connected to the legal (Davies 2006; Fabbrini and Granat 2013; Fabbrini 2017) and political (Craig 2012; Cooper 2006; Cooper 2017; Schütze 2009) facets of subsidiarity. This article explores the subsidiarity principle as a communicative tool that ensures better justification of regulations proposed by the EU (subsidiarity justification) through promoting earlier interactions among decision-makers in search of a consensus on what should be perceived as the better argument justifying the proposed action. There are not many publications on this subject (the few that exist include Schout and Sleifer 2014; Bickerton, Hodson and Puetter 2015) but there is a practical need for a procedure to provide an inter-institutional setting to improve consensus-seeking between European and national institutions looking for a single answer to a question on the appropriate level of regulation in order to achieve goals set out by the EU.

On the EU legislative arena, decision makers are influenced by diverse views when judging which actor is best placed to achieve an EU objective. That is why a decision on the subsidiarity application always involves inter-institutional interactions to balance inter-institutional stances (Pimenova 2016), and this article studies how the EU institutions respond to subsidiarity concerns expressed by national institutions in the legislative process of the EU as a unique jurisdiction whose system of multi-level governance furnishes rich illustrative material for furthering my research interest in consensual decision-making.

What does a 'good decision' in multi-level regulation mean? As Lindblom (1959, 84) points out, an agreement on regulation policy is the test of "best policy" even if there is no agreement on values underpinning a contestable policy. This is particularly the case for decisions that involve cross-border issues and affect the identity and culture of different nations. Decision-makers in a multi-level system need to deliver a proper justification for their decisions supported not just with appropriate reasons confirming what they need in a time but mainly with a consensus about these reasons. A promising feature of consensus-seeking activity is the possibility to avoid the pitfalls and challenges of multi-level decision-making through implementing early deliberations. As the building blocks of a democratic decision-making process, early deliberations enable policymakers to reveal all feasible policy options, to reconcile them through debating any contradicting particularities of these options, and then lend validity to 'the one that survives the widest range of criticisms' (Fischer 2007, 228).

As a form of communication, deliberation relies on an 'exchange of arguments' (Landemore 1976, 90) 'for and against a given preposition' (Fearon 1998; Manin 2005; Thompson 2008) between actors who mutually recognize the provisional nature of their own arguments and are prepared to challenge them (Gutmann and Thompson 2003) on the grounds of a better argument (Risse 2000, 7). Deliberations provide actors with 'a technology for mind writing' (Norman 2016, 697), as deliberators potentially can rewrite their minds as their preferences are not stable and are subject to constant revision through mutual learning (Kanra 2012). Dealing with competing preferences, deliberators move back and forth in their reasoning for and against a debating option (deliberative reasoning) until all objections are addressed through either changing preferences (arguments) or bringing new evidence to keep them stable. Recognizing the epistemic properties of deliberation, I argue that by means of earlier argument exchanges, European and national decision-makers can be involved in a 'more open process of deliberation about the reasons' (Weatherill 2005, 147) and necessity of actions proposed by the EU 'with the expected systemic advantage of making each part responsive to the arguments and concerns of the others' (Terrinha 2017, 3).

The key research question behind this study is whether subsidiarity justification could be a real communicative tool in the EU's multi-level regulation policy used to seek consensus between EU institutions and national parliaments on appropriate EU actions at earlier stages of the EU legislative process. This question will be addressed through the assessment of the practical applicability of the subsidiarity principle in inter-institutional deliberations and through the review of opportunities for strengthening the role of the national parliaments and the Court of Justice of the European Union in delivering subsidiarity justifications.

Key topics include the subsidiarity control mechanism and the potential role and current position of the Court of Justice of the European Union in working out a consensus on subsidiarity observance in the EU regulation. The main methodological focus is on content analysis of published documents and especially on the written texts exchanged by the Commission and the national parliaments in the process of the application of the subsidiarity control mechanism. The main observation is the Commission's response pattern in the subsidiarity concerns of national parliaments; this response pattern manifests a lack of the most important attribute of inter-institutional deliberations – responsiveness to opposing arguments/evidence from national parliaments on the issue of potential subsidiarity violation in the EU legislative process.

Background

As laid down in the consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, the subsidiarity principle sets out that the EU should only act if the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently met by the Member States (so called necessity test), and therefore, by reason of its scale or effects, can be better achieved by the EU (so called added value test). According to some scholars, the subsidiarity principle codifies a preference for regulation 'at the lowest level of governance' (Estella 2002, 81) in order to prevent excessive use by supranational powers and to maintain a space for national autonomy. From this standpoint, the subsidiarity principle has been criticized for 'thwarting the project of European integration and weakening supranational authority' (Toth 1992, 1081). According to other researchers, the subsidiarity principle gives a preference to supranational regulation on the basis of the supposed transnational dimension of most policy issues, the related ideas of a 'collective action problem' (Kumm 2006, 520), and 'the beneficial effects of a common supranational intervention' (Cooter 2002, 111). In this view, the subsidiarity principle has been brought into question for being ill-designed to meaningfully protect national regulatory autonomy, and it was once even labelled as 'the wrong idea, in the wrong place, at the wrong time' (Davies 2006, 71). Despite these disagreements, there is a general consensus that the subsidiarity principle should be pursued as a 'Janus-faced concept' (Schütze 2009, 243) or a 'double-edged sword' (Golub 1996, 703) reconciling both the need for national autonomy and the need for supranational regulation in areas of shared competence between the EU and its member states.

By recognizing the reality of concurrent competence—in which neither the EU nor its member states have sole legislative powers and actions depend on the given context, leaving significant room for discretion—subsidiarity, as a dynamic concept, works in both ways: either extending or limiting the EU's powers. Subsidiarity does not give clear answers about the 'right' level of exercise of legislative powers, but leaves the actual conditions of its application open, meaning that the conditions may vary depending on the circumstances of time and place.

At the same time, the practical application of the subsidiarity principle implies a balance between respect for freedom, the diversity of small entities, and the need for unity and public coherence (Brouillet 2011, 608). As an ideal theoretical target, a balance is hard to establish and there is no absolute criterion for what should be done to achieve it in practice. Striking the right balance between self-rule and shared-rule is a challenging task in any multi-level system and, in this regard, the subsidiarity principle must be understood *as a perpetual*

process of evolution and adaptation, rather than a static system governed by immutable rules. This is key for understanding the practical aspects of an inter-institutional implementation of the subsidiarity principle in a multi-level decision-making system.

What is fascinating about subsidiarity is that it doesn't try by any means to mask itself as a purely legal principle strictly regulated at all stages of its application. Although it has been recognized since the Maastricht Treaty, the precise scope and limits of the principle of subsidiarity in EU law remain undetermined. In the EU decision-making system, the subsidiarity principle operates 'as an ambiguous norm, primarily offering a standard of behavior for legitimate legislative action' (Kersbergen and Verbeek 2007, 224). It vests in decision-makers a large margin of discretion when they look for a 'better' solution, which is critical for multi-level systems in which decision-makers driven by polar political aspirations are often incapable of achieving common ground. However, in order for better multi-level decisions to be delivered, the discretion of one decision-maker should be restricted by the discretion of another, and both of them *should owe one another justifications for mutually binding decisions.*

The value of justification (reasoning)

As a dynamic and evolving concept, the subsidiarity principle does not offer ready-to-use recipes for all problems, but provides decision-makers with a tool to reach a valuable consensus about a possible solution; its blended and Janus-featured nature is perfect for securing consensual decisions with the inclusion of all potentially affected parties with different preferences and interests. Consensus is important for gaining the legitimacy of decisions (Manin 1987, 359) through its proper justification, especially in a multi-level context in which actors are driven by different perceptions of justice when looking for trade-off solutions.

Generally, justice is an elusive, contestable and changeable concept. No theory offers one clear-cut explanation of justice and no single notion of justice exists; it comes down to a question of individual preferences congruent with values and contingent upon the subjective interpretations of the context in which actors find themselves interacting with each other. In different contexts, actors behave differently, revealing adherence to different values. Due to preference instability, it is hard to predict which values will be at play in a subjective interpretation of justice perceived by an actor at a particular time in a certain context. Dryzek (2015, 379) points to actors' interactions which produce justice. More precisely, to be found and clarified, justice requires reciprocity in interactions between actors who give each other mutually acceptable reasons (Gutmann and Thompson 2003, 35). These

reasons are arguments justifying or challenging certain preferences, and reciprocity in their consideration (accepting and rejecting) entails that the deliberation on justice is a continuous process of value/preference clarification consisting of the pondering of pros and cons related to a suggested decision by the bringing up of arguments and evidence which both support and reject the debated option. In this process of continuous reciprocation in reason-giving, consensus on the most convincing argument which 'survives the widest range of criticisms' (Fischer 2007, 228) is required to make a decision, and *only deliberative discourse endorsing two-way reasoning (for and against a decision) with a chance to reject the less convincing argument can lead to decision justification with a higher degree of legitimacy and unity in finding common justice.*

Justification and its deliberative discourse are especially important in multi-level decision-making processes in which thick decisions are at stake, affecting policy actors of all levels and requiring their collaborative efforts to be approved. Through justification (reasoning), actors forge a common ground that makes multi-level communication possible in which the language of narrow functional inevitability is not suitable as it does not contribute to the coherent implementation of a decision in the context featured by diversity in values and justice perceptions. Decision-makers at different levels of governance and with different views about common justice should be included in a deliberative discourse of mutual reasoning over the pros and cons of a proposed action – the discourse governed by the 'logic of arguing' (Cooper 2006, 302) 'with the expected systemic advantage of making each part responsive to the arguments and concerns of the others' (Terrinha 2017, 3). In EU multi-level governance, such deliberative discourse of justification should be a core feature of the subsidiarity justificatory procedure, allowing multi-level actors to benefit from the dynamic and vague nature of the subsidiarity principle coming up with EU legislative decisions without unresolved (still dividing) controversy over the reasons behind them.

Point where the spade turns

Exercising legislative powers in matters that fall within concurrent competences, the EU is forced to provide grounds for its decision-making and demonstrate that proposed measures are consistent with the principle of subsidiarity. The need to justify EU interference means that every draft legislative act must be accompanied by a detailed statement outlining compliance with the subsidiarity principle (Lisbon Protocol 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, Article 5). Statements are elaborated by the relevant EU proposing institutions, and the subsidiarity justification is supposed to help EU institutions facilitate consensus in the European legislative process to gain legitimacy for its decisions. However, this is not always the case.

As European subsidiarity 'assumes the primacy of the central goal [EU goal]' (Davies 2006, 83) and does not protect the right of member states to set their own goals in areas of shared competence, *subsidiarity justification contained in EU legislative proposals does not use the language of political choices equally arguing for and against the necessity of the given EU action*. In practice, while justifying legislative proposals, EU institutions employ the language of inevitability ('this must be done to achieve this concrete goal'), basing their position on the EU's perceptions of 'justice'. This is the point where the spade turns: in the EU legislative process, subsidiarity justification serves not to build a consensus between a relevant EU legislative proponent and the most vigilant 'subsidiarity watchdogs' (Cooper 2006, 304) (i.e. national parliaments of the member states), but to push what is necessary at the time. As a result, there is no dialogical communication between European and national decision-makers.

Although the Commission, as a leading proponent of the EU legislation, has been doing its best to internalise the subsidiarity principle at different stages of the decision-making cycle (impact assessment reports, roadmaps, rigorous systems of evaluations and consultations with experts and affected stakeholders), it has stayed very much reluctant *to conduct a dialogue on subsidiarity justification* of proposed legislation with other participants of the EU legislative process. While there is some kind of interaction between the Commission, the Council, and the European Parliament on how they can use the Commission's subsidiarity justification (contained in impact assessments) in relation to the Council's and the European Parliament's substantial amendments to the Commission's proposal (Interinstitutional Agreement of 13 April 2016), *there is no profound dialogue between the Commission and national parliaments on how to deliver impact assessments*. National parliaments can only challenge the Commission's subsidiarity justifications in the framework of the subsidiarity control mechanism (the Mechanism) or by means of judicial review.

According to the Mechanism, national parliaments raise subsidiarity concerns and submit their reasoned opinions directly to the proposing institutions of the EU (Lisbon protocol 1 on the role of national parliaments in the European Union). The Mechanism should serve as a collective warning of difficulties to be addressed by the EU institutions and as a forum where national parliaments can state their positions on a proposal without undermining the EU legislative process. Some expected outcomes brought about by the Mechanism include a greater flow of information between national parliaments and the European institutions, as well as a 'more open process of deliberation about the reasons and techniques of EU rulemaking' (Weatherill 2005, 147).

Since its introduction, the Mechanism has been triggered three times (the so-called yellow cards) with the main argument raised by national parliaments being the insufficient character of subsidiarity justification provided by the Commission to validate the EU-level actions. The first 'yellow card' was issued in relation to the Proposal for a Council Regulation on the exercise of the right to take collective action within the context of the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services (**the** Monti II proposal). In this instance, the UK House of Commons concluded that the explanatory memorandum and impact assessment provided by the Commission were 'largely based on [the Commission's] perceptions of a need to act, which are necessarily subjective, in contrast to objective evidence of a need to act' (UK Government 2014, 80). Some chambers questioned the added value of the Monti II proposal claiming that the draft act under consideration would not lead to a greater legal certainty (European Commission 2013, 7). The second 'yellow card' was triggered in relation to the Proposal for a Council Regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office. In that case, a number of national parliaments stated that that the Commission 'had not sufficiently explained how the proposal complied with the principle of subsidiarity' (European Commission 2014, 9) and had not successfully manifested a clear need for an EU-wide intervention. In the case of the third 'yellow card', subsidiarity concerns were expressed in relation to the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services. Assumptions voiced by national parliaments were mostly the same: the insufficient character of the Commission's subsidiarity justification and the lack of clear evidence that the intended action would be best pursued at the EU level.

Within the framework of the Mechanism, the Commission is under a duty to justify its legislative proposals, in terms of the subsidiarity principle, to national parliaments. It is not national parliaments that have to prove beyond doubt that challenged legislative proposals contain subsidiarity violations, but the Commission is responsible for providing a clear explanation of why it believes that proposals comply with the requirements of subsidiarity (Pimenova 2019, 292). In the absence of a comprehensive explanation, national parliaments may conclude that it has not been proven that a proposal complies with the subsidiarity principle, as happened in all three yellow card cases. The main argument raised by national parliaments in their reasoned opinions was an insufficient subsidiarity justification of the challenged proposals. However, the common response of the Commission was to dismiss this argument (against the necessity of EU actions) on the formal

basis that it was not directly connected to the strict definition of the subsidiarity principle as laid out in Article 5 of TEU which contains no clarifications on why it is not necessary to take action at the EU level (European Commission 2013). In all three 'yellow card' cases, the Commission operated in a defensive mode and disregarded subsidiarity concerns voiced by national parliaments; subsidiarity justification was reaffirmed by the Commission as sufficient to allow both the EU legislature and national parliaments to determine whether the subsidiarity principle is respected in a draft act under consideration (European Commission 2016).

To some extent, this one-way, for the necessity of the EU's actions, subsidiarity justification by the Commission may be regarded as 'rightful' since the Mechanism is 'half-baked': the Mechanism invites the Commission to review a proposal even though this proposal has been already declared consistent with subsidiarity in the Commission's impact assessment. On the other hand, subsidiarity justifications given by the Commission are truly not deliberative as the Commission delivering them mostly acts on its own and assumes no substantive contributions from the actors – national parliaments – mostly concerned with subsidiarity observance in the EU legislative process. Being consistent in rebutting the arguments of national parliaments opposing EU draft legislation, the Commission makes no effort to embrace the 'logic of arguing' and incorporate two-way (for and against) reasoning over the necessity of EU actions into its subsidiarity justificatory procedure, generally undermining subsidiarity as a principle of a 'better EU regulation policy' (Pimenova 2016).

Regulatory watchdog

In multi-level governance systems based on the rule of law, all decision-makers should be committed to providing a justification of their actions that adequately integrates all positions in the decision-making process. The ideal of a deliberative government system 'is a loosely coupled group of institutions and practices that together perform the three functions […] [of] seeking truth, establishing mutual respect, and generating inclusive, egalitarian decision making' (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 22). Following a systematic deliberative approach to the multilevel decision-making process, a subsidiarity justificatory procedure should be taken seriously in all EU institutions, and especially in a courtroom while the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) itself is well placed in the EU institutional system to adopt the role of a defender of the consensual nature of the EU legislative process. However, this is also not the case.

In case C-233/94 *Federal Republic of Germany v European Parliament and Council of the European Union*, the CJEU accepted that a very simple and concise reasoning may be enough

to justify an action with regard to subsidiarity. 'In assessing the need for the measure […] the Community legislature […] needed to […] choose between the general prevention of a risk and the establishment of a system of specific protection' (paragraph 28). Therefore, it has been established that legislative institutions just need to state in a recital of a proposed act *their preference* for a certain kind of action to conform with the principle of subsidiarity. In 2010, the CJEU moved one step further and indicated that impact assessments undertaken by the Commission should be regarded as a tool for the justification of a common measure at the EU level (Case C-58/8 *Vodafone Ltd, Telefónica O2 Europe plc, T-Mobile International AG, Orange Personal Communications Services Ltd v. Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform about EC Regulation)*. In 2016, the CJEU concluded that compliance with the requirement to provide relevant subsidiarity arguments along with legislation 'must be evaluated not only by reference to the wording of the contested act, but also by reference to its context and the circumstances of the individual case (Case C-547/14 *Philip Morris Brands SARL and Others v Secretary of State for Health)*. Hence, the CJEU has assumed that subsidiarity is a dynamic political principle, but it has remained silent on the necessity of reaching a consensus between a proposing EU legislative institution and concerned national parliaments when they have disagreement over subsidiarity justifications in relation to challenged EU legislative acts.

When the CJEU abstains from the substantive assessment of subsidiarity justifications, it tries 'to preserve its own legitimacy, which derives in large part from the fact that its functions are perceived as being essentially jurisdictional rather than political' (Brouillet 2011, 612). Of course, a strict legal position on the 'right' level for the exercise of the EU's legislative powers would put the CJEU 'against the will of the qualified majority of the member states in Council and the majority of the representatives of the European citizens in Parliament' (Fabbrini 2016, 18). As Federico Fabbrini (2014, 31) states, 'the ECJ [CJEU] should not overrule the results of the democratic debate [in representative and political institutions]'. However, with the 'declining public support for representative institutions' (Brack and Costa 2018, 10), a creeping exclusion of representative institutions from decision-making (on some issues), and an increasing preference for intergovernmental policy coordination (Bickerton et al., 2015), the EU's multi-level governance system currently faces the need for the CJEU to accommodate in its decisions the interests of *all players in the EU legislative process*. In the same way as national parliaments act as 'subsidiarity watchdogs' (Cooper 2006, 304), maintaining a balance between national and European legislative interests, the CJEU may take on the role of a 'regulatory watchdog' (Popelier 2011, 567) and

ensure respect towards all decision-makers engaged in the process of working out a consensus on subsidiarity justification for regulating at the EU level.

Take care early

Endowed with deliberative and law-making powers, national parliaments are capable of adding value to the inter-institutional dialogue within the EU multi-level legislative process, and of enhancing the deliberative legitimacy of EU actions. National parliaments hold a strong potential to act as inclusive deliberative agents: they are, as a rule, directly elected representative institutions with unique democratic legitimacy and naturally suited to be closely involved in the assessment of subsidiarity compliance of EU draft legislation before it is made public.

National parliaments can enjoy a wider recognition of their subsidiarity concerns by developing a deliberative dialogue with relevant EU proposing institutions. As Ian Cooper (2012, 461) suggests, 'the Mechanism [subsidiarity control mechanism] is "hard core" within a much broader, non-binding deliberative exchange among NPs [national parliaments] and EU institutions'. Using the Mechanism for political ends, national parliaments are also expected to develop meaningful interactions with EU institutions, particularly with the Commission as the main EU legislative proponent if they want to strengthen their role in the EU legislative process. Yet, the dialogue should take place at the 'right' time – that is, *before* a legislative proposal is issued. At this stage, it is still possible to give consideration to subsidiarity justification and to push amendments forward on subsidiarity grounds whilst not undermining the political influence of the proposal initiator.

Some scholars recognize that one of the tools to help national parliaments acquire greater 'subsidiarity weight' early in the EU law-making process is the so-called 'green card' procedure (Fasone and Fromage 2016). This instrument partly rectifies the existing reasoned opinions' procedure, which, as mentioned above, requires the Commission to provide a revised subsidiarity justification for a proposal even though this proposal has already been verified as fully subsidiarity-compliant. The 'green card' procedure encourages the Commission and concerned national parliaments to engage in deliberations before subsidiarity justifications are officially released by the Commission. As a result, it potentially can lead to a reduced number of national parliaments' subsidiarity concerns expressed through the Mechanism and at the CJEU. Early deliberations on subsidiarity justification not only transform national parliaments from 'subsidiarity watchdogs' (Cooper 2006, 304) into partners collaborating with the Commission from the outset of a drafting process, but also shift the Commission's focus from seeking the consent of national parliaments on tabled

proposals (under the Mechanism) towards seeking their consent on proposals that have not yet been tabled.

Eventually, early deliberations assume that the subsidiarity justificatory procedure takes the form of deliberative reasoning (for and against a proposed action) instead of one-way reasoning (for a proposed action) in which policy actors do not challenge arguments put forward by a proposing body, but try to verify the acceptability of these arguments. The deliberative nature of the subsidiarity justificatory procedure can secure the meaningful accommodation of national parliaments' concerns. Engaged in dialogue from the outset, national parliaments and the Commission are more likely to reach valuable consensus about the necessity of EU actions.

Conclusion

Decision-makers at different levels of European governance have their own views about subsidiarity and follow their own procedures while participating in the supranational decision-making process. There are all sorts of institutions (including the Commission, the CJEU and national parliaments) that appeal to the assessment of the 'necessity' of proposed EU legislation. This is reflected in the growing interest in exploring the inter-institutional facet of the practical application of the subsidiarity principle in the EU legislative process (European Union 2018, 4).

Although EU institutions have made strong efforts to internalise the subsidiarity principle in the EU's regulation policy, and, particularly, the Commission has established and followed a number of procedures to ensure its draft legislation is compatible with subsidiarity, subsidiarity justification in the EU legislative process has not yet grown into a communicative tool for seeking inter-institutional consensus on proposed EU-level actions. These days, subsidiarity operates much more as a principle for structuring institutional differences and institutional disagreement on political discourse (Constantin 2008, 171) in the EU legislative arena rather than as a consensus-builder among actors with decision-making power located at different levels of EU governance. The proponents of EU actions try to justify these interferences through giving reasons which would be appropriate, from their institutional positions, to take actions at the EU level without looking for and embracing alternatives to suggested options as well as without arguing both for and against given options with other institutional actors who will be affected by it. Here lies the main problem with the application of the subsidiarity principle in the EU's multi-level decision-making where actors lack reciprocity in reasoning over subsidiarity violations in mutually-binding decisions; *a lack of reciprocity in subsidiarity justification by EU institutions reveals a more profound*

problem underlying the application of the subsidiarity principle in the EU – a lack of inter-institutional deliberations in reasoning over the necessity of EU actions.

The Janus-faced nature of the subsidiarity principle makes a perfect fit with securing two-way, for and against, deliberative reasoning over the necessity of EU actions between institutional actors involved in the production and implementation of EU legislation. Unfortunately, the dynamic nature of the subsidiarity principle is currently burdened with the justificatory procedure which, instead of embracing and promoting the dyadic nature of the subsidiarity principle, violates it, thus limiting institutional actors' capacity to reason just in one direction – for the necessity of proposed actions to be taken at the EU level. The evidence observed in all three cases of triggered 'yellow cards' assessed in this article demonstrates the flawed nature of the subsidiarity justification procedure according to which the Commission is capable of producing and reproducing (in response to the subsidiarity concerns of national parliaments) *the same set of stable arguments confirming the necessity of EU actions*. In all three 'yellow card' cases, the Commission was not engaged in two-way reasoning with opposing national parliaments over the controversial EU legislation, and it did not reciprocate the national parliaments' arguments – as a result, the Commission neither changed its own reasons nor brought new evidence to confirm them. *Keeping with what it initially stated, the Commission steadily demonstrated a lack of reciprocity in its vicious cycle of subsidiarity reasoning.*

Concluding, I want to cite a prominent saying of the Commission: 'subsidiarity cannot be reduced to a set of procedural rules but it [subsidiarity] is primarily a state of mind' (Commission of the European Communities 1993, 2). This is true: formality does not lend substantiality in observance of the multifaceted subsidiarity principle. The most appealing application of the subsidiarity principle lies in overcoming inter-institutional barriers and reaching a dialogical communication on the necessity of EU actions – that depends much more on external deliberations of supranational and national decision-makers and on the quality of their political dialogue among themselves rather than upon their rigorousness in following their own formal procedures. *Decision-makers should be committed to a deliberative discourse on subsidiarity justification based on reciprocal reason-giving for and against a given proposition at the earliest stages of the EU decision-making process*. Reciprocity in decision-making encourages actors to switch from pushing their own arguments to reconsidering them on the base of new evidence and accepting a better argument for a final decision (Gutmann and Thompson 2003). Such a shift in inter-institutional communication will drive better justified decisions and secure a more consensual environment in the EU decision-making process through

which 'everyone agrees that all objections to a proposal have been met or at least overridden by more important considerations' (Anderson 2006, 16). Under the reciprocal respect for opposing arguments/evidence, subsidiarity justification procedure can provide an inter-institutional setting to move away from confirming (one-way) to deliberative (two-way) reasoning over the issue of potential subsidiarity violation in the EU legislative process.

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Family Feud, or *Realpolitik*? Opposition Parties, Breakups and Realignments in Contemporary Japan

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Abstract

In this contribution, I use the breakup – just short of the 2017 General Election – of Japan's former second biggest political party, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), as a case study so as to assess the practical implications of splits and realignments in the most relevant party split in Japan since the DPJ was ousted from government in 2012. First, I examine DPJ's origin as an umbrella for ideologically diverse groups that opposed the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) – the government party in Japan throughout most of its post-war history, its tendency to factionalism, and the oftentimes damaging role the factional dynamics played in the party's decision-making process throughout the years. In the case study, it is understood that the creation of the Party of Hope – a split from the LDP, and the salience of constitutional issues were exogenous factors particular to that election, which helped causing the DPJ split.

Keywords

Democratic Party of Japan; Electoral Reform; Factionalism; Japan; Political Realignment

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Introduction[1]

In spite of being a consolidated liberal democracy, Japan lacks alternation of power. An opposition exists, but its electoral results are below the amount necessary for a change of government. Until 2017, there was a sizeable opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), but its electoral strategy towards unseating the incumbent government was unclear, and its support rates, weak.

Throughout most of its post-war history, Japan has been under the rule of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). In the election framework during the so-called 1955 system[2] (1955-1994), featuring single nontransferable vote multi-member districts (SNTV-MMD) – a system in which one district could elect from three to five Diet members according to the size of its electorate (Lijphart 2012), the party that has more resources has advantage in taking more seats (Reed 2003).

In this system, the LDP could maintain a steady majority in both houses of the Diet in spite of its internal divisions. Issues such as clientelism, links to big business and specialized policy-making groups, considered important for such electoral prowess, also facilitated electoral corruption, leading to incidents such as the Recruit and Sagawa cases[3] in the late-1980s and early-1990s (Sims 2001). The revealing of such scandals led to public distrust of the LDP government. As a result, in 1992, the Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, "had no choice but to stress its commitment to political reform", reopening discussions aiming towards revising the existing electoral system (Kohno 1997, 136).

In 1993, the passing of a vote of no-confidence called by the opposition, and supported by LDP dissidents, triggered the so-called Liar Dissolution[4] (*usotsuki kaisan*), dissolving the Diet and calling a Lower House general election. Its aftermath was a loose coalition of eight opposition parties that ousted the LDP from power for the first time since 1955 (Reed 2003). Some of these parties were created by LDP rebels just before the elections,

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[2] The 1955 system has its name due to a political realignment occurred in 1955, when the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP), divided between a left and a right faction, reunited, and as a response the Liberal Party – with links to the bureaucratic and business elites – and the Democratic Party – that preached a "more socially minded and state-centered conservatism" joined forces to establish the LDP. This merger had a great deal of support from the business elite, afraid of a rising support for the socialists. (Gordon 2013, 269)

[3] The Recruit scandal was named after the job-listing publishing company, still active to this day, "that issued millions of dollars' worth of its own stock at below-price market prices to politicians"(Kohno 1997, 136). The Sagawa scandal, by its turn, involved Sagawa's CEO bribing politicians to ensure benefits for the delivery industry, as well as the use of underground connections to intimidate opponents of his political ally Noboru Takeshita, clearing the path for his selection as Prime Minister in 1987 (Gordon 2013).

[4] *Asahi Shinbun*. June 23, 1993. p. 29. *Yomiuri Shinbun*. October 12, 2003. p. 13.

such as Ichiro Ozawa's Renewal Party (*Shinseito*), and Masayoshi Takemura's New Party Harbinger (*Sakigake*). In addition, from that point well until the end of the 1990s, a wave of splits and realignments led to the consolidation of most of the opposition under the DPJ umbrella.

In this research note, I discuss some structural problems inside the DPJ after its consolidation in 1998, the origins of its internal factionalism, and its oftentimes damaging role in the party decision-making process. I also refer to literature on the LDP's factions to analyze the main differences between the two parties' factional structure. Lastly, I use the 2017 DPJ split as a case study to assess the practical implications of splits and realignments in the most noteworthy opposition-related political fact since the DPJ was removed from government in 2012.

Taking these factors into consideration, I put forward the following research question:

RQ1: *Why did factionalism, despite being a common trait in the Japanese political party system, lead to the split in the DPJ?*

In this work I attempt to answer this question by presenting a background of the party realignments after the 1994 electoral reform, analyzing the trends of party realignments, breakaways, as well as intra-party factionalism from the 1993 General Election to this day, with a focus on the divisions within the DPJ and its splinter groups as of 2019: The Democratic Party for the People (DPP) and the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP).

This research relies mainly on literature review, with the aid of newspaper articles related to the topic whenever necessary.

Literature review

In Hyde's 2006 paper, she argues that the party faced more difficulty than the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) when it came to influencing the policy-making process in the Diet, pointing out that the party "made its own job of being the opposition party more complicated to overcome its own disunity" (Hyde 2006, 99). She also writes that factionalism became a salient issue in the DPJ ever since Yukio Hatoyama started the talks that eventually led to a merger with Ichiro Ozawa's Liberal party (Hyde 2009). The division within the party at the time was related to a lack of consultation with other members before discussing the possibility of merger. This was the first time in which the centralization of decisions became an issue inside the party, and many others were still to come. However, Hyde does not focus much on the absence of a consensus-building mechanism inside the party which is an important factor for a party that became an umbrella for most of the LDP opposition.

On the DPJ's decision-making structure, especially during its time in government, Mulgan (2014) points out that there was a tentative centralization during Yukio Hatoyama's tenure as prime minister, aiming to eliminate party intervention in policy-making and freeing "the government executive from the constraints of pro-protectionist backbenchers" (ibid., 19). However, a majority of backbenchers was against the new policy-making set-up, forcing the DPJ administrations to gradually return to the system in effect during the LDP's government, that is, a decentralized system in which "the ruling party had a veto over government policies and worked to modify them in the light of collective party and individual backbenchers' political and electoral interests" (ibid., 4). The return to such a decentralized process, she argues, led to the emergence "of an 'opposition party within the party'" (ibid., 12). This internal opposition, associated with the factionalism derived from former political affiliations which was an issue present in the party from the beginning, would help create the conditions for a schism that eventually happened in 2017.

On the competition between parties, Reed and Shimizu (2009b) argue that even though one of the main aims of the electoral reform was to create a two-party system that would lead to an alternation of power, the LDP has been able to avoid it by using a series of stratagems. All of these rely on a new proportional representation tier and try to void the implications of Duverger's law[5] – a generalization that electoral systems with (pure) single-member districts lead to a two-party system. Reed and Shimizu (2009b) predicted, however, that those stratagems, if repeated, would lead to the party defeat on the following 2009 general election, which actually happened. However, two of these stratagems – using the PR tier as a consolation prize for candidates who lost their SMDs, and trading LDP votes for *Komei* in PR in return for *Komei* votes in SMDs – are still effective to this day, rendering the explanation incomplete.

Other works have dealt with the cleavages in the DPJ from an electoral perspective (Hrebenar and Nakamura 2015; Pekkanen and Reed 2018a; 2018b; Scheiner, Smith, and Thies 2018) but present the ongoing factional dynamics only incidentally. This work attempts to fill in a gap in literature after the 2017 Lower House general election, arguing that if there was not an exogenous factor – the founding of the Party of Hope, which I discuss in the

[5] "The law is driven by the idea that in the long-run rational politicians and voters will realize that it is hopeless to have more than two parties competing at national level. Although three parties may remain in contention for a few years, a party which begins to slide will rapidly disappear as everybody comes to realize that it will win no seats at all if its support is evenly dispersed. By contrast, the number of parties in a proportional electoral system may be determined more by social forces than by the system's opportunities to split without penalty" (Brown, McLean, and McMillan 2018)

sections below, it is unlikely that the DPJ factionalism alone would have led to the major split that happened.

Party realignments in perspective

The first realignment: 1994 Electoral reform

To understand how the Japanese party system transitioned from the so-called "1955 system" to the parallel voting system, and how this transition affected the body politic, we have to understand the catalyst for such change. In 1994, under the coalition government, the Diet passed an electoral reform that created a new system – a parallel single-member-district along with proportional representation (SMD-PR),[6] and restricted the rules for electoral funding and spending (Sims 2001). One of the main reasons for the electoral reform was a mistaken consensus, established during the early 1990s, that the Japanese electoral system "was primarily responsible for factionalism, money politics, the power of special interests… [and] an emphasis on personality rather than policy in voting behavior, and LDP one-party dominance" (Curtis 1999, 142).

After the inception of the SMD-PR system, the debate on whether Japan would converge to a two-party system started, and one of the proponents of such political convergence was Ichiro Ozawa. For him, "Japan's relatively homogeneous electorate, whose ideological outlooks tend not to diverge too widely" would lead naturally to elections that are "likely to become battles between two large teams" (1994, 66). For some time, there were signs that led towards such conclusion. One was the establishment of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), in 1996, formed mainly by members from *Sakigake*, JSP and DSP, and its consolidation in 1998, with the incorporation of some other small parties. Another was the effect of Duverger's Law - mentioned above - on the new electoral system. Reed and Shimizu point out that, in fact, "Japan has moved closer to a two-party system in every election since the first under the new system, in 1996" (2009b, 29).

However, as theory does not always follow reality, in Japan it worked in a different way. As an alternative argument to Duverger's Law, Scheiner (2012) points out that the mixed SMD-PR system used in Japan creates a situation in which the PR rules create conditions for the emergence of a multiparty system to emerge but also introduces constraints on party proliferation. For example, it is possible to point out that there are

[6] It consists of an electoral system in which both a single member district (SMD) and a proportional representation (PR) bloc work in parallel. On the election day, the electorate will be given a ballot with two columns. One is to vote for its local district, writing the candidate's name; the other one, to vote on its preferred political party for PR.

parties that depend mostly on their PR votes to be represented in the Diet. An example is the Japanese Communist Party which attained 12 seats in the 2017 general election, 11 of them being on proportional representation slots (NHK 2017). In addition, there are originally regional parties with a noticeable presence both in PR and single-member constituencies, such as the Western Japan-based right-wing *Ishin no Kai*, elected three members in single member districts and eight members (most of them in the PR bloc from which Osaka prefecture is a part) on the 2017 Lower House election, as well as two out of the four seats for the Osaka constituency on the 2019 Upper House election (NHK 2017; 2019). In other words, if Japan had adopted a pure single-member district system as in the United Kingdom, there is a possibility that the JCP, in spite of having a reasonable national voting share, would be left with only one constituency seat.

After the electoral reform in 1994, and especially throughout the 2000s, the political scenario indeed shifted towards a two-party system. There was a belief that with the DPJ, it would not be the case of a "perennial opposition" anymore. Rather, it would be the only alternative to an LDP government, since in most districts, competition is "between two – and only two – viable candidates, offering voters a choice between one candidate from the ruling government coalition and one from the opposition" (Reed and Shimizu 2009b, 29). Sasada et al (2013) write about the variations of party polarization in Japan and the United States and the differences between the two countries, focusing on the party leadership strategies and organizational structure. They state that the DPJ "placed great emphasis on presenting the party's ability to manage the government" (2013, 426–27). The reason, accordingly, was that a handover of power became a concrete possibility. They argue further that "as the DPJ tried to appeal to the voters as a possible governing party, its party leadership initially took a convergence (counterproposal) strategy" (ibid., 437), working with the LDP in certain issues by offering counterproposals so as to demonstrate that the party could formulate effective policies and demand realistic amendments to the ruling party's bills. In addition, they posit that "weak leadership initially impeded polarization, but a more centralized party organization in the late 2000s allowed the party to take a confrontational strategy, widening the gap between the two parties" (ibid., 437) which means that in the analyzed period of time, even though there was no significant difference between the policy positions among LDP and DPJ members, "a top-down party polarization occurred as a result of party leaders' voting strategies" (ibid., 434).

Three moments illustrate the possibility of a handover of power discussed above. First, in the 2003 general election, the first after the merger with Ichiro Ozawa's Liberal Party,

the party won 177 seats (up from its 136 seats before the election), "a historic result as the opposition had never done this well in the 1955 system" (Hyde 2009, 57). After that, in the 2007 Upper House election when the DPJ became the majority party in the chamber. Then, in the 2009 general election when the DPJ achieved a landslide victory, which many commentators saw as a turning point. (Lipscy and Scheiner 2012; Rosenbluth and Thies 2010).

The party came to office in 2009 with the intention of consolidating the political control in the Prime Minister's office, with politicians making policy decisions and bureaucrats giving advice and implementing the decisions but not making policies themselves (Stockwin 2019, 20). Yet, in the end of its time in office, the DPJ's relations with the bureaucracy differed little from when the LDP had been in power, that is to say, there was no mechanism to completely rein in the bureaucrats.

The ongoing clash between politicians and the bureaucracy is noteworthy issue in Japan as there are several theories aiming to explain the links between non-elected and elected officials. Mishima (2013) writes that historically the bureaucracy has an "activist organizational culture", a legacy of state-led development in the Meiji period (1868-1912), which makes bureaucrats able to "assume the kind of responsibilities that would be reserved exclusively for politicians in other countries" (705). In addition, "the bureaucracy often works as the pivot of policymaking and undertakes coordination among different actors" (ibid., 705) -- a role that provides leeway for manipulation. Lastly, Mishima (2013) points out that "bureaucrats can talk directly to interest groups via policy deliberation councils and informal communication channels" which effectively means that they can solve administration-related issues without involving politicians, often being able to act "as the principal, rather than the agent, and exert noticeable influence in policymaking" (706).

This desire to replicate the Westminster model of strong executive power in the hands of the prime minister was accomplished at first but due to backbenchers' dissatisfaction with the new system, was scaled down and finally returned to the same governance model used during the LDP governments. I talk about these reforms in detail below, along with the issues of centralization and decentralization of the intra-party decision-making process.

Post-1995 realignments and party factionalism

In this section, I analyze the effects of factionalism in the opposition parties' realignment during the late-1990s and early-2000s. It is necessary to point out that the way factions were formed in the DPJ differs drastically from the LDP. One of the reasons is that

the DPJ was formed essentially by three groups: socialists (from JSP and the Democratic Socialist Party), LDP defectors, and politicians from the new parties formed in the mid-1990s. On the other hand, factionalism in the after-reform LDP is mostly related to intra-party post allocation and party presidential elections, as well as information exchange (Krauss and Pekkanen 2010). These differences in origin would be crucial at a later date, when DPJ was confronted with two strategies that divided its membership and led to the 2017 split.

Due to the peculiar circumstances of the opposition realignment and DPJ establishment as a congregation of splinter groups from across the political spectrum (Hyde 2009; Stockwin 2019), it was difficult to reach a party-wide consensus on policy. For example, "even the groups which derive from the LDP are not coherent with regard to their political programs"; the Ozawa faction would include nationalists and neoliberals, and Hatoyama's group would tend to be moderate in both ideology and economic policies (Zakowski 2011, 197).

Among those who started their careers in the 1990s – meaning they never belonged to either the LDP or to the left-wing opposition – many are supporters of neoliberal economics as a result of their education at the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management, a think-tank specializing in educating the new generation of Japanese leaders (Zakowski 2011). This ideological background draws these politicians closer to the LDP than to some members within their own party.

In 2004, Koellner wrote that the main factions/tendencies inside DPJ were as follows: *Yūai kurabu* ("Fraternity club", former DSP), *Shinseikyoku kondankai* ("New government discussion circle", former JSP/SDP), *Kuni no katachi kenkyūkai* ("Shape of the nation research group," with many members originating from citizen networks), *Seiken senryaku kenkyūkai* ("Political strategy research group," conservative, many with *Shinshintō* background), and *Kōhōkai* ("High companions' society," former *Sakigake* members at the core) (2004, 98). At the time, "while most of the groups inside the DPJ can easily be categorized as cliques or tendencies, the *Yūai kurabu* and the *Shinseikyoku kondankai* should be regarded as institutionalized factions," with such institutionalization being related to the both the links to the labor union confederations *Dōmei* and *Sōhyō* as well as connections to previous parties, "the DSP in the case of the *Yūai kurabu* and the JSP in the case of the *Shinseikyoku kondankai*" (97–98).

In this way, the original DPJ factions were more related to the origins of its members than not. It is important to understand the role of factions inside the DPJ because the party

needed to resort to "vaguely worded official statements" that tried to "gloss over diverging intra-party standpoints" in order to conceal this internal cleavage (Koellner 2011, 32).

Throughout the 2000s, the DPJ tried to distribute posts among various groups to appease the members of the different groups that helped form and enlarge the party. With such actions, it remained mostly united until 2017 due to the advantages a well-established party can provide in the PR election tier, which is not accessible for independent candidates. The logic behind the new electoral system explains why discontented conservative DPJ Diet members did not turn their back on the party often. First, because these politicians increase their electoral chances by belonging to a large party. Second, because it is only if there is no LDP incumbent in a said district that a potential DPJ renegade can compete for a seat with someone who received the party nomination (Koellner 2011).

This assessment, however, just corresponds to the DPJ before becoming government, since Ozawa's faction – *Isshinkai* – split from the DPJ five months before the 2012 general election, perhaps in a strategic movement to draw itself apart from a party that did not deliver most of its electoral promises. Gordon (2013) points out that the main reason for Ozawa's departure was his stance against a "compromise with the LDP to win Diet approval of a two-stage doubling in the consumption tax," to pay for the March 2011 disaster recovery without further increasing the government debt (349). According to him, Ozawa left because "by increasing taxes, the party contradicted its pre-disaster platform of 2009" (Gordon 2013, 349). Thus, in spite of its ideological patchwork, the DPJ stood together because of the actions of the leadership – that tried to cater to the interests of the main factions by either finding a minimum compromise and distributing party leadership posts according to the strength of each group – and of the institutional logic of the new electoral system.

In the next section, I present another important point to understand the DPJ attitude towards factionalism and the reasoning for the party breakup in recent years: its decision-making process, especially during its time in government.

Decision-making process in the DPJ

According to Mulgan (2014), the DPJ's 2009 manifesto pledged to shift from a policy-making process in which the government and the ruling party proceed in parallel, "to a unitary system of Cabinet-centered policy making" (4). Its aim was eliminating party intervention in policy-making, something closer to what the DPJ's secretary-general Ichiro Ozawa had long defended: a strong Cabinet-system like Britain's (Ozawa 1994, 55). The abolition of the party's Policy Research Council (an autonomous party body in charge of

policy-making, which also held vetting power) supposedly would "enable backbenchers to exercise policy influence through their inclusion in the government" (Mulgan 2014, 4).

However, the manifesto did not have much input from the party. Imai (2013) points out that since DPJ internal rules do not require the manifesto be approved by conference, enabling "the party leader to arrange the manifesto almost entirely at his/her discretion" (232). This was the case for Yukio Hatoyama, Ozawa's successor as party president.

The centralization of decisions led to backbenchers' dissatisfaction with the new system. Solving this problem required a degree of compromise by the leadership, that then established 'Diet members' policy research committees', where DPJ Diet members could discuss government-sponsored bills. However, the decision-making authority would still remain with the Cabinet for that time being. During the Kan and Noda governments (2010-2012), the old system effectively came back into force. According to Mulgan (2014), "[w]hile the Kan administration brought back some elements of the old LDP system of 'prior examination' and *de facto* 'prior approval' through its newly reconstituted PRC, the Noda administration fully restored these powers to the party" (19).

Mulgan (2014) also points out that the "existence of the PRC and its policy committees allowed opposition to mobilize from within the party", creating constraints to the decision-making process, and most importantly, "giving the impression not only of policy stasis but also of the emergence of an 'opposition party within the party'" (12). That is an indicator that DPJ was as prone to factional struggles as the LDP, since "both major parties lack a clear common denominator for the factions they are composed of" (Zakowski 2011, 202).

However, Mulgan's approach does not explain what happened with the party after its 2012 defeat. There was internal opposition, but this infighting was a natural behavior inside both parties. What differs is how the parties behave after the issues are solved.

Unlike the LDP, the party did not have a "no-side"[7] (*Nihon Keizai Shinbun*, September 20, 2018) approach after heated discussions, with members challenging the party line even after the decision had already been made. One possible reason for this is that the LDP's intra-party decision-making is a consensus-based policymaking system that was designed to keep its members happy enough not to defect. This was made by allocating posts within the party and the government as well as taking into account all opinions inside the party (Reed and Shimizu 2009a).

[7] "No-side" is a rugby terminology, indicating the end of the match. In Japanese politics, it means that after an election, everybody is (or should be) on the same team.

Once the DPJ went back to the opposition, the intra-party rivalry continued, especially in the months preceding the dissolution of the Lower House in 2017 and the intensification of such cleavages became one of the main reasons for the Democratic Party split. This is covered in the following section.

Case study: 2017 General Election and the DPJ splits and mergers

I use the 2017 DPJ split just before the General Election as a case study due to the magnitude of the party split that ensued.

Throughout the LDP's history, there were breakaway incidents as well. However, those were not as serious as the DPJ's 2017 split, that is, they never threatened the party's existence or caused its complete dissolution. In addition, more often than not, the splits happen due to factional issues. The 1993 split, for example, was due to a rift in the Takeshita faction – the largest one at the time – after its leader, Shin Kanemaru, was arrested for tax evasion. The fight for Kanemaru's succession ultimately led to the Ozawa/Hata group split that created the *Shinshintō* (Kohno 1997).

How did the DPJ overcome its main differences during its early years? An explanation resides in the use of manifestos as strategy. Sasada et al (2013) point out that "in order to compete in an election upholding a manifesto, the party needed to draw a clear distinction in policy stances, between the DPJ and other parties (particularly the LDP)" (430). Thus, the party had to overcome most of its factional differences since fighting an election on a manifesto means that the party has to compromise on a minimum viable government program.

As of 2017, the Democratic Party (DP) – DPJ's new name after a merger with a faction of the Osaka-based *Ishin no Kai* – was "deeply divided over a center-left strategy that included cooperation with the JCP and a center-right strategy that supported amending the constitution" (Pekkanen and Reed 2018a, 25). Though, the JCP was never considered as a coalition partner – not even in the grand coalition of eight parties that ousted the LDP from power in 1993 (Kohno 1997; Pekkanen and Reed 2018b; Hyde 2009). In 2014, as constitutional reform-related issues were gaining salience,[8] the DPJ, with Katsuya Okada as leader, moved towards cooperation with other opposition parties (including the JCP) in a united front for constitutionalism. This also led to the fielding of unified opposition candidates in all single-member districts in the 2016 Upper House election, a "minor

[8] In 2014, Shinzo Abe's administration changed the interpretation of the Constitution's Article 9 (the peace clause) "so that Japan might exercise the right of collective self-defense." (Izumikawa 2018, 316). The political groups that were against this measure are referred to as "constitutional opposition."

miracle", according to Pekkanen and Reed (2018b, 81). After Okada's resignation as party president in 2016, Renho, Upper House member for the Tokyo constituency, also proposing cooperation with the rest of opposition, defeated Seiji Maehara, one of the pro-constitutional-review neoliberal DPJ members.

Renho's tenure as party leader, however, was not without crisis. As conservative members left the party over the ambiguous position in relation to major issues – especially towards the constitution and collaboration with other opposition parties – the party needed to "take the revolt and defection of its members seriously and take actions to rebuild the party before it's too late" (*The Japan Times Online* 2017a).

At this point, it is already possible to say that more than the decision-making process itself, the ideological divide between liberals and conservatives[9] inside the DP – in spite of their former party affiliations – was becoming an important issue inside the party. In 2017, after a poor display in the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly elections, Renho resigned and Maehara succeeded her as the party president. During his tenure, the dissent – led mainly by Goshi Hosono's conservative faction (*The Japan Times Online* 2017b) – became stronger, with its members exploring the possibility of forming a new party. Soon before the 2017 General Election, held in October that year, as the Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike[10] formed the Party of Hope (*Kibō no Tō*), these dissenters saw the new party as an opportunity to cooperate with the LDP on constitutional reform. Maehara even proposed merging the DP and Hope. A complete merger did not happen, but it triggered the creation of the CDP, composed mainly by the DP members that were in favor of collaborating with other left-wing opposition parties.

In 2018, the DPP, headed by Yuichiro Tamaki, was created as a result of the merger of the remnants of the DP and Hope, so to create a bigger structure to fight the 2019 local and Upper House elections (Yoshida 2018). A Japan Times editorial, criticizing the merger, wrote that it "seems to be yet another example of an unprincipled union of political parties in pursuit of numbers" (*The Japan Times Online* 2018).

As mentioned above, the differences in political origin and internal discussions on which kind of policy should be spearheaded by the party determined the split that formed the CDP and drove some DP right-wing politicians towards Koike's party, then to DPP.

[9] In this context, "liberals" refers to those in favor of an opposition united front alliance with the JCP and other left-wing parties; and "conservatives," by its turn, refers to the neoliberals and other center-right politicians who were keen to compromise with the LDP in the constitutional reform issue.

[10] Koike left the LDP in 2016 because of the lack of party endorsement for her candidacy to the Tokyo metropolitan governorship. (Pekkanen and Reed 2018a, 21; 2018b, 82–85)

However, the evidence shows that the main reason for the split was the impossibility of a complete merger between the DP and Hope, due to the restrictions that Yuriko Koike had towards "DP members deemed too left-leaning" (Osaki 2017).

In spite of the dimension of the 2017 split, as of December 2019, there were news that indicated another opposition realignment. Throughout the past November, the *Yomiuri Shinbun*[11] reported on the possibility of a merger between opposition parties by the end of the year. On December 6, Yukio Edano, CDP's leader, in a meeting with the DPP and the Social Democratic Party leaders, proposed a merger aiming towards a united front against Shinzo Abe's LDP administration in a forthcoming Lower House general election, that has to happen until the end of the current Diet session, in October 2021.

In August 2020, after months of standstill in the negotiations, the merger was finally completed with Yukio Edano being re-chosen as party leader (Sugiyama 2020). The prospects of an electoral victory are still low, and its main reason is the electorate's negative perception about the DPJ administration. As Scheiner et al (2018) point out, "the difficult truth for Japan's opposition parties is that, since 2012, the LDP is simply the most popular item on the menu for voters" (36). Ikeda and Reed (2016) complement this view by stating that the party "had simply failed to govern effectively or even consistently" and the rejection of the party was "severe and long-lasting" (55).

Conclusion

In conclusion, some reasons that led to DPJ's breakaway are clear. Since the party was formed by ideologically diverse groups – unlike the LDP which is a conservative party from the start – its factions were mostly related to these political origins. Consequently, the DPJ leadership, especially during the 2000s, tried to balance the distribution of posts among the groups that helped form and enlarge the party to conceal internal cleavages.

There is also an institutional reason for the absence of splits in the DPJ during the 2000s. The logic of the new electoral system made it risky for a politician to defect, since she would face a DPJ-nominated and a possible LDP candidate in the same single-member district which reduces her chances of being elected; politicians without a party affiliation are also not allowed to run in the proportional representation district. This logic stayed in place until the 2017 Lower House general election, when the electoral prospects of the Party of Hope were incentives for conservative-leaning DP members to defect. I return to this point below.

[11] *Yomiuri Shinbun*, November 4, 2019, 4; November 13, 2019, 4; November 18, 2019, 4.

The decision-making process inside the party, differently from the LDP, had moments of centralization and decentralization that depended mostly on the party leadership at the said moment. Mulgan (2014) explains how the decision-making process went from a tentative Westminster-inspired prime-ministerial-centered one to the system of prior examination and prior approval that was part of the LDP's manual. Sasada et al (2013) also write that the strategy was a result more of the party leadership positions than of grassroots pressure resulted from political polarization. However, even though there was the emergence of an "opposition inside the government", the party's inability to take into account the diverging opinions was crucial for the split that happened.

The case study presented cannot be completely understood if not by an exogenous factor in 2017: the creation of the Party of Hope in the period between the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election and Lower House election. The emergence of Yuriko Koike's Party of Hope opened a door for the DPJ conservatives that wanted to cooperate with the LDP on constitutional reform. Koike's refusal to a complete merger led the DPJ's center-left to create a new party, the CDP, that became the strongest opposition party in that election. The cessation of this exogenous factor, that is to say, the unfulfillment of the initial electoral expectations towards Koike's Party of Hope, explains, for example, the discussions that led to a merger between the DPP and the CDP at the time of writing. The parties effectively realized that the price of standing apart is an LDP administration without a possibility of an opposition party administration.

This research note contributes to the study of the contemporary Japanese political system by providing a concise background of opposition realignments, with a focus on the discussion of the former biggest opposition party's internal decision-making process, its failures and, more importantly, the exogenous factor that led to its split. It is also important to point out that even with the CDP/DPP merger, completed in August 2020, public opinion polls show that the electorate's evaluation of the opposition has not changed in a positive way, with the new CDP keeping the same amount of approval of its pre-merger existence (NHK 2020). Further research is still necessary so as to understand which are other factors that collaborate to the opposition parties' low support rates in contemporary Japanese politics, as well as the political perceptions among new generation of voters, whose patterns of political preferences are still unclear.

An important factor that needs further consideration is the role of the oppositions in the post-Abe political environment. Abe stepped down in September 2020, and his chosen successor was the former Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yoshihide Suga. As the LDP party

presidential mandate runs until September 2021, there is still some time for Suga to try avoiding the fate of being only a caretaker prime minister, in spite of the criticism towards his government's conduction of the Olympics and the COVID-19 pandemic[12].

Despite that, with an LDP presidential election in September, whose results are unforeseeable as of now, and the Lower House's four-year term ending in October 2021 (in the case there is not a snap election until then), there is a fair amount of uncertainty about the way Japan is going to be led in the next decade.

[12] *Tokyo Shimbun*, May 5, 2021.

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Sino-American Tensions and Their Effects on Counter-terrorism Operations in Djibouti

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Abstract

This research note examines the tensions between the United States and the People's Republic of China in Djibouti. Djibouti has become a battleground of interests between the US and China with both building military bases on its territory. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) utilises its base to conduct naval operations and to implement the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), often conflicting with US operations and interests. The research note relies on primary documents to investigate the interaction between the two states over Djibouti and to assess whether and how China's presence is an obstacle to US counterterrorism operations. This analysis indicates that a conflict of interests between the US and China is inevitable, but the US' counterterrorism operation in Djibouti can be protected from the diplomatic conflict.

Keywords

Africa; China; Counter-terrorism; Djibouti; Relations; Security; United States

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Introduction

In the wake of the bombing attacks of September 11th, 2001, the US has pursued a counterterrorism operation internationally to combat security threats. The growth of groups including the Taliban, the Islamic State, al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab within the MENA region required the US to maintain a physical presence within the region and to cooperate with national counterterrorism initiative. The presence of the US military's Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti is crucial because it provides Washington with an operations' base to coordinate resources, personnel and military operations around the Gulf of Aden. Djibouti's location allows the US to cooperate with international powers through land and sea activities, anti-piracy campaigns and diplomatic missions. China's investment in Djibouti has diluted the US' dominance in the state, allowing China to influence the local government and potentially disturb US operations, especially its counterterrorism missions. China's campaigns for economic expansion and diplomatic security varies from the US and their allies, damaging US operations within the MENA region.

The participation of both in the United Nations (UN) and other international fora has demonstrated cooperation in areas including counterpiracy and counterterrorism, showing that the powers can communicate to address national security issues. But resource and power competition have soured relations, as identified by statements from US diplomats including John Bolton, Robert O'Brien and Jake Sullivan. Identifying Chinese and US ambitions alongside their conflicts and conformities is crucial when discussing whether China's presence within Djibouti is detrimental to US counterterrorism operations. This research note will utilise archival material and diplomatic documents from Djibouti, China, the US alongside other states to examine the intentions of China's expansion within Djibouti and will assess the perceived risk posed by China to US counterterrorism initiatives. The research note will further investigate whether US-China tensions globally impact Djibouti and its politics.

China's Expansion in Africa

In November 2015 the Chinese government announced a ten-year lease with Djibouti over the Bab el-Mandab Strait. The rental of the land was $20 million USD per annum (considerably less than other state's rent prices) and they planned to appoint 2,000 of a possible 10,000 personnel to the base (Cabestan 2019, 737). The base, known as the Chinese People's Liberation Army Support Base in Djibouti (PLA Base), is 0.5 km^2 with a 400m runway. The base began its operations in August 2017, and by May 2018 the construction of a pier began to increase the military facility's capabilities. The announcement

represents an early manoeuvre by China to consolidate its power in Africa with a physical presence. As Krupakar (2017) notes, "China has realized that it can ill-afford to be perennially dependent on Western powers for global security underwritings" (Krupakar 2017,208) because they don't share common ideologies and the US (alongside their allies) seeks to undermine China's presence. He further notes that the PLA base represents an incubus for the diplomatic conflict between China and the US (Krupakar 2017). The PLA base therefore represents diplomatic tensions between China and the US, with China utilising the base to secure its territorial security. This distrust of the US to maintain territorial security has frequently generated animosity and mistrust between China and the US, potentially damaging US counterterrorism objectives (Ibid, 208).

There are six official objectives of the PLA Base. These are to 1) logistically support the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), 2) increase China's combat capabilities, 3) increase China's presence in the South China Sea, 4) further Chinese influence in national African politics, 5) mobilise UN affiliates to operations within the region and 6) assist humanitarian missions (Cabestan 2019, 746).

The PLA Base is an asset for the PLAN because the port supplies resources and personnel to the PLAN vessels operating around Somalia and the South China Sea. The port also accommodates the PLA supply transfer through airborne and naval channels. Between 2008-2015 China deployed over 60 warships in 21 escort missions around the Indian Ocean, with a prospective increase in operations from 2017 following the PLA Base commencing activities (Henry 2016, 17). The increase in operations, combined with further developments of ports in Africa, highlights Beijing's growing activity in the continent. China operates eleven ports in Africa and influences another 36 through funding or construction. China's ports investments in the region provide Beijing with local allies which are often encouraged to align with China's policy objectives (Deveremont 2019). This activity undermines the US presence at maritime choke points, including the Bab el-Mandab Strait.

The Indian navy monitored an increase of Chinese vessels and submarines in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the Malacca Straits, Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. India criticised China for their deployment of Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUVs) in IOR since December 2019, which have completed 3,400 surveillance missions (Sutton 2020). Theses missions surveyed areas of material interest, indicating that China hoped to find lucrative areas to extract resources from withing the IOR. China's research missions highlight interest in the region's natural resources, furthering anxiety that China is considering expansion which, in turn, would increase China-India tensions within the IOR (Albert 2016).

This expansion in Chinese activity and attempts to consolidate their power alarms the US and its allies; because Beijing's presence seeks to challenge their authority and counterterrorism operations, whilst the PLA base in Djibouti has allowed China to conduct a more confrontational role in the US-China tensions (Stilwell 2020). The PLA base also enables China to carry out expansion missions in areas like the IOR thus; increasing Beijing's outreach.

The PLA has completed humanitarian missions including the evacuation of nationals during the Libyan (2011) and Yemen (2015) crises (Lei. 2017, 56-57). Providing security for the approximately 100,000 Chinese nationals residing in the horn of Africa is key for China; because it allows them to form economic and political connections in the African continent. The PLA Base is important in providing Chinese nationals with support during emergencies (Cabestan 2019, 739). The UN deployed troops to the MENA region from the PLA Base and in December 2015 China increased its UN peacekeepers to 8,000, directing them to operations in states including South Sudan, Mali, and the Congo. The base legitimises China's presence in Africa while allowing international organisations to utilise Chinese assets. The UN's use of the PLA Base further secures China and reduces the intensity of US attempts to remove them from the territory. The UN does assist the US' counterterrorism operations while providing security for international powers. The PLA Base is therefore an unwelcome source of support to the US' counterterrorism operations in the MENA region. The presence of the UN also encourages communication between the US and China.

Diplomatic relations

A significant threat to the US' security and a driver of Chinese foreign policy in the MENA region is the China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This originates from China's ports of Guangzhou and Fuzhou via the African ports in Kenya and Djibouti. According to the Chinese government, the BRI pursues four key policies: 1) the re-engineering of China's strategic environment, 2) the projection of Chinese economic power, 3) the security of Chinese access to energy and minerals and 4) the boosting in economic growth in western China. The BRI is expected to cost $1.4 trillion, eleven times larger than the US Marshall Plan and is far more ambitious because it intends to expand China's relations across three continents. Chinese expansion jeopardises US' investments in mineral industries in the Gulf of Aden, potentially reducing US' supply, as China's investments in African states, larger consumption and transport links offer an alternative for mineral distributers. China's focus on establishing diplomatic and cultural relations with African states also allows them to

undercut the US' presence there. The BRI is therefore a front for US-China tensions (Chatzky and McBride 2020).

The project aspires to connect Chinese businesses, allowing them to trade and transport commodities at a reduced rate without foreign interference. This provides the government of China with more political power and influence within the countries developing BRI (Tarrosy and Vörös 2018). Djibouti has benefited from the BRI, with installations of water pipelines and infrastructure development (République de Djibouti 2016).

The BRI is partially funded by African states including Djibouti who have benefitted from Chinese loans. The strategy has generated policies of debt-servitude. African states who fail to repay loans are obliged to offer land to China at a significantly reduced price. This undermines US influence and allows China to expand territory by offering stimulus calculated to result in debt, thus expansion. The US embassy has opposed the BRI since its inception, citing allegations of fraud, manipulation and criminality. The World Bank has also barred the BRI from construction projects as it found evidence of fraud (US Embassy in Georgia 2020).

Recent infrastructure projects funded by the Chinese government and private businesses in Djibouti, including railways, ports, pipelines, hospitals, and stadiums, have contributed to Djibouti's debt, expanding from 50% to 104% of GDP between 2014 and 2018. As a consequence of this, Djibouti had to offer alternative methods of payment through trading subsidies, territory, diplomatic assistance and other initiatives deemed beneficial to Beijing. Chinese diplomatic tactics seek to acquire land rights and to gain support from states that have expressly opposed the US. China's debt-servitude *modus operandi* does not directly confront US' counterterrorism operations, but it promotes *de facto* Chinese expansion while damaging recipient state's economies.

US Operations within Africa

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries the US sought to retain a presence within Africa to ensure security from competitor states and groups representing a threat to its own existence and business interests.

The strategy of supporting smaller states to combat security threats was a significant component of US foreign policy because it promoted a physical and ideological presence, allowing the US to face threats by distributing troops and conducting operations. In fact, US campaigns in Libya, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan were designated as essential to maintaining

Western security, but their results were inconsistent and generated condemnation from China, Russia and the wider international community.

A US policy of political domination resonates throughout its National Security Strategy, detailing the rising threat of states that conflict with US interests and jeopardise its own security. In the 2017 report The White House states that:

> "America's military remains the strongest in the world. However, U.S. advantages are shrinking as rival states modernize and build up their conventional and nuclear forces. Many actors can now field a broad arsenal of advanced missiles, including variants that can reach the American homeland" (The White House 2017, 3).

The concern for US security is abundant, acknowledging the rising capabilities of enemy states including Iran, China and Russia in the Gulf of Aden and globally. Donald Trump's Presidency concluded with US-Chinese relations straining. Chinese influence has been growing steadily within Africa since 2000, with Chinese companies spending greater amounts on developing foreign relations with African nations. The Forum on Africa-China Cooperation (FOCAC) was formed in 2000, allowing Chinese initiatives to cooperate further with African states. The first conference, held in Beijing October 2000 included forty-four African nations, with China offering aid packages, interest-free loans, and business deals to African states throughout the conferences held in Beijing (Sina English 2006). The 2015 conference offered around $60 billion in financial incentives to the African countries attending (China Daily 2015). Chinese initiatives are a concern for the US, and they have the potential to change foreign relations between the three continents.

Meanwhile, the US has economic programmes through various formats including the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) initiative. Approximately forty African countries benefit from the African Growth and Opportunity Act providing financial aid and allowing the US to enjoy a diplomatic influence over its beneficiaries as the states supporting the US in the UN; and sustaining its diplomatic presence (Carafano 2019).

At the same time, the Chinese government is also subject to less diplomatic and international scrutiny, allowing Beijing to support governments like Sudan with less international condemnation. According to John Bolton, President Trump's former Security Advisor:

"[T]his is a very important point for the U.S. and the West as a whole to wake up [to],". In Bolton's view, if the state of Djibouti leased the port to the People's Republic of China, "the balance of power in the Horn of Africa, a major artery of maritime trade between Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia would shift in favour of China" (Maru 2019).

The US' concern over China's increasing economic and diplomatic influence has been exemplified by Beijing's action in Djibouti, demonstrating that its presence is threatening US counterterrorism operations as the US no longer has unlimited diplomatic influence in the region. Bolton's remarks on Djibouti represent the increasingly confrontational US policy against China, demonstrating the value of the base and the wider conflict it is generating.

Shifting attention to counterterrorism

The fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of terrorist attacks required the US to shift focus onto the MENA region because countries including Somalia, Iraq and Nigeria became states harbouring terrorist groups. Their lacking ability to combat terrorist groups generated a threat to Western security when factions including the Taliban and Islamic State (IS) became able to carry out attacks on the West. Failure of the local governments to fight these terrorist groups has enabled them to take advantage of the population for its own purposes. For instance, Al-Shabaab achieved a high GDP through an un-challenged influence in Somalia, allowing it to fund its campaigns from stolen property and taxing the locals (Keatinge 2014, 16-18).

The US sought to combat this security threat through targeted initiatives supporting states fighting terrorist groups. In 2007, the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) was formed as the first US foreign policy unit with a specific focus on African security. The US assisted governments such as Somalia and Nigeria, providing training, munitions, and tactical support, allowing the states to defend themselves, establish an effective government and develop infrastructure to combat the groups and restore control. US Major-General Jeffrey Kohler stated in 2003, 'What we don't want to see in Africa is another Afghanistan, a cancer growing in the middle of nowhere' (Emerson 2008, 53). Somalia is frequently described as a 'failed state' by the international community with an inefficient infrastructure for properly combatting rebels and leaving the room for exploitation and domination by al-Shabaab (International Crisis Group 2008). The recent surge in US support for the state and the training of its military has resulted in al-Shabaab losing territory, as international forces have been able to combat them (Barnes 2016). AFRICOM uses bases, including in Djibouti to conduct military operations, gathering intelligence, reconnaissance and air strikes to assist Iraqi and local Syrian forces against the remnants of ISIS (Carafano 2019). The Djibouti base is critical for this operation, allowing the US to oversee and influence governments across the continent. US Army Major General Joel Tyler highlights the pivotal role of Camp Lemonier in US operations, stating that "[t]he training and equipment that U.S. Africa

Command provides to the Rapid Intervention Battalion uniquely demonstrates the U.S. commitment to enhancing our shared goal of improving regional security and stability on the continent. Our partnership and training continue to be in demand" (US Embassy in Djibouti 2020).

Nathaniel Allen (2018, 664-667) suggests that AFRICOM policy either enhances the capacity of partner states to establish a coherent and secure government or generates political instability by ignoring corruption and entrenching repressive allies. Scholars remain divided on the effectiveness of the policy, with Zeleza (2013, 174) stating that Africans "don't trust the military as a partner in development, and fear mission creep for AFRICOM to militarization and securitization of economic relations with the US". China is a critic of AFRICOM, arguing that the US' presence within Djibouti is detrimental to counterterrorism operations because they generate further instability (Allen 2018).

The Djiboutian government itself appeared to welcome the US' presence within their state. Its foreign minister, Mahmoud Ali Youssuf stated in 2014: "Djibouti is one of the top targets of al-Shabaab in the region... If we can contain them, ok, if we can get rid of them it's better" (Gardner 2014).

Military bases and their necessity for US operations

The US has approximately thirty-four military bases in Africa. Camp Lemonnier is central for the Pentagon operations in the region, allowing Washington to station troops, drones, and aircraft in the Gulf of Aden. The base's centrality and Djibouti's stability were key drivers for the US' development in the area.

For Rear Admiral Richard Hunt, former commander of the US Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa, "We feel the best way to counterterrorism is to go after the conditions that foster terrorism" (Emerson 2008, 58). US initiatives are central to the US' foreign and counterterrorism policy because they instruct Western and local militaries, allowing them to become self-sufficient in combatting terrorism.

The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) and AFRICOM operate from Camp Lemonnier, with further instalments in Chad, Niger, Mali, Morocco and Algeria. The East Africa Response Force (EARF)'s main headquarters is situated in the Djibouti base. EARF's operation is critical for the US, as its rapid dispatch saved US staff in the Tanzanian and Kenyan Embassies following attacks in 1998. The EARF"s deployment depends on the Djibouti base because they utilise large quantities of resources and personnel. The Djiboutian base also allows the US to launch geopolitical organisations such as the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) promoting US cooperation with Chad,

Niger, Mauritania, Mali, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal and Nigeria to address national security issues. The US' investments of over $600 million in financial aid have allowed local police forces and militaries to conduct research and counteract groups attempting to displace the governments (Archer & Popovic 2007, 9-10).

In sum, the US' counterterrorism strategy depends on bases including Camp Lemonnier because they allow the US to transport personnel and resources throughout Africa. The stability of the Djibouti's government and its interaction with the allied powers ensures that the US can retain a presence there without significant challenges. The growing threat of Chinese expansion is steadily becoming an issue for US diplomats. Thus, bases including Camp Lemonnier are critical for the US' ability to influence local governance and maintain a diplomatic presence.

Beijing's confrontation to the US' counterterrorism operations

US foreign policy requires maintaining hegemony, allowing the US to influence states within Africa. The post-9/11 agenda promoted Western security through various programmes within Africa including the traditional sponsorship of pro-Western states, establishment of multi-national task forces like CJTF-HOA to train states and conduct covert operations to ensure and monitor challenges to Western ideology and US economic interests. China's expansion is motivated by security and economic expansions, often at odds with the US' initiatives. Security of the Gulf of Aden and the South China Sea is critical for both powers but involves supporting conflicting parties and agendas. The introduction of Trump's 'Indio-Pacific Strategy' increased competition whilst trade tariffs and diplomatic attacks on China highlighted a more confrontational US foreign policy from 2016, making US cooperation with China more difficult. US diplomats drafting the National Security Strategy described China "[as] determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence" (The White House 2017, 2). Chinese expansion conflicts with India and numerous US-supported powers that lobby the US to deter China from expanding. The two powers' economic interests conflict with each other as China continues to expand within Africa by building infrastructures and extracting resources. Following his inauguration, Biden highlighted the need to confront China; "We'll confront China's economic abuses; counter its aggressive, coercive action; to push back on China's attack on human rights, intellectual

property, and global governance." (Biden 2021), suggesting that relations have not improved in recent years and the US is continuing to pursue a confrontational foreign policy.[1]

The state's differing ideologies generate conflict too, with the US criticising China's human rights' abuses, whilst China attacks the US for similar offences. China's strategy of territorial expansion through its debt-servitude policy and the BRI's initiatives are a common target amongst Western states. China's increasing power in the UN generates concern to the US too with Beijing pressuring African states to combat pro-Western states like Japan. The conflict between the two states is inevitable in Djibouti, diverting US attention and resources away from its counterterrorism policy; and weakening Washington's connection to allied African states.

Protection of African states

A prominent policy for all presidents following WW2 was to provide humanitarian aid to African states. Barack Obama's strategy increased communication with African states and China. However, following the election of President Trump, the US adopted a harder, more confrontational policy. The withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear deal, the increase of Chinese tariffs and the 'Deal of the Century' (a polarising US policy of declaring full support for Israel) demonstrates Trump's desire to confront China and its interests in the MENA region. Trump stated that China has sought to "advance anti-Western views and spread false information to create divisions among ourselves, our allies, and our partners", demonstrating a deep mistrust of Chinese ambitions and the inevitable exploitation of weak states (The White House 2017, 1). Jean-Pierre Cabestan (2019, 8) highlighted this concern with the Djiboutian base, stating that Western observers are impressed and concerned by the Chinese construction process, with underground facilities and likely ordinance installations, and they believe that the base in Djibouti is evidence of future Chinese ambitions to expand within the continent. The protection of African states from China has become a key policy for Obama, Trump and Biden. The language used by each president has become more confrontational, demonstrating the increasing conflict between the parties regardless of who is holding office.

US Security

In December 2018, former National Security Advisor John Bolton declared during an address to the Heritage Foundation that the rise of Chinese and Russian influence in Africa was an attempt to gain power over the US (The White House 2018). He and his team

[1] "We'll confront China's economic abuses; counter its aggressive, coercive action; to push back on China's attack on human rights, intellectual property, and global governance" (Biden 2021).

highlighted incidents including intellectual theft, aircraft attacks and ideological differences threatening the US' presence in the region. The US is concerned over China's attempts to steal its intellectual property. This is an issue for the US in Djibouti following its technology's' cloning and subsequent sale to African states as part of Chinese diplomacy/ expansion's funding efforts. Intellectual property theft also undermines US counterterrorism attempts as it loses its technological superiority over competitor states purchasing copied technology from China. The loss of income for the US is calculated at between $225-$600 billion per annum (US Embassy and Consulates in China 2020). Further to this, the US established bodies including the National Security Innovation Base (NSIB) protecting US intellectual interests. The administration stated:

> "We must defend our NSIB against competitors. The NSIB is the American network of knowledge, capabilities, and people…that turns ideas into innovations, transforms discoveries into successful commercial products and companies, and protects and enhances the American way of life" (The White House 2017, 21).

Intellectual property theft alongside the loss of technological dominance allows other powers to intimidate US forces. Incidents including the laser attack, in which two US military pilots were temporarily blinded, increased tensions. The US suggested that China attempted to crash a US military aircraft and disrupt US operations on its territory. China denies the incident, but its possession of such lasers has been recorded, and their origin was believed to be from China's military base (Sonne 2018).

Joint initiatives between the two states to combat terrorism have been partially successful throughout the twenty-first century, but the programmes have been undermined by ideological conflict. China's debt-servitude approach and sponsorship of US enemies has generated international condemnation, demonstrating that China's priorities are detrimental to US counterterrorism.

The two powers dispute the designation of terrorist factions. China's counterterrorism operation focuses on internal terrorist threats whereas the US is predominantly externally orientated. Groups including Hamas have been points of contention between the US and China. Beijing also criticised Washington for supporting dictators including Saddam Hussein and its involvement in anti-government rebellions like Libya, destabilising the country. The divergence over the designation of terrorism damages the US' counterterrorism operations because China refuses to engage in campaigns that potentially threaten its economic interests, leading to an inconsistent international approach to counterterrorism.

Involvement of Third Parties

Djibouti hosts many multinational forces by providing leases for military bases. International powers have an interest in the trading routes surrounding Djibouti and its proximity to enemy states, providing an effective and rapid response base. The variety of interest has generated tensions between states, with China conflicting frequently with Western countries, as well as with Japan and India over the territory surrounding Djibouti. The states' allegiances to the US and international organisations including NATO, the UN, and more exclusive groups conflict with Chinese interests because China's competitors have a greater combined influence over Djiboutian affairs than Beijing and its allies. China retains a 38.8% stake in the Port of Djibouti through investments and its debt-servitude approach outlined above. The investment is a concern for rival states because China's influence within the region is increasing and its attempts to appease other African states has begun to unhinge US dominance. The US has thus sought to cooperate with third parties to counter China's domination.

The French government also expresses concern for China's activity within Africa. Paris despatched two Mirage planes to monitor Chinese activity daily following their initial establishment of the Djiboutian base in 2016/17. The French are concerned that their influence could be undermined by China through the BRI and its debt-servitude policies that offer an alternative to French diplomacy or take territorial control of former French-allied territory. Chinese diplomatic relations with the Djiboutian government have escalated over recent years through relief packages and infrastructure development projects seeking to appease the Djiboutian government (Irish 2019). France currently stations troops In Djibouti and frequently conducts military training operations. These improve diplomatic relations between the powers and highlight French military strength (Ministère Des Armées 2020).

Japan and India hold further security concerns for the PLA Base. During August 2017, the Japanese air force spied on China's warships moored at the PLA Base, indicating that China's presence could jeopardise Tokyo's security in the South China Sea. Japan has created bases within Africa to combat China and other security threats (Pajon, 2017, 9, 25). Japan and India cooperated to combat China's BRI expansion plans in the MENA region because they believed that the BRI undermined Japanese and Indian security through the construction of trading routes and pipelines located near their territories. From 2011 Japan stationed 150 military personnel on Djiboutian territory to monitor construction points. The corruption of African governments has been utilised by China to undermine fair competition on the international market by offering cheaper and larger contracts compared to Japan's

allies (Gouriellec 2010, 1). States in the West and Asia formed committees including the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to foster regional maritime cooperation and ensure collective security against China and Russia (Krupakar 2017, 215-217). The involvement of allied states is advantageous to US counterterrorism as the combination of US, Indian and Japanese power can obstruct to Chinese influence. Support for US counterterrorism operations within the UN and other international organisations is vital for Washington to ensure that it can remain dominant within Africa.

The involvement of third parties escalates the tensions between the US and China within Djibouti. The complex international conflicts and proxy wars conducted in the MENA region jeopardise the US' counterterrorism programme as it relies on communication with allies and rivals including China. The complex web of interests impedes communication, hindering the necessary intelligence for US counterterrorism operations. At the same time French, Japanese and other allies of the US based in Djibouti provide support for US programmes and; intelligence sharing while obstructing China's influence.

Cooperation between the two powers

Despite disputes, the threat of terrorism in Africa is substantial enough for the US and China to cooperate whilst their security is jeopardised. Cooperation through initiatives, training operations and anti-piracy activities dilute the tensions as they provide a mutual benefit. The US' national security interests reflect China's, focusing on international operations in Africa and Asia to combat terrorism through protecting established states by offering diplomatic, military and economic support. US support allows foreign states including Somalia, Sudan, Angola, and Djibouti to combat terrorism through national militaries, police and state structures. This shared interest in seeking common protection from international terrorist groups improves cooperation between states, thus protecting US counterterrorism operations. China has expressed willingness to cooperate, taking part in UN, US and international counterterrorism operations.

China's Cooperation with the International Community

China's engagement with the international community through the UN and the EU has increased. This engagement is motived by a desire to improve security for Chinese investments in Africa as well as its diplomatic relations, allowing Beijing to expand operations, including the BRI in Africa and neighbouring continents. The PLA base allows China to cooperate with locals and promotes regional cooperation, encouraging China and

the US to combat terrorism and security threats. While China's cooperation with the international community has considerably risen, the US has criticized its action in the UN.

During October 2018 China hosted the European Union's Operation Atalanta, an EU Defence operation seeking to monitor Somalia's coastline. This joint initiative led by the EU offered training exercises with its multinational force. The PLAN conducted its first medical evacuation by helicopter from an Italian ship to the PLA base in Djibouti. The exercise was completed alongside the EU NAVFOR (Naval Force), demonstrating the PLA's close cooperation with EU activities. China, India, and Japan supported Operation Atalanta by protecting World Food Programme's (WFP) vessels. China is interested in the operation because it's located close to the South China Sea, allowing Beijing to retain a non-confrontational presence. China is also concerned about monitoring European activity within the area and Europe's cooperation with Japan which could undermine China's territorial interests. The European presence in the Gulf of Aden is preferable to an Indian presence because they are less confrontational, therefore supporting the relatively neutral operation is an effective diplomatic incentive (European Union External Action 2019). China also encourages Djibouti's cooperation with local states, including the support for Djibouti to host the 38th Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) summit. The summit allowed Djibouti to further its connection with its neighbours and to address regional security (République de Djibouti 2020).

China is a member of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNCTC), which was established following Resolution 1373. It is also a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asean Regional Forum (ARF), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). China's membership with multiple international organisations is commendable because these associations seek to provide a platform for communication and for the establishment of a counter-isolationist diplomatic policy. The United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC) demonstrates China's cooperation with the international community as it regularly attends conferences and invests in initiatives to foster communication (UNSC, 2016). Meanwhile, the financial incentives offered by China has made the country popular amongst their beneficiaries. Its ongoing engagement in the ASEAN framework provides the members with a stage for debate and for deciding key resolutions in counterterrorism initiatives. China's cooperation with Japan is beneficial by ensuring security for both countries, despite their mistrust (Tanner & Bellacqua 2016, 97).

China's involvement in the international community is beneficial to US counterterrorism as China is seeking to cooperate with counterterrorism initiatives around Africa. This cooperation secures the US' presence in the continent and allows Washington to exert diplomatic pressure on China through various of organisations.

Cooperation between China and the US

Following the 9/11 attacks, the US focused on terrorism as the greatest international threat to its homeland. The US sought to extend diplomatic relations with China internationally despite ideological differences. China's strength and expanding affluence presented an imminent threat to US counterterrorism operations. Cooperation with China is essential to ensure efficient US operations in Djibouti without a significant impediment.

The US aspired to improve relations with China in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. The formation of the US-China Counterterrorism Working group provided a programme for both states to discuss counter-terrorism progress, share research and consider solutions amongst additional objectives. The group demonstrates a common interest of counterterrorism within Africa, allowing communication to be retained. The US and China approved the establishments of an FBI legal attaché and a US Coast Guard Liaison Office (set up in 2004 and 2006 respectively) located in Beijing. This was US diplomacy in China, allowing for effective mediation and a physical US presence in the capital. In 2006, China signed a Memorandum of Understanding, allowing US federal air marshals to travel to China and Chinese air marshals to travel to the US. This cooperation allows the transportation of important military personnel whenever required, assisting counterterrorism operations during national crises and in Africa. Trade and economic cooperation against terrorism has been occurring through treaties and agreements between the US and China. The Container Security Initiative (CSI) is a US-introduced measure designed to mitigate terrorist threats to US soil and to maritime trade by providing security measures to US cargo. The CSI ensures security for the US through the inspection of container cargo at major ports globally, especially within China, the Gulf of Aden, and the MENA region. Cargo is inspected by foreign ports for illegal substances and terrorist material, preventing the distribution of cargo to US soil before inspection. US inspections within China demonstrates continued communication and cooperation.

In 2004, the People's Bank of China established a financial intelligence unit and began working with its US counterparts to build capacity and exchange expertise, leading to the creation of an anti-money laundering law in 2006. The Chinese government also joined the Eurasia Group on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, the Asia-Pacific Group

on Money Laundering, and the Financial Action Task Force. These initiatives seek to combat international terrorist financing by identifying companies attempting to trade with terrorist groups, while preventing transactions. China's cooperation with international counterterrorism programmes is a positive sign for US counterterrorism, as it demonstrates that China has made significant attempts to interact with the global community to combat terrorism and to boost the PLA base as a communications hub. Targeting terrorism financing is vital to the US' counterterrorism programme. Conversely, Beijing's refusal to comply with these initiatives would be a diplomatic and financial disaster for the Chinese government. Rather, its membership in international organisations along with the US and other partners demonstrates China's desire to cooperate globally and ensure security of its African interests, including the PLA Base (Tanner and Bellacqua 2016, 81).

Conclusion

Following 9/11, conduction international counterterrorism operations has become a foreign policy priority for the US. Djibouti is a critical base for the US, allowing the US to operate naval, military, and diplomatic missions in the Middle East and North Africa. Therefore, guaranteeing security for this base and the surrounding region, while combatting terrorist groups is of paramount importance to Washington.

US counterterrorism requires communication between states because intelligence is critical for operations against subversive terrorist groups. The People's Republic of China has impeded US counterterrorism operations as Beijing seeks to pursue its economic and diplomatic missions often conflicting with those of the US. These operations are also in disagreement with Japan, France, and India because they are centred on a debt-servitude approach with the BRI seeking to undermine competitors' presence in Africa. The animosities between China and India in the South China Sea generate conflicts between Beijing and US allies. Moreover, China's economic investments, support for powerful states and its increasing influence internationally allow the country to challenge the previously unimpeded US presence in Africa. Even though, China and the US have signed agreements, treaties, and carried out common operations, but the increasing aspirations of China, the rise of a Russian threats and the changing nature of terrorism have strained communications between the two. US counterterrorism operations in Djibouti will remain as long as the terrorist threat from groups including the Islamic State, al-Shabaab and Boko Haram threatens the US and local security. The combined action of the US and its allies is countering China's influence in Djibouti, but China's increased presence internationally makes the long-term operation of US counterterrorism activities in the MENA region uncertain.

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