# *STAGES in Security: Vol 1*

Edited by Gillian Brunton and Faye Donnelly

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## *Setting the STAGES: introduction to the Special Issue*

For now, this Special Issue is one of a kind. Each piece grows directly out of the cross-institutional network between the University of St Andrews (STA), the University of Glasgow (G), and the University of Edinburgh (E)'s Security studies (S) programmes. Together, we have created the acronym STAGES to capture these ongoing collaborations. In August 2018, we, as a small group of colleagues working at each contributing university started to discuss how our master students can learn more about security beyond the confines of their separate classrooms. As Jorge M. Lasma writes, 'In many cases, classrooms have slowly come to be seen as the only domains for learning. Other forms and channels of learning and knowledge are viewed with suspicion and sometimes even discouraged for fear of higher costs' (2013, p. 369). Challenging this idea, we set out to create a collective project to allow different students, with their own unique opinions and viewpoints on security, to meet one another to share their ideas in open, honest and lived ways.

As teachers and academics, we spend a lot of time talking about what security means and does. In certain degrees, we may even shape what students think about these issues by assigning core textbooks as essential reading (see Kirby, 2013). Along the way, students are often socialised into a pattern of listening first and speaking second. Try as we may to generate group discussion, student voices often do not get enough time, especially when they are not tied to assessments. We also never really know where, how and when students learn once they leave our classrooms or turn off their computers. Within our initial meetings, we carefully examined how we could nurture alternative ways to think and talk about security. Over the course of our brainstorming sessions, we began to realise that this network could also have many lifecycles and iterations. So, for us, the acronym STAGES felt like a perfect way to epitomise the three different universities joining together to invite students to remain eternally curious when it comes to the study of security, and to allow their understandings, reflections and ideas to evolve over time.

After months of careful planning, particularly by Dr Andrew R. Hom and Helene Frossling, on 28 June 2019, we held our first STAGES event, under the auspices of the Centre for Security Research at the University of Edinburgh. In the process, we brought together staff and master's students from three different parts of Scotland to learn and talk more about security. The entire day was packed with events ranging from dissertation panels to wellness ideas to career talks. Once again, the onus was placed on acknowledging that there are different ways of learning about and encountering security. In this respect, the STAGES event resonated with Alejandro Chávez-Segura who claims that 'Security is no longer considered only about justified violence and controlling others in military terms against enemies, but

also about having the right practices to transform our relationships, from living in fear to move forward towards cooperation and freedom' (2020). During the cross-institutional event, students also learnt new skillsets ranging from public speaking to conference presentations and academic networking. Throughout the day, they continued to connect what they had learnt in their individual programmes to group conversations about topics they had never studied before. This happened in panels, group activities and coffee breaks. Another major way for each student to expand the understanding of security was through the standing-room only keynote speech given by Professor Claudia Aradau, entitled, 'Security and ethics in the age of Artificial Intelligence'.

Unfortunately, the ongoing pandemic has prevented us from running the next planned STAGES event. If anything, COVID-19 has taught us how unpredictable, fragile and contested security can be in everyday contexts, virtual classrooms and ongoing emergency situations. At the time of writing, it is hard to capture how much this pandemic has altered what security means, how it should be taught, and indeed how we all live it each day, in myriad ways. Almost everyone can agree that global health issues will remain a paramount concern for security scholars. The problem, of course, is that public health outbreaks do not always create security. As Stephen L. Roberts and Stefan Elbe have already highlighted, pandemics can create insecurity and '*syndromic* surveillance systems' (2016, p. 47, italics in original). To be more exact, 'Policy discourses and practice within global health security now resonate with notions of "early detection", "preemption" and "response"' (ibid.). Adding another layer of complexity, Katerini Tagmatarchi Storeng and Antoine de Bengy Puyvallée have showcased the entanglements between the COVID-19 crisis and "Big Tech", smartphones and digital technologies (2021). In the face of these, and many other revelations, we need to remember that security is always constructed and spoken in many different voices.

Against this tumultuous backdrop, we are delighted to present this Special Issue, which represents the first collection of pieces produced by master students studying security at the University of St Andrews, the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow in 2018–2019. Its purpose is to highlight these students' own views of security in their own words. As a result, the articles in this collection do not necessarily pursue common security studies issues. Instead, each piece opens a door to a different topic. Yet, on closer observation, the question of security remains a common theme. In terms of transparency, it is important to acknowledge that the articles that have been published are based on final projects from each author's master's programme. In order to foster inclusivity, we invited the students who produced the top two dissertations from each university to submit their pieces anonymously to CVIR. Each piece was subject to at least two rounds of rigorous, blind, peer-review from external experts. As a result, each contributor had to make extensive changes and respond to reviewer comments along the way. We are very grateful to all of them for embracing the detailed, and sometimes difficult, feedback they received on how to improve their paper. We think that this has resulted in an excellent collection of articles that showcase not only

exceptional student scholarship, but also emphasise the value of re-thinking our traditional approaches to the teaching and learning of security. Last, but in no way least, we would like to express our sincere thanks to Mrs Gillian Brunton for everything she did to make this issue possible.

Ryan Beasley, Faye Donnelly, Andrew R. Hom, Juliet Kaarbo, Andrew W. Neal and Ty Solomon

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## *Profiling the President: explaining Donald Trump's nationalistic foreign policy decisions using Leadership Trait Analysis and Operational Code Analysis*

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### Biography

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### Abstract

How does an individual leader's personality and beliefs shape a country's foreign policies? Donald Trump has promised to put America First by disrupting the liberal international system in favour of a nationalistic isolationism. His violation of international norms and close friendship with rogue leaders have led many to question his psychological fitness to be president. The research on foreign policy analysis lacks a systematic examination linking the personalities and beliefs of leaders to the hyper-nationalistic policies they adopt. This article conducts at-a-distance content analysis, specifically Leadership Trait Analysis and Operational Code Analysis, on US President Donald Trump in order to explain four puzzling nationalistic foreign policies.

**Keywords:** Leadership style; Personality; Nationalism; Trump; Leadership Trait Analysis; Operational Code Analysis

### Introduction

Those who framed the United States Constitution created, by deliberate design, a constrained government (Mastanduno, 2015, p. 227). They were aware of the perils involved in the abuse of political power and so sought to disperse it with a system of 'checks and balances' to ensure that no single person accumulated enough power to threaten the integrity of democracy (Ikenberry and Trubowitz, 2015). In George Washington's farewell address, he warned against allowing a single person or minority of elites to undermine fundamental principles, even if it answers popular demands in the short term. Specifically, he forewarned: 'Cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion.'[1] It is plausible to argue that,

even back then, America's founding fathers recognised that "who leads matters" and knew there was a possibility that the wrong kind of leader could be elected one day. This article focuses on the psychology of the individual who has the authority to make foreign policy choices for the United States – the president. Of particular concern is how a president's individual beliefs and personality traits influence foreign policy choices.

The stunning 2016 US presidential election of Donald Trump resulted in celebration from his loyal base of supporters and feelings of apprehension from much of the international community. The basis for both of these reactions was clear: a new type of leader had been elected (Carter and Chiozza, 2018). Trump campaigned on a nationalist nostalgia (Make America Great *Again*), which Stephen Walt argues helped win him the White House against the odds, and which formed the basis for his protectionist and anti-immigration foreign policies (Walt, 2019). Since taking office, Trump made a series of executive decisions with far-reaching consequences. His demand that a wall be built on the southern border, which he claimed Mexico would pay for, has tarnished relations with Mexico and South American allies (Powaski, 2019, p. 36). His isolationist beliefs culminated in the withdrawal of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the Iran nuclear deal (Goldgeier and Saunders, 2018). He imposed trade tariffs on close trade partners, such as Canada, Mexico and the European Union, and started a trade war with China (Powaski, 2019, p. 240). He single-handedly dismantled the G-7 summit by insulting Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, calling him 'weak' and 'dishonest' and demanding that Russia be readmitted (Powaski, 2019, p. 250). He, instead, flew to Singapore to meet with North Korean tyrant Kim Jong Un, whom he characterised as a 'very talented man' (Macdonald, 2018). His hostility towards US allies and reverence of rogue leaders reflects his self-image as a dealmaker. Some of his actions appear highly narcissistic and seem to serve no political purpose beyond putting him in the spotlight. His advisors and allies have been seemingly unable to talk Trump out of damaging the liberal international order that the US has led for decades in favour of a nationalistic isolationism (Macdonald, 2018).

Studying a US president requires unique methods, as they are not easily available or willing to be interviewed for psychological analysis (Hermann, 2003). One way of learning more about decision-makers, which does not require their cooperation, is by examining what they say using "at-a-distance" measures. A leader's speech acts can be analysed by statistical discourse analysis, in which traits and beliefs are correlated with the frequency of associated words (Hermann, 1980). This article combines Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA) and Operational Code Analysis (OCA) to uncover a causal linkage between Donald Trump's individual psychological traits and his political behaviour. This research goes even deeper and asks the following question: *Do the individual-level personality traits and beliefs of Donald Trump have a causal effect on the increasingly nationalistic foreign policies adopted under his administration?* Intuitively, leaders seem crucial to understanding the type of foreign policy a state adopts. Yet, demonstrating how their personality traits and core beliefs act as

an independent influence on the way these policies are carried out is a challenge (Ikenberry, 2014).

Hermann's research demonstrates that nationalism (or in-group bias) as a cognitive belief, and distrust of others are two broad aspects of authoritarianism. When these traits are apparent in heads of state, these individuals usually have strong negative expressions towards other nations and are unwilling to commit resources to foreign relations (Winter, 1992, p. 88). In order to conceptualise nationalism, Florian Bieber's (2018, p. 520) definition is a good starting place:

> Nationalism is a malleable and narrow ideology, which values membership in a nation greater than other groups, seeks distinction from other nations, and strives to preserve the nation and give preference to political representation by the nation for the nation.

Building on this definition, I add that a nation is a group of people that conceives itself as constituting a unique community with a distinct identity, and expresses this sentiment through the value placed on national symbols, pledges, shared history, flags and other everyday markers that remind us of our national identity. In Benedict Anderson's (1983) famous phrase, nations are 'imagined communities', where total strangers nonetheless recognise and acknowledge each other as belonging to the same group. The elusive concept of nationalism has shaped human history in ways that many people do not fully appreciate, and in the US, as in other countries, nationalist sentiments inevitably infuse politics.

The central contribution of this article is to provide an understanding of the effect that nationalistic leaders have on international relations. First, I identify a theoretical framework of nationalism applied to the US case specifically; second, I explore Trump's foreign policies and identify examples which could benefit from an FPA perspective; third, I critically evaluate the relevant literature on LTA and OCA in relation to nationalism; finally, I apply my research findings to the theoretical framework in order to connect Trump's nationalistic foreign policies to his individual personality and beliefs. This research is relevant to the field of International Relations for several reasons. As the sole superpower in the current unipolar world, the US dominates international relations not only militarily, but also culturally and economically. Therefore, the foreign policies of the US affect almost every other state in the world. As a country with nuclear capabilities and the largest military, understanding the psychology of a commander-in-chief, who has been described by many as unpredictable, volatile and even rogue is critical. As Peterson correctly observes, 'presidents remain the most potent political force in the making of foreign policy' (1994, p. 217) and Trump is especially unsettling to many in the international community with his volatility and unpredictability.

The belief that leaders matter and can influence foreign policy decision-making is deeply ingrained (Hermann and Hagan, 1998; Kaarbo, 2018). It is fair to say, however, that most contemporary theoretical work on International Relations did not follow this line of thinking, and instead overlooked the personality, beliefs and perceptions of the decision-making unit. It was assumed that this unit, whether working as one or in a group, was a unitary, rational actor and was therefore seen as equivalent to the state. This assumption was not theoretically challenged until Snyder, Bruck and Sapin's (1962) pioneering argument, namely that the individual decision-making process is at the heart of international relations. Snyder and his colleagues argued that in order to understand the behaviour of states, it was necessary to focus on the intellectual processes of the individuals who make key foreign policy decisions. The field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) can offer useful insights into state behaviours that may seem puzzling, as it examines the processes and results of political decision-making. Often, as with this article, scholars may be explaining not simply a single decision or indecision, but a pattern of behaviours made within a certain time frame or set of circumstances. One way that FPA complements the field of IR is its employment of a multilevel analysis of variables, from the micro to the macro (Kaarbo, 2015). FPA scholars examine those factors which influence foreign policy decision-makers and, as a result, the field has developed into an integrated approach which combines insights from various disciplines.

The time is now ripe for taking stock of the theoretical debate on the effects of individual leaders on modern nationalism and for contemplating alternative ways of thinking about nationalism in the current political climate. I find that Donald Trump fits into Margaret Hermann's constructed 'expansionistic' leadership style, which corresponds to low cognitive complexity, high need for power, deep mistrust of others, and pronounced in-group bias. Hermann's (1980) research shows that leaders with this personality are statistically more likely to engage in armed conflict and diversionary actions, such as blaming external scapegoats for the country's problems in order to foster support from the population against perceived threats (Foster and Keller, 2012).

The organisation of this article is as follows. The next chapter will explore the rise of nationalism in American foreign policy. It will establish a comprehensive discourse on the relevant theory of nationalism, which has resulted in a gap in the literature linking nationalism and leaders in American foreign policy. It will then outline four puzzling foreign policies adopted by Donald Trump, for which structural theories cannot fully account and which form the basis for investigation. The third chapter will provide a theoretical framework on political leaders and foreign policy. It will first overview the value that political psychology adds to FPA, and will then explore the vibrant developments in the literature concerning the agency of decision-makers. Following that, it will explain the framework of LTA and OCA in depth by explaining the characteristics and coding procedures for traits and beliefs. Consequently, it will bridge the gap among personality, beliefs and nationalism. Finally, it will link personality traits and beliefs to political behaviour in the US. Chapter 4 will explain

the research design and methodology used for this article. Chapter 5 will present my research findings and outline the leadership style and operational codes of Donald Trump compared to a norming group of past US presidents, world leaders and rogue leaders. Chapter 6 will provide a discussion on the relationship between Trump's leadership style and belief system, and his nationalistic policies at home and abroad, and will then offer directions for future research as well as explain the limitations of this project. The final chapter will summarise the overall research objectives and reiterate my conclusions.

## The rise of nationalism

The exploitation of nationalist sentiments by highly nationalistic leaders during the twentieth century culminated in events such as the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide, in which almost entire ethnic groups were slaughtered to create a homogeneous nation. In the wake of these human rights atrocities, the international community worked to foster international cooperation and globalisation, which caused many scholars to predict the end of nationalism (Fukuyama, 1989). Until recently, that period of xenophobic nationalist sentiment appeared to be of the past. Modern insecurities, however, such as immigration, security, terrorism and unemployment have caused those nationalistic ideas to return into political discourse (Bieber, 2018). The purpose of this literature review is to explore the link between the unique nature of American nationalism as it interacts with President Trump's personality, manifested in his attempts to exploit nationalistic sentiment via foreign policy. Thus, some of his foreign policy decisions may seem puzzling unless one includes a personality-based research approach.

This literature review of nationalism will establish a characterisation of American nationalism. First, it will explore the intertwined concepts of American exceptionalism and national identity. American nationalism requires its own theoretical framework, as it does not fit into mainstream theories about nationalism. Second, it will investigate the effects of Trump's 'America First' policies on the US economy and international prestige. Finally, it will identify four puzzling foreign policy decisions that this article seeks to explain by profiling Trump's personality and beliefs. The following chapters will investigate this by combining a theoretical framework with qualitative examples of American nationalism at a collective and national level in order to identify its effects at the individual level.

American nationalism is often described as unique compared to that of most nations. Indeed, it is referred to as 'American exceptionalism' to highlight its inherent sense of superiority over other nations, which carries with it a unique moral value and responsibility (Byers, 1997, p. 86). Critics of American nationalism tend to focus on what has been called "American imperialism", especially after the 2003 Iraq War. For much of America's history prior to WWII, however, American culture has embodied a strong sense of isolationism. This isolationism was not simply a desire to withdraw from the world, but rather a complex form of chauvinism and American messianism rooted in the belief that America was a unique and superior 'city on a hill' (Lieven, 2004, p. 3). This belief culminates in nationalist unilateralism

in international affairs and a contempt for foreigners. Such American national identity and notions of exceptionalism are deeply intertwined with the American creed, which was summed up by Richard Hofstadter: 'It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies but to be one' (cited in Kohn, 1957, p. 13). As a nation of immigrants, American nationalism is civic in nature and based on faith in its democratic ideals, liberty, constitutionalism, individualism and freedom (Lieven, 2004). In de Tocqueville's words, 'the Americans are unanimous upon the general principles which ought to rule human society' (cited in Lieven, 2004, p. 48); this remains just as true today as it did when it was first observed in the 1830s.

I seek to reflect on trends of rising nationalist sentiment in the United States, which culminated in the 2016 election of a billionaire businessman who had little knowledge of international relations and no prior political experience. The election itself consisted of critiques of internationalism, globalisation and free trade in favour of pugnacious nationalism (Brands, 2017, p. 73). Relatedly, his campaign slogan 'Make America Great Again' aimed to evoke memories of an imagined golden age of American primacy before internationalism, to which he promised to return. In an interview shortly after the election, American nationalism expert Anatol Lieven (2017) described Trump as representing a highly exclusionary and chauvinistic nationalism, characterised by his belief that Americans are the only ones deserving of the American way of life, and that non-Americans, who cannot share these values, will threaten them.

### Donald Trump's 'America First' policies
In the years since his election, the Trump administration has blithely attempted to implement his 'America First' agenda, characterised as an impolitic foreign policy plan that distrusted US allies, actively encouraged the break-up of the European Union, and called security alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) obsolete (Dombrowski and Reich, 2017, p. 1013). He called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) 'a rape of our country' at a campaign rally in 2016 and promptly withdrew the US from the agreement within his first days in office. Trump's undue emphasis on 'America First' is highly evident in his decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, which is seen as the backbone of global climate governance, in favour of protecting manufacturing jobs and the short-term economic benefits of unregulated carbon emissions (Zhang, Dai, Lai and Wang, 2017). The announcement came as a shock to the international community since the US had played a leading role in the international climate negotiations and governance until now (Dai, Xie and Zhang, 2018, p. 363). The administration's advocacy of an economic nationalism abroad and cultural nation-building at home has caused scholars such as John Ikenberry (2018) to predict the reversal of globalisation and the subsequent decline of the liberal international order that the US had sustained for nearly eight decades.

Studying nationalism in America requires a nuanced and integrated approach. It does not readily fit into most theoretical frameworks for a few reasons. First, America's relatively

young age as a nation compared to others in Europe coupled with the lack of oppression since its independence means that it cannot be explained by the mainstream modernisation theory of nationalism. Second, its diverse immigrant population has resulted in its strong sense of civic nationalism over the more commonly seen ethnic nationalism elsewhere. Third, despite being highly nationalistic, Americans genuinely do not consider themselves as such (Lieven, 2004, p. 6). Since America does not seem to fit into the dominant theoretical frameworks of nationalism studies, scholars have tended to avoid connecting American nationalism to foreign policy (Bonikowski and DiMaggio, 2016). This gap in the literature is puzzling for three reasons. First, the US case is significant due to the country's role as global liberal hegemon, one who champions free-world values and attempts to recreate other states in its own image (Ikenberry, 2018). Second, the US is a distinct example of a multi-ethnic polity, which has survived several centuries due to the prominence of its civic nationalism. Third, Lieven (2004) argues that it is crucial to understand the influence of American nationalism on US foreign policy and, consequently, the effect of those policy outcomes on the world. This area of research is ripe for theoretical development.

For the purpose of this article, I find the *ethno-symbolic approach* to be a useful theory of nationalism. This approach emphasises the role that symbols, myths, memories, values and traditions play on the persistence and power of nationalism at a collective level and also on individuals (Smith, 2001, p. 84). I find this approach useful in explaining how Trump has exploited nationalist sentiment in order to gain support for his foreign policy decisions. This theory differs from others as it emphasises the importance of subjective elements in our understanding of nations, such as the role of memories of golden ages, heroes in the national past, and the significance given to flags and other national symbols. This approach also illuminates the emotive power of collective memory and explains how nationalism can generate such widespread popular support (Smith, 1996). Ethno-symbolic scholars identify three key features of nationalism, which can be applied to explain the US case. The first is *a sense of oneness*, in which members of the nation have a strong sense of loyalty to other members, despite only knowing a fraction of them. Consequently, this feeling of deep affinity with one's own group can make empathy for outsiders more elusive. Second, a *distinct culture* involves the rituals, symbols, language and beliefs which separate one nation from another. Cynthia Koch argues that the significance given to American historical figures such as Christopher Columbus or George Washington amounts to almost biblical worship. Indeed, 'their successes signified heavenly approval for the American national enterprise' (Koch, 1996, pp. 32–33, 45). Furthermore, nationalist discourse regards the American flag as so holy that any criticisms of it amount to blasphemy, and discussion continues on whether the 'misuse of the flag should automatically result in a long stretch in jail' (Bosworth, 2013, p. 27). Interestingly, Donald Trump wrote on Twitter in 2016: 'Nobody should be allowed to burn the American flag - if they do, there must be consequences - perhaps loss of citizenship or year in jail!', despite the Supreme Court holding since 1989 that flag-burning was a constitutionally protected right to free speech.[2] Third, a *sense of superiority* is especially apparent in the US,

dating back to the idea of Manifest Destiny, and is shrouded in American national identity. Madeleine Albright captured this feeling in 1998 when she famously said: 'If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future' (quoted in Mearsheimer, 2018).[3]

One prominent feature of nationalism is the desire to return to the glorified past of an ethnically purer nation and traditional society, where hard-working people are guaranteed a decent job (Lieven, 2004, p. 90). Although the US is ethnically heterogeneous, the ethno-symbolic approach does provide an explanation for the deepening divide between the "ethnic core" that is the White Anglo-Protestants, and the minority ethnic groups within the country. The US has experienced such rapid demographic changes from immigration that researchers predict White people will make up the minority by 2045 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Trump claims to provide a panacea to the social helplessness affecting his followers, who feel displaced by those who were historically considered "beneath" them – minorities, immigrants etc. Bohleber (2010) describes how Hitler used such fears to manipulate German prejudice against Jewish citizens. White nationalists, whose loyalty Trump has openly courted, articulate this sentiment quite clearly (Rudden and Brandt, 2018, p. 48).

Hatred and fear that is directed abroad by nationalism usually emanates from tensions and resentment at home, which is distinctly true for the United States. John Mearsheimer identifies two ways a political leader can foster nationalist sentiments: by creating a foreign bogeyman sufficiently feared to motivate the nation to defend against it, and by unifying the majority against a treacherous 'other' within society itself (2018, p. 38). Popular concerns over the loss of manufacturing jobs, immigration, terrorism and America's standing in the world have been attributed to malevolent outsiders in political discourse. This contempt of the 'other' suffuses the nation and creates powerful motivations to eliminate the threat by any means, including violence (Mearsheimer, 2018).

To be clear, nationalism does have its virtues. Stephen Walt (2019) argues that it is not a bad thing for individuals to make sacrifices willingly for the common good. Having a healthy feeling of pride and unity within a nation is preferable to discord. The significance attached to national flags, anthems, national heroes and shared history creates the sense of a distinct culture which separates one nation from another. Also, studies using data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) have tracked levels of nationalism across a range of countries. They have found that countries which scored highest in nationalist sentiments, measured as having a high degree of national superiority, and were also consistently wealthier with lower rates of crime and corruption (de las Casas, 2009). The extreme cases which are usually cited alongside nationalism, such as Nazi Germany, Rwanda and Yugoslavia to name but a few, can be argued to represent the exception rather than the rule. Walt (2019), however, stresses that passionate national sentiment can be exploited by political leaders to garner public support for what would otherwise be unpopular policies.

Scholars and analysts continue to debate whether US foreign policy has really changed much under Trump. Indeed, some refer to his security policies as 'pragmatic realism' and argue that, despite his rhetoric, his actual policies resemble more continuity than change (Dombrowski and Reich, 2017). While US foreign policy has undoubtedly been tinged with nationalist sentiment since the country's birth, the past four presidents, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama all dealt with global concerns such as climate change, nuclear proliferation and human rights through international cooperation and alliances when able. The Paris Agreement and the Iran nuclear deal were achieved through cooperation with the international community in order to make the world a safer place for everybody, not just Americans. These presidents tried to protect and advance what they perceived to be national interests abroad without abandoning American values in the process. While this assessment is by no means exhaustive, it stands in stark contrast to the strategies employed by Donald Trump. The xenophobic feelings aroused by Trump's rhetoric have condemned children to cages at the southern border, separated from their parents. Intense feelings of American superiority have caused the break-up of significant trade agreements, which hurt the economy in the long run. Never before had an American president labelled Mexican immigrants as 'criminals' and 'rapists' who come to steal American jobs, or inspired their followers to chant 'send her back' at four non-white US Congresswomen at a political rally.

Trump had promised in his campaign that he would put America first, but many of his decisions so far have damaged the US economy and prestige abroad. There are four puzzling foreign policy decisions for which this article will try to account: first, the decision to move Israel's US embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv in May 2018. The decision broke with an international consensus that called for the status of Jerusalem to be settled in peace talks with the Palestinians (Powaski, 2019). The UN General Assembly rebuked the decision in a vote of 128 to 9, with 35 abstentions (Abuzayyad, 2018). The decision also hampers every national security objective the administration has in the region, if the embassy is moved before Jerusalem's status is resolved. What is puzzling is that there are few discernible gains from this move, as Trump received nothing in the way of concessions from Israel.

The second decision involved the withdrawal from the TPP in January 2017. Trump's opposition to the TPP rests on his assertion that it would have pushed manufacturing jobs overseas despite evidence indicating otherwise (McBride and Chatzky, 2019). The TPP would have expanded trade relations and added protections for American workers. In 2018, the rest of the signatories created their own trade agreement, which did not include the US (Samuelson, 2018). This is of consequence for several reasons. It makes other countries less dependent on the US and more susceptible to Chinese or Russian economic influence. Furthermore, the withdrawal is contrary to US economic interests. The Peterson Institute for International Economics conducted a comprehensive analysis of the TPP and found that it could have increased US real income by about $130 billion, boosted the number of high-paying jobs in export industries, and lowered costs for US consumers and manufacturers (Schott, 2016).

The third questionable policy decision is the announcement of the travel ban from Muslim-majority countries. In January 2017, Trump signed an executive order halting all refugee admissions and temporarily banning people from Muslim-majority Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen (Wadhia, 2018, p. 1484) from entry. His stated aim was to prevent terrorist attacks, which fits into his pattern of equating Muslims with terrorists. What is puzzling, however, is that Saudi Arabia was left off his list despite being the country of origin of the majority of the 9/11 hijackers.

Finally, Trump's close relationships with rogue leaders such as Putin and Kim Jong Un are also puzzling, as is his tendency to ruin relationships with other heads of state. This set of behaviours cannot be explained by realism, liberalism or constructivism. Realism cannot account for why an American president would strengthen ties with countries that pose a significant threat to the US. Liberalism would not be able to explain why a democratic leader would be personally close to the heads of repressive regimes who violate human rights. Further, constructivism fails to provide a reason why a US president, who supposedly espouses the core values of American democracy, would befriend leaders who abide by such different norms, values and institutions. The above are just a few of his nationalistic foreign policies which cannot be definitively explained without unpacking the black box and examining the individual leader.

Over the course of the twentieth century, the nations of the world created institutions, doctrines and free trade agreements designed to increase interdependence and economic development. Today, however, we face a new kind of conflict that has emerged as a result of increasing globalisation: hyper-nationalism. It is in times such as now that global leadership becomes more significant than ever. As political philosopher Isaiah Berlin once said: 'At crucial moments, at turning points […] individuals and their decisions and acts can determine the course of history' (quoted in Safty, 2002, p. 157).

*Leaders and foreign policy*
This article is based on the assumption that leaders matter from a foreign policy perspective. As noted earlier, this assumption was often rebuked by supporters of the rationalist framework paradigm, which stated that political leaders would advance national interests by carefully weighing the costs and benefits. This rational actor framework did not assign a role to individual personalities, flawed information processing, emotions or other psychological variables (Levy, 2003, p. 256). This discord between understanding the psychology of the decision-making process versus assuming rationality during decision-making has been the focus of long-standing ontological and epistemological debates. Scholars, however, have emphasised that 'leaders define constraints, make decisions, and manage domestic political pressures on their foreign policy choices' (cited in Hermann and Hagan, 1998), which has created the assumption that leaders can have a causal impact on foreign policy (Levy, 2003).

The last twenty-five years have witnessed an impressive expansion of research on psychological constructs, both theoretically and methodologically. Political psychology studies have challenged the rational actor assumption by integrating factors such as past experiences, beliefs, perceptions, goals, risk propensity and cognitive complexity into the broader field of FPA. For example, research on political decision-making suggests that variation in a leader's beliefs and personality traits produces systematic differences in the way that they perceive and respond to opportunities and risks (Foster and Keller, 2012, p. 586). Further, work on leadership psychology shows that traits which are associated with higher risk-taking, such as conceptual simplicity and aggressive responses to constraints are crucial intervening variables that increase the likelihood of the use of force (Foster and Keller, 2014). Scholars of political psychology contend that although international and domestic structures may constrain foreign policy options, when they leave room for choice it is the decision-maker's personality, beliefs and cognitive processes which guide their choice (Jervis, 1976; George, 1969; Hermann, 1980).

For most US presidents, bureaucratic politics, organisational processes and group dynamics help shape decision-making due to the nature of the "checks and balances" of the political system. These constrain the manner in which issues are defined and the range of options considered by channelling information and utilising expertise. Scholars have emphasised the influence of group dynamics in situations ranging from the Cuban Missile Crisis (Allison, 1971) to the troop surge Barack Obama ordered into Afghanistan (Marsh, 2014). This article, however, predicts that Trump's personality and beliefs diverge greatly from those of his predecessors, so much so that they override these constraints because he views anyone who disagrees with him as disloyal and would sooner replace them than make a political compromise. This scrutiny is corroborated by the unprecedented turnover rate of his closest advisors. James Goldgeier and Elizabeth Saunders (2018, p. 155) argue that decision-making had become centralised in the White House, as evidenced by the fact that Trump had received very little pushback from Congress over his foreign policy choices.

As the international system grows more interdependent and complex, political leaders face several dilemmas when making policy choices. The first is that the international environment is inherently demanding on the information-processing system of policy-makers; leaders must sometimes deal with incomplete or unreliable information on the intentions or capabilities of others, and then must choose among options with incommensurable values, sometimes under great time pressure (Tetlock and McGuire, 2014, p. 490). The second is that human beings are limited-capacity information processors, who use simplifying strategies in the face of complex situations (Jervis, 1976). Due to these inherent difficulties for every political leader, it is useful to explore the psychological framework that affects the manner in which they deal with these complexities.

As noted, the ways to study the psychology of decision-makers are numerous. The two

psychological approaches I believe are most useful in studying President Trump and his nationalistic foreign policies are his personality and belief system, specifically the influence that certain personality traits and beliefs have on setting a nationalistic policy agenda. The relationship between personality and beliefs is deeply intertwined. Certain personality traits tend to be associated with particular beliefs, such as LTA's *belief in the ability to control events* and OCA's *control over historical events*. I predict that the direction of his master beliefs will correspond accordingly to LTA traits and strengthen the causal link to political behaviour. Personality traits influencing openness to information may constrain incoming intelligence that conflicts with existing beliefs. Most individuals are inclined to avoid the dissonance that arises when they are faced with conflicting information (Rapport, 2018). Some people, however, seem able to tolerate inconsistency in their statements and espouse beliefs without suffering from that cognitive dissonance (Post, 2005). I believe this might be applicable to Donald Trump in regard to his friendship with Vladimir Putin. I chose to combine LTA and OCA because, together, they can provide a more holistic insight into the decision-making process. One benefit of incorporating both into this study is that the range of material examined is increased: LTA uses spontaneous material while OCA relies on speeches. Although scholars debate which one is more useful for analysis, I argue that they can complement each other and provide insights into a wider range of issues. Another advantage is the computer-based software *ProfilerPlus*, which can analyse both scores simultaneously and produce immediate comparative results. This increases reliability, replicability and direct comparisons of psychological variables (Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998). These two psychological approaches, when combined, have been found to account for a relatively large percentage of the variance in explaining foreign policy behaviour, especially when a leader is the head of government, there is a crisis, no clear precedents, when events threaten deeply held values, or when the policy situation is ambiguous (Greenstein, 1969; Hermann, 1984; Byman and Pollack, 2001). Thus, most personality and political psychology studies on US leaders tend to focus on presidential decisions during or resulting in war. This article, however, seeks to study how Donald Trump's personality and beliefs affected his everyday foreign policy decision-making, which resulted in his nationalistic rhetoric and 'America first' foreign policies. The next chapters of this article will overview the two dominant approaches to studying personality and beliefs: Leadership Trait Analysis and Operational Code Analysis. I will first overview Margaret Hermann's seven personality traits and how they are coded, before reviewing the relevant literature on the topic. Then, I will introduce the ten questions which constitute an individual's operational code and survey the vibrant literature on belief systems.

*Leadership Trait Analysis*

Personality is defined as a 'collection of relatively persistent individual differences that transcend specific situations and contribute to the observed stability of attitudes and behaviour' (Huddy, Sears and Levy, 2013). In a political personality profile, we attempt to identify the linkage between beliefs, values, attitudes and deeply ingrained patterns that have

strong predictive implications on foreign policy (Post, 2003). In other words, the essence of the leader's personality defines their range of beliefs, opinions, motivations and information processing. It determines the nature of the relationships with those in the group, including who is chosen to serve in it. Personality traits affect a leader's goals and motivations. They also affect how they respond to cues, symbols and stimuli, and how they interpret information. Also, a leader's personality affects their determination, risk-orientation, perception, and management of emotions, all of which are highly influential to decision-making (Hermann, 2003).

This chapter builds on the work by Margaret Hermann (1980), who identifies specific traits that condition how leaders deal with the complexities of international politics. These seven personality traits – *belief in the ability to control events*, *need for power*, *conceptual complexity*, *distrust of others*, *in-group bias*, *self-confidence* and *task orientation* – illustrate whether leaders respect or challenge constraints, are open to incoming information, how they deal with opposition and, ultimately, the policies that they will choose (Hermann, 2003). LTA research assumes that one can conceptualise someone's personality by the words they use, which can be quantitatively measured to form a personality profile. Hermann also suggests that situational variables can mediate or "filter" the effects of personality on foreign policy. For example, a leader who is strongly interested in foreign policy is likely to increase the effects of personality, while sensitivity to the environment combined with training and experience are likely to decrease its effects (2001).

For the purpose of linking Donald Trump's personality traits to his nationalistic foreign policies, I will focus on four of the seven personality traits: *in-group bias*, *distrust of others*, *need for power*, and *conceptual complexity*. For an overview of all seven traits, see Appendix A. Taken together, in-group bias and distrust provide information on the leader's motivation towards the world. Thus, in assessing motivation, we are interested in whether the leader is more likely to adopt conflictual or cooperative policies, and also the intensity of their need to preserve the nation they are leading. The need for power will suggest whether they will challenge or respect constraints in their environment. Conceptual complexity and self-confidence explain how open they are to information, which relates to the next chapter on operational codes and beliefs; if one is closed to new information, especially if it contradicts their existing beliefs, they can fall into confirmation bias and poor decision-making. The conceptualisation and coding for each trait, which borrows from Hermann's (2003) discussion on assessing leadership style, are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

| Conceptual complexity | Capability of discerning the different dimensions of a complex environment | Percentage of words related to high complexity ("approximately", "possibility") vs low complexity ("absolutely", "irreversible") |
|---|---|---|
| Distrust of others | Suspicions, wariness of others outside one's group | Percentage of nouns that indicate misgivings or suspicions that others intend harm towards the speaker or the speaker's group |
| In-group bias | Perception of one's group as holding a central role, accompanied with strong feelings of national identity and honour | Percentage of references to the group that are favourable ("successful", "great"), show strength ("powerful") or a need to maintain group identity ("defend our borders") |
| Need for power | A concern with gaining, keeping and restoring power over others | Percentage of verbs that reflect actions of attack, advice, influence on the behaviour of others, concern with reputation |

*Source: Dyson (2006), drawing on Hermann (2003)*

Once all seven traits are coded, it is time to put them into perspective against other leaders. Determining whether a leader scores high or low on a certain trait requires a comparative analysis against a norming group. The norming groups I will employ for a comparison against Trump's LTA scores are 284 World Leaders and 18 American Leaders. When a trait is a standard deviation above the norming group, the leader scores high on that trait. Conversely, if they are a standard deviation below the norming group, they score low on that trait. If the trait in question is close to the mean of the norming group, they are moderate on that trait. These personality traits are used to develop a leader's personality profile, which can then establish their leadership style.

Leadership style is defined by Hermann (2003, p. 178) as: '[w]ays in which leaders relate to those around them, whether constituents, advisors, or other leaders. It's how they structure interactions and the norms, rules, and principles they use to guide such interactions.' A healthy leadership style has characteristics that contribute to sound decision-making, and the ability to perceive the environment accurately and work effectively within a group chosen for its expertise and wisdom, from which the self-confident leader can learn and take wise counsel (Post, 2005). A completely rational and effective leadership style would allow the decision-maker to engage in a thoughtful, deliberative process that seeks a diverse range of information, considers alternatives and asks the hard questions. He or she would check against biases, question assumptions and reconsider choices when needed (Schafer and Crichlow, 2010).

Hermann has developed an eight-fold typology of leadership styles based on their responsiveness to constraints, openness to information, and motivations. The *expansionist* leader is one who challenges constraints, is closed to information, and is problem-focused rather than relationship-focused. This type of leader is concerned with expanding their own power and influence. The *charismatic* leader is one who challenges constraints but is open to information and is relationship-focused. The *actively independent* leader is focused on maintaining one's own and the government's manoeuvrability and independence in a world that is perceived as continually trying to limit both. Such leaders pursue their goals by engaging other people and persuading them to act. The reactive or *opportunistic* leader respects constraints, is open to information, and tends to focus on what is realistically possible in a given situation.[4]

## A review of LTA literature

In the past twenty years, scholars have built on Hermann's pioneering work and developed an impressive body of empirical research demonstrating the validity and utility of LTA for the study of political leaders. This scholarship includes: comparative studies of US presidents (Preston, 2001; Preston and Hermann, 2004; Hermann, 2005), British prime ministers (Hermann and Kaarbo, 1998; Kaarbo, 2018; Dyson, 2006; Dyson, 2009), Iranian revolutionary leaders (Taysi and Preston, 2001), Soviet Politburo members (Hermann, 1980; Winter,

Hermann, Weintraub and Walker, 1991), heads of the United Nations (Kille, 2006), and sub-Saharan African leaders (Hermann, 1987). The theoretical and methodological rigour of the LTA framework has given FPA scholars the opportunity to fill in gaps in puzzling political behaviour, such as why some leaders are more risk-acceptant vs risk-averse, or why some are more willing to bargain or negotiate. Based on the leadership characteristics contained in the LTA framework (specifically the need for power, in-group bias, distrust of others and task focus), Jonathon Keller (2005) suggests that leaders can be broadly categorised into two groups: those who respect constraints and those who challenge them. Keller analysed 39 democratic leaders and 147 foreign policy outcomes and found that the leaders classified as constraint challengers were more likely to use violence than those classified as constraint respecters. Relatedly, studies show that leaders who are constraint challengers have lower levels of cognitive complexity, higher levels of distrust, are more nationalistic and are more likely to pursue aggressive foreign policies (Kowert and Hermann, 1997; Keller, 2005; Foster and Keller, 2012; Foster and Keller, 2014).

I chose LTA because it is a multivariate method of constructing personality profiles of political leaders using different motivational and cognitive variables. It is particularly useful for explaining a leader's foreign policy orientation by offering a more holistic approach, which incorporates beliefs, traits, motivations and leadership style, rather than a single variable approach. It has reliably demonstrated that certain personality traits correspond to foreign policy outcomes and provides a systematic method of approach. Hermann's model, which combines the effects of seven objectively defined personality traits with filters of interest, situation and learning is a sophisticated and advanced method of personality theory and methodology. Furthermore, enough research has been conducted using this method for it to provide reliable regional and world norming groups to which an individual can be compared.

## Operational codes

Those who study foreign policy decision-making have long recognised that the individual beliefs of leaders are critical to understanding foreign policy decisions. Belief systems give decision-makers much needed cognitive order and stability in an ambiguous and complex international environment (George, 1969). A decision-maker's belief system is important in the realm of IR because beliefs are what provide norms, standards and guidelines which influence (albeit not determine unilaterally) their strategic choices in dealing with other nations (Tetlock and McGuire, 2014). Beliefs impact their perceptions of how the world works, as well as how to respond appropriately when making decisions.

A growing research area in FPA centres on those beliefs of leaders that make up their operational codes (Leites, 1951; George, 1969). The operational code approach provides policy-relevant knowledge about how the individual views the political universe and their place within it (Dyson and Parent, 2018). George proposed that the essence of the operational code can be captured in its answers to a number of questions concerning the nature of

the political universe and the types of policies most likely to achieve important objectives (Holsti, 1976). Subsequent research by George (1969) and Walker (1990) has refined this concept into two classes of beliefs: philosophical and instrumental. Stressing policy-makers' cognitive limitations, George (1969) hypothesised that leaders regularly draw from a set of five instrumental and five philosophical beliefs in order to deal with the complexities of the decision-making process. Philosophical beliefs establish a decision-maker's views on the fundamental nature of politics, such as whether it is primarily characterised by conflict or cooperation. Fundamentally, this relates to the degree to which the political universe is friendly or hostile, and the degree of control the actor perceives themselves as having over it. Instrumental beliefs specify ends–means relationships, or the 'norms, standards, and guidelines that influence the actor's choice of strategy and tactics, his structuring and weighing of alternative courses of action' (George, 1969 p.108).

The core argument of this approach is that leaders filter incoming information through their beliefs in order to maintain consistency (Jervis, 2006). For political decision-making, leaders respond not to an objective reality but rather a 'subjective representation of reality', which is filtered through their belief system (Holsti, 1962; Renshon, 2008). OCA scholars argue that belief systems matter in the explanation of foreign policy in ways which are not addressed very well by other structural theories (Tetlock, 1998). Cognitive theories, especially OCA, allow for the possibility that beliefs play an exogenous role, which steers decision-makers by shaping their motivations, perceptions and biases rather than passively reflecting reality (Schafer and Walker, 2006, p. 5). The effect of beliefs on foreign policy-making is especially salient when the environment is uncertain (Holsti, 1976), when new information does not align with an individual's pre-existing beliefs, or when they are aroused by strong emotions such as hate, unease and rage (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). The effects of beliefs on decision-making can take the form of mirroring, steering and learning processes (Malici, 2017). Beliefs can mirror information from the external context that influences decision-makers to maintain or change strategies of conflict management, initiate trade wars or impose economic sanctions, adopt or obstruct institutional reforms, and support or oppose international agreements (Drury, 2000). Beliefs can exercise steering when pre-existing notions compete with new information, which sometimes results in motivated bias. Other times, beliefs can change as part of the learning process. These examples illustrate the potential importance of understanding a leader's operational codes. The effectiveness and reliability of OCA has increased since the creation of the automated coding Verbs in Context System (VICS) (Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998), and has led to a burgeoning literature on the subject. The next chapter will explain these beliefs and how they are coded.

### *Philosophical and instrumental beliefs*

George (1969, 1979) and Holsti (1970, 1976) developed ten questions to identify the modus operandi of a political leader. Their conceptualisation of belief systems generated the assumption that operational code beliefs were internally coherent, generally remained

stable over time, and extended across different levels for a particular leader. Like LTA, OCA can be measured at-a-distance using a leader's speech acts to quantify their belief system. Contemporary OCA uses the Verbs in Context Systems (VICS) developed by Walker, Schafer and Young (1998) to measure the answers to George's ten operational code questions:

***Philosophical beliefs:***
1. What is the essential nature of political life? Is the political universe essentially one of harmony or of conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponents?

2. What are the prospects for realising one's fundamental political values? Can one be optimistic, or must one be pessimistic on this score, and in what respects are they one and/or the other?

3. Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?

4. How much control can one have over historical developments? What is one's role in moving or shaping history in the desired direction?

5. What is the role of chance in human affairs and historical development?

***Instrumental beliefs:***
1. What is the best approach for selecting goals for political action?

2. How are such goals and objectives pursued most effectively?

3. What is the best approach to the calculation, control and acceptance of the risks of political action?

4. What is the best "timing" of action?

5. What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interests?

Table 2 below illustrates the process of scoring for the beliefs used in this article. Creating a typology of the operational code scores allows researchers to form predictions about the leader's likely strategic choices.

Table 2

**P-1 Nature of the political universe**

| HOSTILE | | | | | | | | FRIENDLY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely | Very | Definitely | Somewhat | Mixed | Somewhat | Definitely | Very | Extremely |
| -1.0 | -.75 | -.50 | -.025 | 0.0 | +.25 | +.50 | +.75 | +1.0 |

**I-1 Direction of strategy**

| CONFLICT | | | | | | | | COOPERATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely | Very | Definitely | Somewhat | Mixed | Somewhat | Definitely | Very | Extremely |
| -1.0 | -.75 | -.50 | -.025 | 0.0 | +.25 | +.50 | +.75 | +1.0 |

**I-5 Utility of means**

| UTILITY | | | | UTILITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Low | Low | Medium | High | Very High |
| 0.0 | .08 | .16 | .24 | .32 |

*The verbal descriptor data is borrowed from Walker et al. (2003)*

The purpose of VICS is to look for manifestations of beliefs about power relationships between the self and others. The VICS method focuses primarily on verbs in public and private statements, such as interviews, speeches, press conferences and letters, which indicate different intensities of power found in deeds and words, and codes them on a conflict-cooperation continuum. *Deeds* indicate the exercise of power in the form of positive and negative actions (i.e. "invade", "attack" or "aid") and *words* indicate the invocation of authority to support or oppose actions in lower forms of intensity (i.e. "threaten" or "praise"). Coding the intensity of transitive verbs gives us a broad picture of how the actor sees the exercise of power; some may see it as hostile while others may see it as friendly. These beliefs become clear when the actor uses conflict-oriented (coded as negative "–") or cooperation-oriented (coded as positive "+") verbs in their rhetoric. Deeds are coded as the most intense sanctions (punishments and rewards) and words of lower intensity are at the opposite end of the spectrum. This spectrum holds six values ranging from –3 to +3, which are marked by the following verb signifiers: punish (–3), threaten (–2), oppose (–1), neutral (0), support (+1), promise (+2), reward (+3). In order to conceptualise how an actor sees others exercise power, we collect and measure the verbs used to talk about other actors, which indicate their philosophical beliefs. In order to uncover how an actor thinks one ought to exercise power, we measure the verbs used to talk about themselves or their in-group to indicate instrumental beliefs. Taken together, the above form a leader's operational code of the political universe.

In VICS, the first instrumental (I-1) and philosophical (P-1) beliefs are conceptualised as 'master beliefs', meaning that, theoretically, all other beliefs should flow from and be empirically linked to them (Walker and Schafer, 2006, p. 33). These master belief scores (I-1 direction of strategy and P-1 nature of the political universe) vary between –1 and +1, with lower scores correlating to a more hostile/conflictual view of the political universe and a proclivity for conflict actions. Higher scores point to a more cooperative and friendly view of the universe and inclination towards cooperation.

## OCA literature review

Operational codes were introduced in 1951 when Nathan Leites attempted to assist the US government in explaining Soviet thinking and specifically Bolshevik beliefs. They referred to the set of axioms, postulates and premises that constitutes the foundation of broader beliefs and practices (Winter, 2003, p. 26).[5]

The development of VICS has shaped contemporary literature by decreasing the time and errors in coding the belief systems of world leaders. Research on the operational codes of American presidents includes: Jimmy Carter (Rosati, 1987), Lyndon Johnson (Walker and Schafer, 2000), Ronald Reagan (Malici, 2006), Bill Clinton (Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998), Woodrow Wilson (Walker and Schafer, 2007), John F. Kennedy (Marfleet, 2000; Renshon 2008), George H.W. Bush (Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998) and George W. Bush (Renshon, 2008; Robison, 2006). Studying the effects of presidential beliefs on US foreign policy, Cooper Drury (2000) finds that those which are more conflictual are highly predictive of sanction imposition. Research also shows that a president's risk orientation and belief in the role of chance affect their decision to initiate trade disputes (Stevenson, 1999). In addition, Malici's (2004) study of Cold War dynamics found that President Reagan went through experiential learning with Gorbachev, which led to a change in beliefs and strategy towards the USSR. This initiated a shift from confrontation to cooperation and eventually ended the Cold War.

Elizabeth Saunders (2009) compares how two US presidents, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, approached Vietnam to show how leaders confronting the same conflict may arrive at different diagnoses of threat and, thus, choose different strategies. Her case study illustrates how differences in beliefs about the nature of the political universe influence whether or not a leader is inclined to use force. Belief systems also play a role regarding how democratic heads of state view non-democratic regimes and determine whether they are a threat or not (Schafer and Walker, 2006). Strong beliefs of the "other" can sometimes result in misperception, bias, selective attention and even inherent bad faith during the decision-making process. This is highly relevant to explaining nationalist foreign policy. A leader who genuinely believes that a group constituting the "other" is a threat, even if no actual threat exists, will be more willing to act aggressively to protect against this perceived threat. Although beliefs are generally thought to be relatively stable, they can change when leaders are exposed to experiential

learning (Rapport, 2018; Schafer and Gassler, 2000) or shocks (Robison, 2006; Walker and Schafer, 2000). For example, Schafer and Gassler (2000) found that Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat underwent experiential learning, which caused his core beliefs to change. It is likely that his instrumental belief (I-1) switched from conflictual to cooperative, which contributed to his famous decision to go to Jerusalem and engage in peace talks with Israel. Beliefs can also change in the face of crisis events or high levels of enduring stress (Marfleet, 2000; Schafer and Crichlow, 2010), which is what Sam Robison (2006) argues happened to George W. Bush after 9/11. He found that Bush's core beliefs drastically changed from cooperative to conflict-oriented and hostile towards the world following the terrorist attacks.

OCA has developed into a vibrant field of research contributing to FPA. Scholars have examined a wide range of topics including how leaders' beliefs change over time, the effect of specific events on leaders' beliefs, the beliefs of terrorist organisations and rogue leaders, and how beliefs can affect the international economy. The next chapter will discuss the link between OCA and nationalistic foreign policy behaviour.

## Linking psychological variables to political behaviour

Introducing psychological variables, such as personality traits and beliefs, into an analysis of political behaviour raises a theoretical question on the causal linkage between beliefs and behaviour. I concur with Walker, Schafer and Young's (1998) positive assessment that political behaviour is not merely a response to constraints and external stimuli, but that beliefs interact with external conditions to provide an explanation for foreign policy behaviour. Numerous studies have identified this causal linkage by including event datasets on state behaviour into their analyses, which show that individual-level psychological variables can affect foreign policy in several ways. They can influence the process of decision-making, as well as the direction (conflict vs cooperation) of foreign policy outcomes (Schafer and Crichlow, 2010). Traits that are most likely to increase a leader's propensity for conflict include a high need for power, distrust of others, in-group bias and negative worldviews for self or others. Conflict-prone individuals will also have low self-confidence and conceptual complexity. Likewise, the inverse of these traits will correlate with more cooperative behaviour. There are certain personality traits which correspond with a higher proclivity for nationalist feelings. Leaders who score high on in-group bias and distrust of others will be more likely to internalise threats, perceive imagined threats where none exist, and act forcefully to defend their in-group against perceived threats.

Leaders who score high on these traits also tend to keep only the most loyal and like-minded people in their decision-making groups and dismiss those who voice dissent, leading to biased decision-making and early consensus. Small-group dynamics is another way individual-level psychological variables influence foreign policy. Although the focus here is on the president as the decision-maker, it is important to emphasise that foreign policies do not occur in a vacuum. They are usually the product of organisational processes and scrutiny from experts,

advisors and committees. For instance, Irving Janis's (1982) work on groupthink argued that the dominant leader, in this case the president, could stifle discussions, discredit information and encourage premature consensus. Whether or not this is likely is directly correlated to the leader's need for power, control orientation and conceptual complexity. It is also the dominant leader who decides who is chosen to serve the group and for how long.

When a leader has high scores in nationalistic personality traits, it can cause over-confidence in the nation's capabilities, decrease cooperation, and increase the likelihood of adopting an aggressively nationalistic foreign policy agenda. Since nationalism includes a belief in the superiority of one's nation, a leader who scores high on self-confidence and in-group bias is more likely to overestimate its military capabilities. George W. Bush believed that the US could easily invade and occupy Iraq; yet, this overconfidence resulted in years of occupation, and loss of life and American credibility in the international community (Walt, 2019). Studies show that a leader who scores high on need for power is less likely to engage in international multilateral or interdependent behaviours (Kaarbo, 2018). Combined with a high score on in-group bias, this could exacerbate isolationist sentiments and cause leaders to act negatively or aggressively towards other actors.

While there have been no empirical studies linking operational codes to nationalist foreign policies, in theory one can argue that the more someone's sense of self is tied to their nation, the more sensitive they will be to the threats and opportunities posed by outside forces. As a result, certain beliefs could cause a leader, who also scores high on nationalistic personality traits, to adopt a nationalist agenda. For instance, if a leader's P-1 belief regarding the nature of the political universe is negative, it is likely that a higher LTA score in distrust for others and in-group bias will also be observed. The same is true for a leader's I-1 belief regarding direction of strategy. One who is more willing to use force and prefers conflictual relations over cooperative ones is likely to be highly nationalistic because their distrust of others causes them to be wary of outsiders. When this wariness escalates into hostility and enemy-imaging it is common to dehumanise people from that "other" country in order to make it easier to adopt strategies which may cause them harm. While a healthy level of patriotic feeling is normal for any leader, when one's core beliefs become overly nationalistic this can prevent political compromise or cooperation and can make cross-border empathy elusive.

This link between the president's personality and beliefs, and their foreign policy has been historically evident since the birth of America. Periods of successful or popular policies are usually characterised by the "doctrine" of that period's president. For example, the Monroe Doctrine sought to protect American hegemony from European powers. The Truman Doctrine, which pledged to fight communism globally, and even the controversial Bush Doctrine, which legitimised pre-emptive attacks in the name of national security, all espouse their named leader's individual beliefs regarding the nature of the political universe and the best strategy to deal with threats. Certainly, there are other factors which contributed to the

implementation of these doctrines, as foreign policy outcomes do not occur in a vacuum; however, I argue that beliefs play an integral role. It is hard to imagine the Spanish-American war occurring if it were not for the expansionist and nationalistic qualities of the Monroe doctrine (Brands, 2006). Would the Vietnam War, which resulted from the Truman doctrine, have lasted so long despite its intense public unpopularity, draft riots and dissident movements if the leaders had not seen the world through such a strong nationalistic "us vs them" mentality (Holsti and Rosenau, 1977)? Would the US still have unilaterally initiated a controversial war in Iraq if George W. Bush's core beliefs had not changed from cooperative to conflictual in response to 9/11 (Robison, 2006)? Following from Keller's (2005) framework, I argue that US presidents whose LTA and OCA scores indicate a high need for power, distrust of others and in-group bias will be more likely to engage in nationalistic diversionary foreign policy actions in order to moderate dissatisfaction with domestic policy failures (Foster and Keller, 2014). I hypothesise that this is especially true for Donald Trump because his unabashed nationalistic proclivities should make him more likely to use a scapegoat and blame outsiders for the country's problems.

## Research design and methodology

In this chapter, I will explain the research design and methodological approach used in this article. The research strategy I employ is an individual case study of President Donald Trump using "at-a-distance" quantitative analysis of word count frequency. I chose a single case study in order to explore Trump's personality and beliefs in relation to foreign policy choices in depth. It is also fair to say that including him into a generalisable study of US presidents is difficult due to his significant departures in rhetoric and disposition compared to his predecessors, even though it is argued by some that his policies fall within conservative Republicanism. What this research seeks to investigate is whether Trump's policy decisions are driven by rational, conservative decision-making which weighs the costs and benefits, or if there is a hyper-nationalist proclivity that seeks to expand America's power through aggression at the expense of its interests in the long run. My methodology will include submitting transcribed scripted speeches and spontaneous interviews of Donald Trump, as well as a range of tweets during his tenure in office from his personal Twitter account, through *ProfilerPlus*, an automated content analysis program designed by Social Science Automation (www.socialscienceautomation.com). By integrating his tweets into the analysis, I can avoid one of the pitfalls Margaret Hermann (2003) warns against when examining speeches: that they might be written or practised ahead of time and not a true reflection of their deliverer's personality. There is a precedent in conducting personality studies using tweets of successful CEOs and entrepreneurs, such as Elon Musk, Oprah Winfrey, Bill Gates and Donald Trump when he was a businessman (Obschonka and Fisch, 2017). There is currently, however, limited academic precedent in profiling a US president's tweets, since there has never before been a president so strongly associated with Twitter.

As the literature review in Chapter 2 – 'The rise of nationalism' – identified, there is a gap in existing research linking US political leaders and nationalism. This research integrates theory and methodology to create a personality profile for Donald Trump in an attempt to explain the four puzzling foreign policy decisions discussed in Chapter 2. Since the American political system gives its executive branch almost unilateral power over foreign policy, I can reasonably expect for his leadership profile to influence foreign policy choices. Below, I will discuss the method of data collection for the independent variables, LTA and OCA. In the next chapters I will explore the link between a US president's personality profile and the foreign policies adopted during their administration by seeking answers to the following question:

> Do Donald Trump's personality traits and operational codes correspond
> to increasingly nationalistic foreign policies?

LTA and OCA both rest on the assumption that words are the artefacts of personality and beliefs, meaning that certain traits will be linked to word choices (Hudson, 2007; Hermann, 2003). In order to focus on the relationship between nationalistic foreign policies and Trump's personality traits and beliefs, I concentrate on certain traits and beliefs. The LTA traits most heavily connected to nationalism are in-group bias and distrust of others. I will also include his need for power and conceptual complexity scores to determine whether he respects or challenges constraints and whether he is open or closed to new information. Taken together, these four traits will explain whether Donald Trump is predisposed to favouring nationalistic foreign policies. The OCA beliefs I will focus on are the two "master beliefs" regarding the nature of the political universe (P-1) and the approach to strategy (I-1), as the other eight indices should flow from these. I also include his utility of means (I-5) because it will provide insight into Trump's beliefs about the nature of tactics with which to exercise political power. This trait is broken down into six categories: punish, threaten, oppose, support, promise and reward.

Hermann (2003) posits that a reliable assessment of leadership style using LTA can be constructed by analysing at least fifty speech acts of one hundred words or more in length. In order to assess Trump's overall personality, I collected two foreign policy related tweets per week from his tenure in office (January 2017 – July 2019), as well as ten spontaneous interviews with the press, resulting in 57 speech acts of at least 100 words each and a total of 6,480 words. For OCA, Walker and Schafer (2006) suggest that an accurate profile can be created by analysing at least ten speech acts of at least 1,500 words each, and at least 15–20 verbs per speech act. For Trump's OCA scores, I analysed ten speeches totalling 16,000 words. This quantitative approach uses Social Science Automation's *ProfilerPlus* content analysis software to scan for the frequency of certain words. Since this is an automated process, it is 100% reliable, reproducible, and it reduces the risks associated with hand-coding, such as human bias and errors. Extensive dictionaries have been developed for both LTA and OCA,

which automatically code for self-referential pronouns (I, me, we, us etc.); however, Trump frequently uses other non-pronoun references when still talking about himself. For example, 'The United States strongly opposes…', which *ProfilerPlus* would have automatically coded as "other". In an effort to fix this, I followed the advice of Schafer and Walker (2006) and manually went through the speech acts noting relevant instances and changing them into self-referential pronouns before submitting for analysis.

The leadership profile which will be presented in the next chapter was developed in five steps. First, the verbal data corresponding to LTA and OCA was coded separately through *ProfilerPlus*. The results were then put into perspective by comparing them to the norming groups and determining if a trait is low, moderate or high. Then, the LTA leadership style was devised from these quantifications. Based on the leadership style and OCA scores, expectations of political behaviour were described (Hermann, 1999, 2002; Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998, 2003). Finally, I compared the expectations to the four puzzling foreign policies.

Whether taken individually or combined, these seven traits predispose Trump towards his foreign policy choices by providing the psychological framework through which he perceives his environment, his exercise of power, and his strategies for dealing with others. The four LTA traits examined – in-group bias, distrust of others, need for power and conceptual complexity – will be put into perspective by comparing them to a norming group of US presidents and world leaders. Hermann's LTA has been used extensively to generate a reliable norming group of world leaders. While this provides valuable insight into Trump's peers around the world, there are considerable cultural and political discrepancies to be taken into account. This is why I chose to include a homogeneous group of past American presidents, which will provide the basis on which Trump's scores will be assessed as low or high. OCA characteristics P-1, I-1 and I-5 will be compared to norming groups of US presidents and world leaders, but also rogue leaders.[6] I chose to include a norming group of five rogue leaders (Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Bashir al-Assad, Fidel Castro, Kim Jong-Il and Saddam Hussein) for a comparison of OCA scores because Trump has been characterised as "rogue" by his critics, and such a comparison could provide insight into whether this description is at all accurate. Rogue leaders are said to be genuinely belligerent or hostile, and are sometimes described as crazy (Malici, 2017). They are also usually charged with sponsoring terrorism and engaging in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (Malici, 2006; Tanter, 1998). Trump's challenge of core norms, practices and laws of the American political system and international arena are compounded by his close ties to other highly nationalistic rogue leaders.

## Results: President Trump's leadership profile

This chapter reveals the results of the case study described previously. The leadership profile of Donald Trump, the 45th president of the United States, is based on an analysis of his speeches, interviews and tweets between 2017–2019 using LTA and OCA. First, I will present my research findings from LTA and OCA in Tables 3 and 4. His full LTA scores are presented in Appendix B. I will then summarise the results and offer outlooks for his behaviour.

Table 3: Leadership Trait Analysis of Donald Trump

| Personality Trait | Trump's Mean Score | Comparison | World Leaders | American Leaders |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| In-group bias | .19 | Leans High | Mn=.15 SD=.05 | Mn=.13 SD=.03 |
| Distrust | .31 | High | Mn=.13 SD=.06 | Mn=.12 SD=.03 |
| Power | .32 | High | Mn=.26 SD=.05 | Mn=.24 SD=.04 |
| Conceptual complexity | .54 | Low | Mn=.59 SD=.06 | Mn=.60 SD=.05 |

Donald Trump's scores are distinct for all four personality traits examined here and indicate that he challenges constraints, is closed to information, and is either relationship- or problem-focused depending on the situation.

### *In-group bias*

Trump scored two standard deviations over the American presidents' norming group for in-group bias, which predisposes him towards eliminating threats and problems by engaging in aggressive or assertive behaviour. His scores indicate that he is highly nationalistic, meaning he likely internalises threats, sees the world as "us vs them", and is quick to blame enemies for the country's problems (Hermann, 2005, p. 377). In-group bias was originally termed 'nationalism' in Hermann's early works. It is a view of the world in which one's own group or nation is inherently central compared to others. Generally, there is a strong emotional attachment to the in-group, and importance placed on preserving its culture and superiority. Political leaders who score high on in-group bias wish to maintain their separate identity at all costs. This causes topics such as immigration, border security and globalisation to become hot-button issues, about which the leader is passionate. Leaders also tend to see anyone not belonging to the group as the "other", posing a threat to its status. Instances of increasing the size of the military, closing borders and demonising immigrants are extreme manifestations of high in-group bias. Moreover, the president is likely to see only the good in the US and dismiss any weaknesses. As a result, they would use scapegoats to mobilise

political support against perceived threats. They see the world as a zero-sum game where the US loses if anyone else wins and must, therefore, be vigilant to ensure the US always wins.

### *Distrust of others*

Trump scored six standard deviations over the American presidents' norming group and three over other world leaders. These scores are highly unusual and portray him as much more conflict-oriented than most US presidents. Distrust of others involves a sense of doubt, uneasiness and wariness about others. It develops from seeing the world in black and white, or as a zero-sum game in which someone wins and someone loses. It usually involves an inclination to be suspicious of the motives and actions of others. Leaders who score high on distrust are particularly wary of those who have competing ideologies, and anything they do will be perceived as having ulterior motives to the ones stated. A high score in distrust may often signal willingness to act forcefully, even pre-emptively, to deal with perceived challenges domestically and internationally (Holsti, 1962; Shannon and Keller, 2007). Loyalty becomes compulsory for those working with the leader. Any hint of disloyalty is seen as a challenge to their authority and met with dismissal. Leaders who distrust others tend to be hypersensitive to criticism, even if it is only imagined. In its extreme manifestations or in crisis situations, distrust can turn into paranoia. Leaders who score low on distrust tend to put a situation into a wider perspective, rely on facts, and can accurately diagnose how things stack up.

### *Need for power and influence*

Trump scores two standard deviations higher than the average US president, and one higher than other world leaders. This trait indicates a leader's desire to establish or maintain their power. It also shows their desire to influence or control others by manipulating or violating 'fair play' norms (Preston, 2001; Winter, 1973). The need for power trait is visible when the speaker: (1) engages in strong, forceful actions, such as an attack, threat or accusation; (2) gives unsolicited advice; (3) attempts to control or regulate the behaviour of other groups; (4) tries to persuade, argue with or bribe someone when agreement does not seem otherwise probable; (5) endeavours to gain fame or impress others; and (6) is highly concerned with their reputation or with keeping their position. When the leader has a high need for power, they work to manipulate the environment in an effort to appear a winner. They are highly Machiavellian, trying to ensure that their positions prevail. While they might be outwardly charismatic, they have little real regard for those around them. People are instruments in their game of politics. Leaders who score high on this trait will test the boundaries before committing to a course of action, bargaining for as long as possible in order to see what is feasible and what the consequences of pushing further will be. When the need for power is tempered by self-control, responsibility or altruism, however, it can become an essential, beneficent feature of leadership (Winter, 2003, p. 158). Leaders who score low on the need for power share their influence more easily. They are fine with sharing credit and enjoy empowering others. They are more willing to sacrifice things for the needs of the group and end up boosting morale and team spirit.

*Conceptual complexity*

Trump scored one standard deviation below the norming groups for this trait, making him low in conceptual complexity. This trait measures the degree of differentiation an individual shows in perceiving other people, places, policies, ideas or things. Less conceptually complex individuals tend to see the world in black and white, and their environment as a zero-sum game. Political leaders who score high on this trait seek a variety of perspectives to appreciate different circumstances. Such leaders often take their time in making decisions, seek others' opinions, and gather as much information as possible. Leaders who score low on conceptual complexity are often willing to go with the first presented option and trust their intuition over new information. Action is preferable to searching for more information, planning or thinking. Suedfeld and Tetlock (1977) compared communications and statements from two US crises that ended in war (WWI and the Korean War) and three that were peacefully resolved (the 1911 Morocco crisis, the 1948 Berlin airlift crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis). They found that the statements indicated higher levels of complexity in the situations where war was avoided. Studies have also been conducted in which conceptual complexity was the only psychological trait measured, which found that 'when high- and low-complexity leaders face negative feedback on an existing foreign policy, the former are much more likely to change course than their low complexity counterparts' (Yang, 2010). Regarding openness to information, Trump's self-confidence scores are lower than his conceptual complexity, which would normally mean he was open to information. Trump's self-confidence and cognitive complexity scores, however, are also both lower than one SD from the norming groups, making him closed to information compared to the average president. Hermann (2005; see also Barber, 1965) notes that these leaders usually show signs of narcissism, enjoy the spotlight, push for even more extreme moves than the group may perceive are necessary, and are obsessed with their own success.

## Trump's leadership style

His scores indicate that he is closed to information, challenges constraints, and is either task- or relationship-focused depending on the situation. These three characteristics suggest that his leadership style will vary between *expansionistic* and *evangelistic*. Expansionists focus on expanding one's power and influence or that of their country. This is somewhat puzzling though, compared to his espoused beliefs that the US should not expand its influence into other countries, but rather focus on increasing jobs and closing borders. It does align, however, with his past actions of signing unconstitutional executive orders and trying to expand his own power. Evangelists focus on persuading others to accept one's message and join one's cause, which might explain his penchant for performing before large crowds and extolling his own popularity. The variance between the two styles can be explained by examining how he interacts differently across audiences in the speech acts used in this analysis. For example, he directs most of his tweets to his supporters, and emphasises the need to increase America's power and status in the world. For most of his spontaneous interviews with the press, however, he directs his message to his enemies, such as 'fake news' reporters and Democrats, and

urges the public to support him. His scores indicating that he is closed to information mean that he is an ideologue and will interpret the environment based on his view of the world. According to Hermann (2005, p. 193), evangelists do not generally win any 'most popular' contests, which could explain Trump losing the popular vote in the 2016 election and why his approval ratings have never surpassed 50%, according to Gallup Polls. One related aspect of his leadership is the record-breaking turnover rate of his administration. Consistent with Trump's personality profile, he fired Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Chief Strategist Steve Bannon, FBI Director James Comey, and National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster when they opposed his foreign policies. He replaced them with more hawkish and like-minded advisors. The following chapter will overview his OCA scores.

Table 4: Operational Code Analysis of Donald Trump

| OCA Characteristic | Trump's Mean/ Z-Score | World Leaders | American Leaders | Rogue Leaders |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| P-1: Nature of political universe | .17/–5.4 | .48 | Mn=.44 SD=.05 | .15 |
| I-1: Approach to strategy | .38/–2.7 | .60 | Mn=.57 SD=.07 | .35 |
| I-5: Utility of means | | | | |
|    a. Reward | .18/+.06 | .16 | Mn=.15 SD=.01 | .15 |
|    b. Promise | .03/–.02 | .08 | Mn=.05 SD=.01 | .05 |
|    c. Support | .35/–1.76 | .53 | Mn=.58 SD=.13 | .31 |
|    d. Oppose | .15/–1 | .10 | Mn=.17 SD=.02 | .28 |
|    e. Threaten | .06/+4.5 | .02 | Mn=.06 SD=.008 | .07 |
|    f. Punish | .32/+5 | .10 | Mn=.10 SD=.02 | .15 |

The results from the comparison of Trump's OCA scores and those of world leaders and American presidents suggests that Trump's beliefs differ significantly from the average. His view of the political universe (P-1) score is over 5 standard deviations below the average US president, making him almost unique in his conflictual and hostile view of others in the political universe. The index for this score varies between –1 and +1, with lower scores indicating that others are seen as being more hostile. Similarly, he has a more conflictual direction of strategy (I-1) than others, as shown by his score being 2.7 standard deviations below the norming group. Trump's instrumental beliefs (I-1, I-5) reflect how he thinks he

and his in-group should exercise power, and although according to Table 1 in Chapter 3, his I-1 scores fall into the category of 'somewhat cooperative', they are put in context when compared to these norming groups. Overall, he credits more utility to conflictual (I-5def) rather than cooperative (I-5abc) tactics to achieve goals, although his Oppose (I-5d) scores align closely with American leaders. The most striking of his Utility of means (I-5) scores is how high Trump's Punish (I-5f) score is, even compared to rogue leaders. At 5 standard deviations above the norming group, he is much more inclined to see punishment as a useful strategy compared to anyone in either norming groups. The most significant result is how closely his master belief scores align to those of rogue leaders rather than mainstream world leaders.

## Discussion

Donald Trump's LTA and OCA scores indicate a significant departure in personality and beliefs from other mainstream leaders. His distrust of others score is far greater than other leaders and offers an explanation for his foreign policy discourse, which emphasises other countries taking advantage of the US. It also offers insights into the high turnover rate of those working within his administration, as he is quick to remove anyone he sees as disloyal to him. Donald Trump's repeated allegations that any news reports of his administration that criticise him are 'fake news' is an example of his hypersensitivity to criticism. Walker (2009) states that personality traits influence the formation and maintenance of respective belief systems, which explains why his distrust score aligns so closely with his hostile view of the political universe (P-1). His motivation towards the world, which focuses on eliminating threats, also complements this description. Trump's in-group bias score, which is higher than the average US president and world leader, could help explain his proclivity towards adopting nationalistic foreign policies and fostering nationalist sentiment domestically. It is especially useful for filling in the gaps in explaining his decision to move the Israeli embassy to Jerusalem in the face of international condemnation, despite not receiving any concessions from Israel. His high in-group bias combined with his high need for power help explain his decision to sign an executive order instituting a travel ban from several Muslim-majority countries but exempting trading partner, Saudi Arabia. Both are nationalistic moves which were designed to resonate with his followers and increase his domestic popularity. His high need for power, characterised by strong, threatening rhetoric and disregard for "fair play" norms correlates with his conflict-oriented OCA scores for Utility of means (I-5). The fact that his master beliefs align so closely with those of rogue leaders could offer an explanation of why he forms friendships with leaders such as Putin and Kim Jong Un, despite them upholding seemingly irreconcilable ideologies. Structural theories of IR cannot offer a full explanation of Trump's idiosyncratic behaviours such as this, which illustrates the utility of FPA. Trump's Utility of means score for Punish (I-5f) is striking in that it is high even compared to rogue leaders. Combined with his hostile view of the political universe and high scores of distrust and in-group bias, this could explain immigration policy actions such as building a wall on the US southern border, reflecting his ethnonationalist desire to protect his

in-group and his belief that the best way to do so should be conflictual rather than cooperative. Trump's low score in conceptual complexity can offer insights into his transactional, zero-sum view of the world, which might explain why he sees the US as "losing" to other countries, hence his withdrawal from key trade and security agreements. What Donald Trump seems to be missing is the big picture. The US has long since agreed to act as a benign hegemon, one who absorbs security costs in return for geopolitical access and a world of states willing to cooperate. Every US president since WWII has regarded free trade as essential to US economic prosperity, until Trump. His personality traits and beliefs combined, help explain why he views international actors as "winners" and "losers" rather than actors mutually standing to benefit from cooperation, and explains his withdrawal from the TPP, which will ultimately cost the US economically and geopolitically.

In sum, there are alternative explanations for Donald Trump's foreign policy decisions, as nothing in the decision-making process occurs in a vacuum. For example, some scholars might argue that he is operating within a 'principled realist' framework, which acknowledges the centrality of power in international politics, identifies key US national interests, and asserts that cooperation among sovereign states, rather than multinational institutions, is the best hope for American interests (Powaski, 2019). Others might argue that the "hawks" in his inner circle influence his decisions or cite constraints placed on him at the domestic level. I argue, however, that his personality and core beliefs on an individual level, which interact with variables at several other levels, are the main source which guides his foreign policies and make him especially inclined to adopt nationalistic policies even if they are not in the long-term best interests of the country.

### Limitations and directions for future research

Chapter 2 has demonstrated that the literature on nationalism currently suffers from several limitations, mainly lacking in breadth and explanatory power (Dekker, 2001). Moreover, nationalism is often confused with other national orientations such as "patriotism" and, therefore, lacks a consistent definition. Another limitation is the difficulty to measure different levels of analysis quantitatively, such as nationalism as an overall ideology, individual feelings and nationalistic foreign policy. Nationalism's lack of a grand theory and empirical studies have created a degree of epistemological chaos. An avenue for future research should focus on creating a clear conceptualisation of nationalism through sound empirical studies.

One of the challenges I encountered in examining Trump was that his style of speaking is very different than most leaders. Hence, I ran the risk of it not being accurately captured by *ProfilerPlus*. Many of his tweets contained grammar and spelling mistakes or incomplete sentences, and his spontaneous interviews contained repeated phrases or words which would not be identified by the automated system's dictionary and which, therefore, had to be sorted out manually prior to the analysis. A broader limitation using cognitive analysis is the causal weakness linking specific personality traits and beliefs to resulting foreign policy. I attempted

to strengthen the argument of causation by incorporating both LTA and OCA, which is an area for future research. Although Trump's scores, however, did correlate with each other, that may not be the case in other studies. Another option for improving causation, which was unavailable for this project, is including event data to the analysis.

## Conclusion

In this article, I identified US President Donald Trump's leadership personality traits and operational code beliefs to answer the following question: is there a causal link between Donald Trump's personality and belief system and his nationalistic foreign policies? The overall aim of this research was to advance an understanding of the effect nationalistic leaders have on international relations. The specific research objectives were: (1) to identify a theoretical framework of nationalism which could be applied to the US case specifically; (2) to explore Trump's foreign policies and identify examples which could benefit from an FPA perspective; (3) to evaluate critically the relevant literature on LTA and OCA in relation to nationalism; and (4) to apply my research findings to the theoretical framework in order to connect Trump's nationalistic foreign policies to his individual personality and beliefs.

Upon identifying the need for an approach which links American nationalism and political leaders, I identify in Chapter 2 Trump's America First foreign policy agenda, which I argue is highly nationalistic even by American standards. By analysing his tweets throughout his presidency and a multitude of speeches, I aimed to address four policy decisions and behaviours which might appear puzzling without examining the individual leader themselves. Regarding the relocation of the Israel embassy to the contested area of Jerusalem, the data suggests that he identifies Israel as part of his in-group and was, therefore, willing to defy international consensus and US precedent. As for the withdrawal from the TPP, the results show that Trump views the world as a zero-sum game and is nationalistic enough to believe trade agreements infringe on American sovereignty. The executive order instituting a travel ban against Muslim-majority countries reflects his distrust of others, his hostile and conflictual beliefs, and his in-group bias. The fact that he excluded Saudi Arabia, however, could indicate that his own business ties include the Saudis loosely in his in-group. Finally, his deference and desire to form relationships with rogue leaders appears to be a product of his personality, which includes his self-image as the only person capable of taming adversaries. The results of this article reinforce the significance of individual leaders in foreign policy decision-making. Popular concerns relating to globalisation can be exploited by nationalistic leaders at the expense of other groups, as well as long-term US interests.

I have sought to establish in this article that the personality traits and beliefs of President Donald Trump account for some of the gaps in explaining his foreign policy decisions. My results find that he has a deep distrust of others, is highly nationalistic, with lower than average conceptual complexity, and a high need for power. Together, these traits indicate that his leadership style focuses on extending his power at the expense of others, makes

him likely to take risks and engage in highly aggressive behaviour, and concentrates on eliminating potential threats and problems (Hermann, 2003). His OCA scores indicate that his beliefs align much more closely with rogue leaders than mainstream ones, and that he has a much more conflict-oriented view of the political universe than the average leader. In sum, the fact that Trump has been an impactful leader cannot be denied. It will most likely take years and a wealth of studies to determine exactly what that impact will be.

## Notes

1   Washington, G. (1813) *Washington's farewell address to the people of the United States*. Hartford, CT: Hudson and Goodwin.

2   Trump, D. (2016) 29 November [Trump Twitter Archive V2]. Available at: http://www. thetrumparchive.com (Accessed: 10 August 2021). The Supreme Court held in *Texas v Johnson* (491 US 397) that flag-burning was symbolic political speech and could be expressed at the expense of the national symbol and to the affront of those who disagree.

3   Albright made this statement on NBC's *Today* show on 19 February 1998.

4   For a more complete overview of all eight leadership styles, see Hermann (2003).

5   For a review of the evolution of early operational code analysis work, see Walker (1990).

6   The data for rogue leaders comes from Dyson and Parent (2018).

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*Appendix A*

| LTA Trait | Characteristic | Coding |
|---|---|---|
| Belief in ability to control events | Perception of one's own degree of control over the political world | Percentage of verbs used that reflect the actions of the leader or relevant group |
| Conceptual complexity | Capability of discerning the different dimensions of a complex environment | Percentage of words related to high complexity ("approximately", "possibility") vs low complexity ("absolutely", "irreversible") |
| Distrust of others | Suspicions, wariness of others outside one's group | Percentage of nouns that indicate misgivings or suspicions that others intend harm towards the speaker or the speaker's group |
| In-group bias | Perception of one's group as holding a central role, accompanied with strong feelings of national identity and honour | Percentage of references to the group that are favourable ("successful", "great"), show strength ("powerful") or a need to maintain group identity ("defend our borders") |
| Need for power | A concern with gaining, keeping and restoring power over others | Percentage of verbs that reflect actions of attack, advice, influence on the behaviour of others, concern with reputation |
| Self-confidence | Personal image of self-importance in terms of the ability to deal with the environment | Percentage of personal pronouns used such as "me", "myself", "I", which show that the speaker perceive themselves as the instigator of an activity |
| Task focus | Focus on solving problems vs building relationships | Percentage of words related to instrumental activities vs concern for others' feelings and desires |

## *Appendix B*

| Personality Trait | Trump's Mean Score | Comparison | World Leaders | American Leaders |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| In-group bias | .19 | Leans High | Mn=.15 SD=.05 | Mn=.13 SD=.03 |
| Distrust | .31 | High | Mn=.13 SD=.06 | Mn=.12 SD=.03 |
| Power | .32 | High | Mn=.26 SD=.05 | Mn=.24 SD=.04 |
| Conceptual complexity | .54 | Low | Mn=.59 SD=.06 | Mn=.60 SD=.05 |
| BACE | .44 | High | Mn=.35 SD=.05 | Mn=.36 SD=.04 |
| Task focus | .57 | Moderate | Mn=.63 SD=.07 | Mn=.62 SD=.06 |
| Self-confidence | .40 | Moderate | Mn=.36 SD=.10 | Mn=.45 SD=.08 |

## Children in power: are children entitled to the right to stand for public office?

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### Biography:

Júlia Peña is a Community Development Worker at local charity based in North Kensington, London, and author of *Children in Power: Are Children Entitled to the Right to Stand for Public Office?* She obtained a joint honours Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from the University of Warwick before completing a Master of Science in International Relations at the University of Edinburgh. Júlia now helps London residents to release their potential and live fulfilled lives through education, employment and wellbeing support.

### Abstract

This article seeks to address the gap in the literature concerning the right to stand for office by establishing that all children are entitled to run for election. Following a thorough review of the literature on children's participatory rights, this article identifies children's representation as a leading factor in legitimising democracy. Furthermore, it addresses concerns regarding children's competence and practicality issues to guarantee that the realisation of this right does not result in an immoral outcome. Finally, deliberative democracy is considered as an alternative to representative systems, where children can influence policy-making without requiring their assimilation into the adult world.

### Introduction

Children have consistently been marginalised from political decision-making due to their perceived incompetence and lack of self-determination compared to that of adults (Cowden, 2012, p. 365). As a consequence, children's lives have been tied to third parties entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of them until they reach adulthood. In the last hundred years, however, there has been a shift in how children interact with society. Not only have children become the centre of 'huge emotional, cultural, technological and economic investment' (Oswell, 2012, p. 3), but as a collective they have also gained visibility in many issues that affect them globally, such as climate change, famine and the refugee crisis. Children have started to develop their own thoughts and to voice their concerns over policies that endanger

them now more than ever. Nonetheless, despite this increasing presence of children in contemporary issues, they remain alienated from political participation. 'Children and young people are simultaneously at the heart of contemporary political debate and on the margins' (Hartung, 2017, p. 3).

From these new times, a key question emerges: how entitled (if at all) are children to being part of the democratic process? Although policy-makers are still reluctant to extend children's participation to formal political institutions, the scholarship regarding their citizenship and their participatory rights has grown over the last few decades and has managed to gain some influence. There is particular interest in lowering the age to vote, for example, because it would 'give higher priority and emphasis to policies relating to youth affairs than at present' (Franklin, 1986, p. 46). The notion that children must have the right to vote as part of their citizenship status combined with an urgent need to increase voter turnout in national and local elections has influenced countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua and Yugoslavia, which have now given sixteen-year-olds suffrage (Wall, 2011, p. 89). Another branch of study is specifically concerned with Article 12 of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which states that children have the right to express their views freely. It has been argued that children's voices should be listened to, to improve the government's representation of their interests. This concern with children's consultative rights has been put into practice in certain parts of the world in order to include children's voices into the public debate. For instance, in 2001, New Zealand created an Agenda for Children in which children were asked to present their views on society's most pressing issues. In addition, in 2003, South Africa launched a project called Children in Action (Dikwankwetla), which invited children to some parliamentary hearings (Wall, 2011, pp. 87–88). Despite the right to vote and consultation being prime examples of democratic political rights, there is one right that has remained untouched in the literature and that has only appeared on rare occasions in youth rights campaigns: the right to stand for public office. Running for elections is one of the most vaguely defined democratic political rights, as there is no universal consensus regarding the minimum age required to become a political candidate. Whilst the voting age oscillates between sixteen and twenty-one years old, the age of candidacy may range from eighteen to forty years old, depending on the country and the type of election. Political advocates and scholars focus on lowering the age of candidacy to mirror the voting age. This means, however, that little attention is paid to children's right to stand for office, as they are younger than the voting age. This constitutes a significant gap in the literature concerning children's democratic political rights. It excludes a human right put in place to encourage the political representation of all members of the state, which is a legitimising factor of the whole democratic process. Therefore, this article argues in favour of the entitlement of *all* children to run for public office.

In order to develop this analysis, I dedicate the first part of this article to providing a review of the literature, in which I present the varied schools of thought concerning the definition

of children, rights and citizenship. The definition of these terms implies political and legal consequences for the young and, hence, they must be clarified early on. In addition, I outline the underlying debate surrounding this piece of research. Behind the entitlement of children to participatory rights, there are two main views that evolve from David Archard's (1993) analysis of the 1970s 'children's liberation movement' and the opposing 'caretaker thesis'. The 'children's liberation movement' advocates in favour of the emancipation of children from their parents/guardians and argues that children should be allowed to make their own decisions. The 'caretaker thesis' establishes that children must have their decisions made for them as a means to protect their future selves. I use this discussion to put this article into context, while also re-evaluating and challenging the association of competence with age that limits children's engagement in active citizenship. Furthermore, I address the literature surrounding children's participation paying particular attention to Hart's (1992) participation ladder and its impact on society's accommodation of children's voices. The second part of the article focuses exclusively on children's right to stand for public office in the context of representative democracy. I analyse why children are entitled to this right to legitimise this form of democratic system and guarantee that the interests of all are mirrored in the government. In addition, I argue that competence is not enough to exclude such a large percentage of the population from running for elections. I shall address concerns regarding the consequences of holding political power for children if elected, particularly focusing on the risk of child labour. Finally, I describe the work of Youth Parliaments in promoting civic education and political literacy. I argue that despite their educational qualities, these organisations are not sufficient to guarantee the representation of children's interests in governments. Thus, they are not a viable substitute to the right to stand for public office. The last part revolves around deliberative democracy as an alternative to representative conceptions of democracy. I use this system to evaluate how children's political participation could achieve a greater impact when traditional electoral processes are not involved. Therefore, I argue that deliberative efforts to improve the inclusion of all communities in decision-making can offer more benefits to children than the electoral process in representative systems.

## Children, rights and citizenship

Determining where children stand in society is necessary to understand the extent to which states owe them democratic political rights. The child's entitlement to democratic political rights refers to a moral entitlement, not a legal one. In Franklin's words, 'a moral or human right is a claim for a right which it is believed children, indeed all human beings, should possess by virtue of their common humanity' (Franklin, 2002, p. 21). Hence, the entitlement I focus on does not depend on any legal arrangements but is a universal moral claim that belongs to all human beings. Thus, it is essential to define childhood and establish the nature of its interactions with citizenship and the rights that come with it. Isolating the notion of childhood from the wider definition of humanity is necessary because, whether socially constructed or not, there are evident differences between children and adults used to justify the current alienation of young people from politics and decision-making. As Allison James

describes, every society has shown signs of a conceptual distinction between child and adult caused by both their physical and psychological differences. Each culture's conception of childhood, however, may entail different legal, political and social consequences and may vary in terms of their citizen membership altogether (James, 2011, p. 169). For the purpose of simplicity, I will focus on the Western perception of children.

Childhood as an idea separate from adulthood may be considered both a phase and a permanent state, two terms that despite appearances do not contradict each other (Qvortrup, 2009, p. 23). On the one hand, the developmental model regards childhood as a stage, a period of time that coincides with the cognitive and physical early development of a human being in which becoming its adult form is the goal (Archard, 1993, p. 36). This process is characterised by major changes that transform the individual from an immature, incompetent being into an individual capable of self-determination and taking care of themselves. The outcome of this stage is the improved version of the child, which we call adult. Thus, Western socialisation and education focuses on guiding the child towards overcoming childhood successfully (Qvortrup, 2009, p. 24). On the other hand, childhood is a permanent social structure of society, even if its members are constantly changing (Qvortrup, 2009, p. 25). People belonging to the childhood "group" are entitled to specific rights that other groups do not possess – for example, education – and are granted special protection by the state. This particular relationship between children and the state is embedded in the law, which makes it at least semi-permanent. Hence, childhood is both a phase in which a human being develops the capabilities that will make them adult and a permanent institution that embraces all individuals undergoing this stage. 'Childhood is there as a social space to receive any child born and to include the child – for better or for worse – throughout his or her childhood period' (Qvortrup, 2009, p. 26). For the purpose of this article, I shall limit the definition of children to any individual aged zero to eighteen years old. Therefore, when I argue for the right to stand for public office of all children, I refer to any individual who fits this age requirement.

This dual distinction between childhood and adulthood, however, does not fully explain why there is a difference in their entitlement to certain rights. In the context of this analysis, I refer to democratic political rights. In order to explain this difference, it is essential to describe how these rights are separated from those that belong to all human beings regardless of their child or adult status. According to David Archard, 'rights may be divided into those that require, if exercised, that their possessors do certain things, and those that require of others that they do things' (Archard, 1993, p. 64). I hence call the first kind participatory or active rights and the second kind passive or protectionist rights. The latter are the rights that must be guaranteed and protected by third parties, mainly the state, and are related to social welfare, security, civil liberty etc. They generally apply to all human beings regardless of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or class. The former kind, however, requires that individuals foster specific capabilities in order to put them into practice. Being able to vote and exercising sexual liberty

are the clearest examples. Hence, democratic political rights are a sub-category of active rights. They are specifically concerned with the individual's participation in the democratic process, whether it is through voting, standing for office or having a voice in policy-making. This article's hypothesis stems from this particular sub-category of rights because it depends on a series of competencies that children have been assumed to not possess. This assumption is based on the belief that there exists some correlation between age and competence (Archard, 1993, p. 58). This is why it has been deemed necessary to establish a boundary where society agrees that this incompetence has been left behind. In most countries, this takes the form of age majority at 18 and it determines the time when individuals are no longer children and can, therefore, exercise their democratic political rights. Following the notion that children must be protected from their own choices until they are old enough, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) represents an international attempt to determine how children's passive rights must be protected around the world by third parties, whether it be carers or the state. These rights include that children will have the right to life, health care, education, will be free from any form of abuse etc., and that third actors will be there to ensure these conditions are met (Franklin, 2002, p. 20). Articles 12 and 13, however, do consider participatory rights in an ambiguous manner. They are both concerned with freedom of expression and establish that all children capable of doing so must be able to express their views (UNCRC, 1989). Nonetheless, there is a certain vagueness in terms of how to determine the capability of each individual child and it is, therefore, unclear in determining of what this freedom consists. Thus, children's political democratic rights remain unpractised both at the national and international levels.

This denial of rights according to competence has a significant effect on children's citizenship status. 'At the formal level, citizenship simply denotes the legal status of membership of a nation-state, as symbolized by the right to a passport. However, at a substantive level it means much more than this legally, politically and socially' (Lister, 2007, p. 9). Citizenship is not only a status, but it can also be considered a practice, which means that being part of a community grants both passive and active rights; citizens will enjoy the protection of their basic rights while they actively engage with their community by exercising their participatory rights (Lister, 2007, p. 9). Children should be entitled to citizenship status by simply belonging to a specific territory, but they have a different relationship with their community to that of adults due to their assumed inability to self-determination. As a result, children's citizenship has embraced two different understandings. On the one hand, T.H. Marshall (1950) argues that children should be regarded as potential members; citizens 'to be' rather than citizens in full right (James, 2011, p. 169; Sanghera, Botterill, Hopkins and Arshad, 2018, p. 543). Despite enjoying some social and civil rights, children cannot fully engage with their community because they are not competent enough to exercise their active rights. Hence, it is believed that since there is a clear distinction between children and adults, this should be reflected in terms of their citizenship. Cockburn, on the other hand, supports a re-evaluation of children's contributions to society and argues that today's children already

participate in many aspects of their life and their own upbringing; they are not as hopeless as we depict them to be. Thus, he defends the view that children should be considered citizens in their own right (Cockburn, 2013).

The clarification of these terms is necessary because the definitions of childhood, democratic political rights and citizenship have political, social and legal implications for all citizens. The existing distinction between child and adult is indeed partly biological since both groups of people are at different stages of their physical and psychological development. It is essential, however, to understand that this differentiation is also socially constructed and that by encapsulating children in a world where they are protected from their own choices, we are not allowing them to show their true potential. In Archard's own words, 'children's incompetence is self-confirming. Presumed unable to do something, children may simply not be allowed to show that in fact they can' (Archard, 1993, p. 68). Therefore, the denial of participatory rights to children must be reassessed, as it relies on outdated assumptions of children's nature.

## The big debate: should children have the same rights as adults?

The previous section established that the denial of children's democratic rights is commonly justified because they are considered 'morally incompetent, inexperienced and incapable of making rational decisions' (Kellet, 2009, p. 44). Liberals presume that this incompetence is characterised by their lack of 'rational autonomy' (Archard, 1993, p. 65), which is a combination of rationality, maturity and independence. These three aspects determine whether an individual has experienced the world long enough to make sense of it, is emotionally balanced and can therefore sustain relatively invariable interests and can rely on their own resources to survive (Archard, 1993, pp. 66–67). If an individual fulfils the criteria, they are mentally fit to engage actively in the democratic process. These characteristics, however, are for the most part not innate. Children are expected to develop them over time and, thus, they cannot exercise their political rights until they overcome these competency barriers, which is associated with reaching adulthood. From this key assumption emerges what Archard describes as the 'caretaker thesis' (Archard, 1993, p. 51). This paternalistic approach claims that children must have their decisions made for them as a means to protect them from making mistakes that might harm their present selves and their future adult selves (Kellet, 2009, p. 44). This thesis states that 'self-determination is too important to be left to children' (Archard, 1993, p. 51) and it is justified by the notion that children would most likely make choices they would not make if they were competent individuals. Hence, the caretaker – usually but not exclusively the parents – must make decisions on their behalf by becoming the 'trustee of the child's interests who acts to promote them until such time as the child is able to do it for [themselves]' (Archard, 1993, p. 53). Therefore, the 'caretaker thesis' argues against the child's entitlement to democratic political rights.

In strict opposition to this thesis, the children's liberation movement has existed since the

early 1970s and challenges the idea that children cannot make meaningful rational decisions (Kellet, 2009, p. 44). Considered to be the next step in the emancipation of humanity (Archard, 1993, p. 45), this movement categorises the lack of children's rights as a form of institutionalised oppression perpetuated by the family unit and the education system (Ludbrook, 1996, p. 278). This argument is built on various points from which I highlight the three most relevant ones. First of all, the age barrier that separates children from adults is arbitrary and unjust considering that adults may display the same incompetence all children are assumed to have. Consequently, adults are also at risk of making irreversible mistakes that will not only affect them but also the child on whose behalf they have been making decisions. Secondly, children's inability to self-determination based on inexperience is a self-fulfilling argument. Children are denied action in decision-making scenarios because they lack the experience and, hence, they do not have the opportunity to learn to do so (Franklin, 2002, p. 24). Thirdly, paternalist views seem to equate one's entitlement to a specific right with doing the right thing. Children, like adults, can and will make mistakes but if we do not stop one group of people from doing so, it is unjust to stop another for that same reason (Dworkin, 1977, p. 188).

The main criticism to the child liberationist view is that the arbitrariness of age is only realistic when comparing the competence levels of older children – between fourteen and eighteen – and adults. It is not reasonable, however, to generalise this premise to all children. Although there have been studies showing very young children constantly making decisions in everyday situations (Miller, 1999), it is undeniable that the competence displayed by very young children is significantly lower than that of the average adult. Thus, applying the competence-age argument to all children is an oversimplification. Furthermore, child liberationists tend to exaggerate how independent children can actually be. It is clear that children have the means to maintain themselves to a certain level but at the earliest stages of their development they must rely on their carers to survive. It is an overstatement to claim that this dependency is forced upon them because it can in fact be partially natural (Archard, 1993, p. 67). Hence, this article considers these limitations and argues in favour of the right to run for election by disregarding the competence factor, as will be explained in future sections. Instead, it will follow the liberationist notion that humans' moral entitlement to their rights should not be conditioned by their potential mistakes.

This debate is relevant now more than ever. Political discussions concerning the rights of the child are constantly influenced by public perceptions of children. As Franklin explains in his assessment of the shift in media portrayals of young people in the 1990s, 'adults construct the children they need' (Franklin, 2002, p. 29). This means that the narrative surrounding children is flexible to be able to sustain the inflexible character of their participatory rights. The most significant discourses portray children either as vulnerable, passive and pitiable creatures, or as antisocial, irresponsible beings that require monitoring (Franklin, 2002, p. 30). The end of the 1990s and beginning of the new century, however, witnessed a shift from

the former to the latter. This is dangerous for those advocating for an expansion of children's rights because it implies that policy-makers are focusing on how to limit their rights even further. This narrative, however, now clashes with an increasing self-awareness that children seem to be developing all over the globe. This phenomenon is described by Hartung in *Conditional citizens: rethinking children and young people's participation* (2017), as one caused by globalisation, individualisation and democratisation. From these three aspects, I emphasise the importance of individualisation because it stresses the notion of self-awareness. Due to a generalised detachment from tradition and religious faith and norms, young people have started to question well-established institutions and ideologies, becoming responsible for their own actions as a consequence (Hartung, 2017, p. 7). Instead of accommodating these new concerns into the debate, however, policy-makers seem to be willing to dismiss them in favour of traditional perceptions of children combined with this new vilifying discourse. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to challenge the common justifications surrounding the limitations of children's democratic political rights, particularly the right to stand for office.

## Children's participation

Having described the current dichotomy regarding children's participatory rights, discussing children's participation – or lack thereof – in more detail is essential to appreciate the depth of their alienation from any form of self-determining decision-making. Given that we want to make children participants in their own lives, it is worth exploring the literature surrounding children's participation specifically because it shows the importance of generating a discussion for adults to learn how to enable children's participation. The literature that emerged as a result of the child liberationist movement was concerned with establishing a correct way for children to participate in their communities in an unofficial way. It was soon realised, however, that there is no unique way of promoting children's participation. Rather, the literature simply sheds light on the problem and suggests different ways to approach it. This discussion regarding children's informal involvement is relevant because it can be extended to children's political participation; it can help us develop settings where children can exercise their democratic political rights in harmony with adults. For instance, children's right to run for public office requires that adults reconsider the way they promote children's participation and question how prepared they are to welcome children's ideas.

The most important paper on children's participation is Roger Hart's (1992) *Children's participation: from tokenism to citizenship*, where he uses Sherry Arnsterin's (1979) ladder metaphor to describe eight different levels in which a child can participate (Bartos, 2016, p. 117). Hart regards participation as the opportunity to have a say in the decisions that directly affect our lives, and divides the ways in which children are denied or granted participation in two categories. The first category is non-participation, which includes manipulation, decoration and tokenism as the first three steps of the ladder. This is particularly useful because it has helped practitioners recognise these false types of participation and work to

eliminate them (Shier, 2001, p. 110). The second category represents the different degrees of actual participation, where each subsequent level entails greater participation. Child-initiated shared decisions with adults is the greatest form of involvement (Hart, 1992). His approach, however, was meant to spark a much-needed conversation about children's participation rather than provide step-by-step guidelines on how to make children participate. Hart's ladder 'is largely limited to describing the varying roles adults play in relation to children's participation' (Hart, 2008, p. 20) and it does not cover many of the ways in which children can get involved. Thus, Hart's example is simply meant to emphasise the fact that there is no established approach regarding children's participation. Consequently, the purpose of this literature is to serve as an indicator to evaluate the progress of children's participation (Lansdown, 2010, p. 20) and to set a theoretical framework through which adults can start to question and address the way they interact with children.

Harry Shier (2001) proposed an alternative interpretation of Hart's participation ladder by eliminating the non-participation category. His model creates five different levels of participation, instead of eight. Each level poses three different questions, such as 'Are you ready to take children's views into account?' to help the reader determine where they stand and offer them guidance regarding how to improve (Shier, 2001, p. 110). Similarly, the highest level of participation is 'Children share power and responsibility in decision-making'. This model is significantly more centred in creating a clear pathway towards participation than Hart's ever was. Shier himself, however, clarifies that this model should only be used as the first step in developing an action plan to enhance children's participation (Shier, 2001, p. 116). Hart and Shier's models of child participation exemplify the existing diversity of approaches to promote children's involvement in their own lives and offer us a means to measure, analyse and improve the way we currently protect children (Lansdown, 2010, p. 20). Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that the research surrounding children's participation is still fairly limited and hypothetical. In terms of democratic political rights, these limitations are even more noticeable since voting and consultation are the only two forms of participation that have been explored in depth. Therefore, children's right to stand for public office, being the main focus of this article, is relevant because it presents a new approach to children's participation in the political sphere. It offers them a way to take control of their own existence and represent their interests and that of their peers in official political processes. An additional rung to the theoretical ladder is added.

## Children standing for office

Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is concerned with the need to secure a functioning democracy to guarantee the protection of human rights in all states. The way to do so is through fair and free elections, which means that the vote must be secret and free of coercion and everyone must be able to run freely. Article 21 states that 'everyone has the right to take part in the government of [their] country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in

[their] country' (UDHR, 1948). Thus, the UDHR suggests that standing for public office is a human right in the context of representative democracies. Before I discuss why this should include children, I want to focus first on how this right is currently applied around the world. If we accepted that due to its participatory nature this right should be reserved to adults, it would be reasonable to assume that the minimum age of candidacy would be equal to the voting age. This, however, is not the case in many countries across the globe, Western and otherwise. The law surrounding political candidates is far from homogeneous and it may even differ within one state depending on the type of election. In Europe alone, most countries allow eighteen-year-old candidates to run for national elections, but there is still a group of countries that reserve this right for twenty-one-year-olds – Poland, Estonia and Ireland being prime examples – and sometimes twenty-five-year-olds or more – Italy, Lithuania, Cyprus etc. (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2017). In the United States, the minimum age requirement varies depending on which office one is running for. The President and Vice President must be at least thirty-five years old when assuming office, a Senator must be thirty years of age and anyone running for the House of Representatives has to be twenty-five years old (Bomboy, 2016). Even countries that do accept eighteen-year-olds as candidates have intrinsic barriers to youth participation. Their perceived inexperience, lack of recognition to get public attention and lack of financial resources to sustain a political campaign are the main factors which deter young people from running for office (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018, p. 21). Children's alienation from political life is justified on a similar basis, paying particular attention to the incompetence factor. Both children and young adults are considered to be inexperienced, unknowledgeable and too immature to be in a position of such responsibility. Campaigners all over the world, however, are only advocating for the inclusion of young adults in national parliaments. Thus, as an extension of their efforts, it is plausible to argue that the debate surrounding the need to lower the age of candidacy can and should include children.

In the following sections, I argue in favour of children's entitlement to the right to stand for public office on three different accounts. Firstly, children must be able to run for election to at least have the possibility of seeing their interests directly reflected in their government. Representation is essential to legitimise liberal democracies and so, children need to have a seat at the parliamentary table. Secondly, competence by itself ought not to justify an individual's political status. Adults can behave as incompetently as some children are depicted to do, and excluding a group of people on this basis and not the other must be viewed as unjust. Furthermore, having the right to run for election does not entail winning the elections. The electoral process is built as a filter for incompetence and the voters are trusted to identify the people who are most qualified to represent them. Thirdly, despite not arguing in favour of children winning the elections but just having the possibility to run, I describe the conditions necessary to make the parliamentary environment child-friendly and accessible. Finally, I consider the existing Youth Parliaments and argue that despite the very valuable educational approach, they are not enough to neglect children's right to stand for public office.

## Children as a minority and political representation

Traditional liberal democracies understand representation as the presence of different ideas in a government. Hence, political exclusion in elections will result in lack of diversity and over-representation of some views and under-representation of others (Phillips, 1998, p. 1). This politics of ideas leaves little room for concerns regarding *who* is getting elected. Hanna Pitkin (1967) has described this phenomenon as descriptive representation, 'where the representative stands for a group by virtue of sharing similar characteristics such as race, sex, ethnicity, or residence' (Childs and Lovenduski, 2013, p. 490). This type of representation has been heavily overlooked in conventional liberal perspectives because an over-emphasis on the individual components of a government is considered to divert attention from what the government is actually doing. More radical attitudes, however, have identified descriptive representation as essential in legitimising democracy to the point where it has become central to minority and women's groups advocating to gain presence in the political sphere. Hierarchies and discrimination exist in all societies and, despite it being a human right, access to public office has been repeatedly denied to members of disadvantaged groups – whether they are ethnic minorities or people of colour, women, working class etc. This makes legislatures highly homogeneous since they are largely composed by rich white cisgender men. Before, this kind of social exclusion was regarded as only a matter of expanding the franchise (Goodin, 2003, p. 194). Nonetheless, people from disadvantaged groups cannot expect representatives that occupy privileged positions in society to understand their needs, interests and experiences because they have never faced discrimination based on their identity (Hayward, 2009, p. 113). Thus, granting them the vote is not enough. A democratic system that does not include the interests of all cannot be legitimate. It must make an effort to include explicitly the voices of those who have been excluded from politics for a long time.

Given this premise, do children count as a disadvantaged group that deserves representation? In 1976, *The New York Times* named children 'the last minority' in the human rights movement (Margolin, 1978, p. 441). Children constitute a large percentage of the world population, but as a group they remain uniquely uninfluential because they are perceived as vulnerable and powerless individuals. In Joan Lestor's words, 'children are the largest minority in Britain's democracy without a political voice of their own. They do not have the vote, but they constitute almost one quarter of the total population… Because they do not organise or lobby decision-makers, however, they are all too often the statistically unrecognised victims of bad policies' (Lestor, 1995, p. 102). Indeed, children spend at least eighteen years of their lives being widely affected by government policies without being able to influence them formally. Furthermore, Western countries consider that because they are able to feed, clothe and educate their children, they are entitled to overlook their participatory rights. Nonetheless, children are still regarded for the most part as their parents' property and 'any efforts to promote the cause of children's rights are often interpreted as undermining traditional "family values"' (Lestor, 1995, p. 100). This mentality may sound familiar, as it has also been used to justify the political exclusion of women (Lister, 2007, p. 6; Anderson, 1992, p. 164). Women were once,

and still are in many places, considered incompetent, irrational and immature, which was used to justify their alienation from politics. Ever since, it has been proven that the association of these qualities with gender is completely arbitrary and so women have technically been emancipated. The question regarding children's competence will be discussed in detail in the next section because the basis for such an assumption goes beyond mere arbitrariness. If we assumed, however, that children are indeed incompetent, which is the main reason that keeps them separated from the adult world, their political exclusion would imply that it is justified to let mental and physical capacities determine one's political status. Letting this factor determine which adults get to participate in politics would be unthinkable because it violates the principle of equality upon which most liberal democracies are built (Fowler, 2014, p. 98). This principle of equality establishes that all citizens are entitled to the same rights by the nature of their status and, thus, cannot be denied those rights on the basis that they are somewhat different to other citizens. As Dworkin puts it, 'the community confirms an individual person's membership, as a free and equal citizen, by according him or her a role in the collective decision. In contrast, it identifies an individual who is excluded from the political process as someone not fully respected or not fully a member' (Dworkin, 1988, p. 4). Therefore, alienating children from the democratic process because of their perceived incompetence is discriminatory as it violates the same principle of equality. This means that children are in fact a disadvantaged group. In being so, their experiences and interests are not appropriately reflected in the composition of governments because they do not have the option of being a part of them. Hence, children should be entitled to run for election because they are necessary agents in legitimising our democratic systems.

It is essential, however, to not undermine the uniqueness of the children's case because it is the only disadvantaged group that, given the time, all members are able to leave behind. Hence, it is important to explain why adults, who have all been children in the past, are still not fit to represent the latter's interests. Firstly, Liebel outlines that interests are 'the expression of a particular life situation and life experience' (Liebel, 2018, p. 598). Thus, as the historical context changes, experiences and therefore interests change as well. For example, the children from twenty years ago did not have to worry about the immediate consequences of climate change in their lives and, thus, it was not necessarily in their best interest to do something about it. Hence, having been part of the same social structure does not mean that adults can properly represent the interests of children as they are today. Secondly, when shifting from a disadvantaged position to a privileged one, it is easy to forget what being a child felt like, especially when adopting the point of view of the carer rather than the cared. Similarly, people suddenly earning enough money to move from one social class to another tend to forget some of the difficulties associated with living under poorer conditions. The same way we would not expect a wealthy person with a humble past to represent the working classes, we cannot expect adults to represent the interests of children accurately. Thirdly, it could be argued that children are volatile creatures and that their prime motivation is the instant gratification of their needs. Hence, they are not aware of the importance of their long-

term interests, both as children and future adults, and would not be able to represent other children appropriately as a consequence. It is hard to describe what the general interests of all children are because it is a heavily heterogeneous group, which means that representing them would not only be a challenge for children, but it already *is* for adults. Children from different backgrounds, genders, races etc. face different situations where their multiple identities intersect and, thus, distinctly different interests arise from their contrasting experiences. For the sake of simplicity, however, let us assume that some interests are common to all children. These interests reflect both their experiences and concerns as children – education and family – and as future adults – pensions, climate change etc. (Cook, 2013, p. 440). The existence of these interests is undisputed, but traditional approaches consider that children lack the self-awareness and autonomy necessary to fight for them. Therefore, adults are expected to preserve them on their behalf. The fact that children have interests at all, however, requires them to be 'self-acting' individuals to some extent because it is their experiences and needs that generate them in the first place. Children's 'feelings, thoughts and actions are guided, or at least stimulated and influenced by their interests' (Liebel, 2018, p. 598); children themselves are more likely to understand these motivations better than any adult. Thus, 'children's interests […] refer to a range of commitments, desires and experiences that are better defined by children themselves' (Wyness, 2009, p. 540).

We see children fighting for these interests on behalf of other children informally all the time. Children's increasing involvement in activism demonstrates a deep understanding of the current deficiencies of the system in protecting their fundamental rights. As Harvey Day (2019) explains in his article for the *BBC*, 'a new generation of young activists has proved that many teenagers are, in fact, deeply concerned with social, political and environmental issues – and they're fully prepared to do something about them'. Emma Gonzalez was just eighteen when she co-founded the gun-control advocacy group Never Again MSD (Day, 2019). She was also at the forefront of March for Our Lives, a student-led movement that seeks to end gun violence in the United States (Holpuch and Owen, 2018). Greta Thunberg was fifteen when she staged her first protest to raise awareness about climate change. Since then, she has inspired over a million students to strike and demand political action in their home countries (Day, 2019). Malala Yousafzai started writing about girls' right to education in Pakistan when she was eleven (Yousafzai, 2013, p. 154) and was the youngest person to ever win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 (Day, 2019). The undeniable presence of children in activism and advocacy projects shows both a clear concern for the preservation of their present lives and an understanding of the consequences of today's politics for their future selves (Walker, 2017, p. 22). Furthermore, children already represent other children's interests in schools as class or student council representatives. Pupil participation has proven to improve the learning experience significantly because not only are children's voices heard, but also they are the ones directly participating in decision-making. Their understanding of their own needs is more profound than that which any adult mediator could achieve, which leads to more effective policy-making (Welsh Government, 2011, p. 9). This evidence shows that it

is not the case that children are not in touch with their best interests. They are constantly involved in unofficial political endeavours promoting their interests and the interests of their peers. Therefore, if children can fight for less controversial interests, 'such as a right to safe spaces where they can socialise and congregate, to care and well-being, and to a healthy environment', they can also claim 'more controversial rights' (e.g. political rights to vote or to run for public office) (Sanghera, Botterill, Hopkins and Arshad, 2018, p. 545).

Finally, it could also be argued that children are considered to lack critical thinking skills and, thus, could be easily manipulated into promoting the interests of others rather than their own. The problem of manipulation is complicated, as there are few studies that clarify whether children are in fact easily manipulated or not in a political context. Clemente and Padilla-Racero's research on manipulation in disputes over child custody, however, establishes that when children become witnesses in a judicial procedure regarding their parents, they tend to stay true to their beliefs and experiences rather than rely on what someone else says is the truth (Clemente and Padilla-Racero, 2015, p. 106). Hence, they recommend always assuming that children are telling the truth. Considering parents are the most influential figures in a child's life, it is plausible to argue that if parents cannot manipulate their children into lying for them it is unlikely that other adult figures can. In addition, manipulation seems to be of little importance because representative democracies traditionally rely on a party system. Political parties are democratic entities that select the candidates they want to present in elections following multiple criteria. Despite there being different levels of exclusiveness in terms of who can run for office with a specific party, most parties require a pledge of loyalty, which means that the candidates' values and ideas must align with the party's ideology (Hazan and Rahat, 2010, p. 20). Each party has a different view on children's rights, and potential child candidates will want to run for election with the party that best mirrors their own perception of children's interests. Therefore, if they were to run or even win the elections and become political representatives, they would work under the umbrella of their party, where everyone aligns with a particular ideology. Similarly, parties would not be interested in recruiting someone who did not already share the same ideology. As a consequence, manipulation seems rather unlikely.

Thus, since representation matters in order to legitimise liberal democracies, it is important to not neglect a large portion of the population because of their age. Children as a minority group, in all its heterogeneity, are constantly alienated from important decision-making, which means that their interests are not reflected in the composition of governments. Since their lives are directly affected by policies that condition their experiences as children and as future adults, it only makes sense that they would be morally entitled to run for election freely. Concerns, however, may arise regarding the competency levels of children aspiring to gain political power and represent not only other children but the rest of the population. Therefore, in the following section I present two arguments that challenge this claim of child incompetence.

## The competence bias in democracy

As explained previously, incompetence is what liberals describe as lack of 'rational autonomy' (Archard, 1993, p. 65), which is composed of rationality, maturity and independence. Incompetence has traditionally been linked to young age (Cowden, 2012, p. 365), as if it were an 'all or nothing' characteristic, when in fact it develops gradually and at different paces depending on the subject area (Grude Flekkøy and Hevener Kaufman, 1997, p. 68). It has been used to justify the paternalist model that currently "protects" children from making the wrong decisions. As a result, children are stripped from their agency, as they are not allowed to contribute to their social environment. Furthermore, it assumes that child development is universal, which means that all children become competent at the same time (Lansdown, 2005, p. xi). Competence is a relevant factor in participatory rights since it is perceived that, in order to engage in the democratic process, one must have some minimum level of mental capabilities (Anderson, 1992, p. 164) because the decisions of one have consequences on the lives of others. In Le Borgne and Tisdall's words, 'the individual assignation of incompetence to children reduces children's opportunities to participate, putting them in a less powerful position than those adults assumed to be competent. The "competence bias" is thus associated with intergenerational hierarchies of power' (Le Borgne and Tisdall, 2017, p. 123). Therefore, since children are all labelled incapable, they have been denied these rights as a group rather than individually. In standing for office, competence becomes even more significant. In some countries, children are not the only ones excluded, but young adults up to forty years old cannot run for office on the same basis. As stated previously, however, competence alone cannot be enough to designate political status. Hence, instead of arguing that all children are in fact perfectly capable to run for election, I argue that denying children such right because of incompetence is morally wrong.

First of all, I establish that children are more competent than we give them credit for, even when they are very young. For instance, preschool children can appreciate causality, consider other people's point of view and understand symbolism (Archard, 1993, p. 66). Our tendency to ignore this is fuelled by an unrealistic standard of competence (Anderson, 1992, p. 165) that puts a lot of emphasis on maturity that can only come with age, rather than the social intelligence that very young people can already display. The choice of this kind of rationality over other forms of intelligence seems rather arbitrary, as emotional intelligence and empathy could be just as important as rationality in ruling a country. Hence, children are excluded according to this standard, but they would not necessarily be if such a standard was based on other criteria. Furthermore, the narrative of incompetence and vulnerability that surrounds children creates a world different to that of adults where they are not exposed to real choices and, thus, they do not have the opportunity to learn how to manage adulthood before they reach it. This makes children's incompetence a self-fulfilling prophecy (Archard, 1993, p. 68). If society gave children a chance to interact in adult contexts, they would develop their capacities faster and more easily. Ann Solberg's research on hundreds of twelve-year-olds shows that when children are treated with respect, and responsibility is expected of them,

they are able to fulfil expectations and cope with the increasing level of responsibility well. When they are sheltered and regarded as immature, however, they respond with increased dependency and rebellion (Anderson, 1992, p. 175). Therefore, giving children the chance to learn by doing would further challenge the notion that children are more incompetent than adults. This is not to say that I do not recognise that the average two-year-old may indeed be less competent than the average adult. The right to stand for election does not entail a duty to do so and so said two-year-old, likely lacking the capacity to conceive of elections and political institutions, would be unlikely to exercise this right. Nevertheless, I deem it important to clarify that our perceptions of child capacities are not accurate and, therefore, should not be used to justify their political exclusion.

Secondly, the fact that some children are not as competent as the average adult does not mean that all adults are competent. In fact, quite a few adults do not reach the 'standard of competence' that is deemed appropriate to hold public office (Archard, 1993, p. 66). Adults are very capable of making mistakes that can have an impact beyond their own lives, especially when they are carers. This is particularly relevant when addressing the right to stand for office because society assumes that this right requires an even higher standard (Ludbrook, 1996, p. 292). People ruling – or attempting to rule – a state are expected to possess relevant skills that qualify them for office. Hence, this participatory right is denied to children and, in some instances, young adults because they have not had the time to develop such skills. The controversial aspect of this assumption, however, is that anyone above the minimum age requirement will be able to run for election regardless of their qualifications because it is a human right. This is problematic because many political candidates that run for election clearly lack such skills. For example, the unorthodox Lord Buckethead in the United Kingdom has stood for public office on multiple occasions as the satirical 'not entirely stable' leader of the Gremloids party (Malkin, 2017). This and other satirical parties exist all over the world but have no real intention of ever representing the country's needs. Furthermore, on a less satirical note, the level of specific knowledge required to be the Minister of a particular government department in the UK is often not matched by the expertise or academic background of the MPs in these positions (Bego, Pilkington and Goujon, 2017). This means that even when they are elected, political candidates do not need to be experts on the subject they intend to hold power over. These two examples show that society considers incompetence to be relevant only with respect to age, which challenges the fairness regarding the exclusion of children. Thus, children's denial of the right to stand for public office based on incompetence is unjust.

Finally, since the ruling of a country seems to be too important to leave to incompetent people, including children, it would seem necessary to establish a competency test in order to identify the people that should have the right to stand for public office. The validity of this kind of test, however, has been questioned multiple times in the literature, particularly regarding the minimum voting age. Firstly, this kind of test supposes a high risk of corruption and abuse of power. For example, in the past, similar tests have been used to perpetuate racial segregation

in the United States and to reduce enfranchisement accordingly. Where the stakes are as high as having the possibility to run for national elections, governments in charge of such tests have the incentive to reduce political competition (Archard, 1993, p. 64; Cook, 2013, p. 442). Secondly, competence is not a permanent trait and can disappear over time. Thus, competency tests should be taken at multiple stages in life, which would be unsustainable in terms of expenses and management. In addition, they would be endlessly controversial as the standard of competence is culturally nuanced, and it could induce discrimination due to false correlation between ethnicity, gender, class etc. and IQ (Archard, 1993, pp. 63–64). Thirdly, failing the test would entail a denial of citizenship rights to people who already had them, which could significantly harm their self-esteem and affect their social status (Cook, 2013, p. 442). These are a few of the reasons why a competency test would be problematic to determine who can be a political candidate. There is one aspect unique to this particular right, however, that does not apply to the right to vote. The electoral process in itself is a competency test. As Cook describes in his analysis against the minimum voting age, 'democratic authority is constituted by consent and not expertise' (Cook, 2013, p. 443). In representative democratic systems, the people choose who they want to represent them. Although adult citizens have the option of running for office, there is a dual electoral system that is expected to filter the most competent candidates. This dual process is constituted by the party selection of the candidates and the elections themselves. As mentioned in the previous section, some parties are sovereign in their selection of candidates and use a series of criteria to decide who has better chances to win the elections (Hazan and Rahat, 2010, p. 20). This does not violate the right to stand for office because those still wishing to run can create their own political parties or choose another party. The party selection process, however, is a first screening in attempting to guarantee that those getting to the election are skilled. In addition, during elections, the voters are entrusted with the ability to choose who they believe is most fit for the job. Despite this not being a perfect system, it does provide a mechanism to separate competence from incompetence (Ludbrook, 1996, p. 292). As a result, children should not be denied the right to stand for office due to their lack of knowledge and experience because the electoral system ensures that they will not have access to power if they are not deemed prepared enough for the role.

Therefore, competence is a controversial factor used to exclude all children from running for office as it disregards the heterogeneous capacity levels that children possess, and it assumes that adulthood and competence are correlated. Since it cannot be proven that all children are incapable of running for office and that all adults are, it is unjust to exclude an entire group of people but not the other. Furthermore, finding alternative methods to determine political status would also be problematic, as competency tests are not free of corruption and involve major management and budgetary challenges. Consequently, we can only rely on the electoral process to filter the qualified candidates from a pool of people that should in fact include children. Therefore, it is unjust and rather arbitrary to use competence as a requirement to have the right to stand for public office because it does not exclude *everyone* based on

incompetence. Instead, it is only a selected group of people whose discourse characterises them as incompetent that gets left out. Hence, since competence is no longer enough to justify the denial of this right, children should have the right to run for public office.

## Children being elected

So far, this article has focused on defending children's entitlement to run for public office. It is not, however, advocating that all children exercise this right. The electoral process is expensive, stressful and invasive and it could be a lot for a child to face. Furthermore, if a child were to become an elected representative, the political environment could be too much for an individual who is still somewhat dependent on other people to survive. 'Elected representatives become public figures and are exposed to the cut and thrust of party politics and the critical interest of the media. It might be argued that even though under 18s should be able to vote they should not be exposed to the destructive aspects of politics' (Ludbrook, 1996, p. 292). Thus, I am not advocating for children quotas but rather I am arguing that there is no reason why children should not have the *option* to run for election. Having a right does not mean being obliged to exercise it, thus children who do not feel prepared for such a responsibility should not run even if they have the right to do so. Nonetheless, it would be unrealistic to expect no children to run for public office and, given that this right is in place for long enough, one would eventually get elected. Hence, in this section I explore the conditions necessary to guarantee a safe and accessible environment for child representatives. This section is of particular importance because for a right to be a moral entitlement, the consequences of exercising it should be moral too.

Being an elected representative is a full-time job, which means that it requires a significant time commitment and it entails income benefits. If children had the possibility to run for election and win, this would be a controversial issue because this activity could be considered child labour. The UNCRC establishes that children must be protected from economic exploitation and, thus, this often translates to protecting children from having to work (Liebel, 2013, p. 225). Children working, however, can be interpreted in two different ways. On the one hand, we can indeed condemn children's work if it takes the form of child labour. The key aspects of this concept are that it replaces what should be children's main priority, education, and that the child is not being duly compensated for their labour. Child labour is considered to deprive 'children of their childhood and also negatively impacts on their welfare, their development and their dignity' (Okyere, 2012, p. 80). On the other hand, child employment is legal and permissible insofar as it is submitted to children's right to education and play. Employing children can be seen as a beneficial initiative since it can teach valuable lessons about responsibility and accountability (Heesterman, 2005, p. 79). Child work takes many forms and it does not always have to be paid – e.g. helping at the family farm – but it is not usually a full-time endeavour. Hence, being an elected representative does clash with this premise. In order to overcome this obstacle, I reflect on the law surrounding child performers. I apply it to my case to prove that children could be able to participate in governments if elected,

granted that we made it accessible for them. I have chosen child stars as an example because theirs is a job of extreme public attention and significant pressure, which is comparable to the circumstances elected representatives face.

Labour laws surrounding child performers tend to be strict in many countries because they recognise that the entertainment industry can be very demanding for young people. In order to ensure that this kind of child employment does not fall into the child labour category, these laws are put in place to guarantee that the child is free from any form of exploitation. This means that the child's interests and needs must be considered and that their decision to work must be free of coercion. Furthermore, their right to work cannot overshadow their other rights, particularly education. This is reflected in UK law, for example, which restricts filming hours to ensure that children can study three to four hours a day and forbids children from working late in the night unless special permission is granted to the filmmakers. The consequences of these measures do in fact slow down the production, but they exemplify the necessary working conditions that are unique to the children's case (Galloway, 2006, p. 43). Another example is the United States, where in 1999 the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) successfully managed to protect children's earnings making them separate property, rather than their parents' (Armbrust, 2005). This guarantees that children are not being exploited by their carers or the businesses hiring them. The problems that would arise from children accessing job positions in parliament could be regarded as similar since lack of education and exploitation are the main concerns. I argue that since compromises have been made in the entertainment industry to include children in the production process, similar arrangements could be considered should children win an election. Their job would have to be adapted to meet their educational needs and have their monetary benefits protected. This way, elected children would have the chance to represent children's interests in a position of political power without giving up their identity as children. Moreover, states would comply with Article 3 of the UNCRC that establishes that 'in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration' (UNCRC, 1989).

The world of politics, however, does present additional limitations beyond the problem of child labour that need to be addressed. Holding public office is a job that has always been reserved exclusively for adults. Hence, it could be a cultural shock to introduce children suddenly into the work environment. UNICEF's *Handbook on child participation in parliament* presents several initiatives to improve parliamentarian consultation of children, which could be applied to the case of children actually accessing parliamentary roles. The two most relevant aspects to contemplate are respect and support training. 'Children's views have to be treated with respect, and children should be provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities' (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2011, p. 18). This means that children's input and proposals must be considered by the rest of the elected representatives as relevant and with the same respect

as any other proposal. Furthermore, support training is essential on two accounts. On the one hand, it is necessary to introduce children to the political jargon, etiquette, processes etc. On the other hand, adults must learn how to communicate in a child-friendly way and how to encourage children's participation. 'Children themselves can be involved as trainers and facilitators on how to promote effective participation; they require capacity-building to strengthen their skills in, for example, effective participation, organizing meetings, raising funds, dealing with the media, public speaking and advocacy' (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2011, p. 19). These are only a few suggestions that could be implemented to facilitate a transition towards more child-friendly governments, which I deemed necessary given the possibility that a child could become elected if they had the right to run for election. Therefore, these issues of practicality have been explored in order to guarantee that the consequences of exercising the right to stand for public office are not detrimental to the development of the child. They work to guarantee that the realisation of the moral right children possess to run for office does not result in immoral practical application.

## Youth Parliaments and why they are not enough

Currently, one of the most relevant forms of children's political participation takes the form of Youth Parliaments (YPs). They are good examples of children's relevance and competence in formal politics because they offer them the opportunity to participate in institutions that mimic the procedures of adult parliaments without the harms of real political life. This participatory mechanism, however, could be perceived as a viable alternative to the right to stand for public office when in fact it is not enough to guarantee the accurate representation of children's interests in real parliaments. Thus, I address the role of YPs in promoting political literacy and how their existence should be complementary to children's right to run for election rather than a substitute. YPs do already exist in at least thirty countries – India, Norway, Slovenia, Brazil, Congo, Scotland, to name but a few (Wall, 2011, p. 88) – and they are set in place to promote children's participatory rights and introduce them to the democratic process without being officially part of it. This initiative successfully complies with Article 12 of the UNCRC, which explicitly establishes children's right to express their views (Matthews and Limb, 1998, p. 66). Furthermore, YPs are important because of the current disengagement and disinterest in formal politics in young adults, which has contributed to a reduction in voter turnout. 'This phenomenon appears to be more intense for certain subgroups among the young, such as the unemployed. At the same time, it is feared that young people may be more likely to resort to violence when expressing their grievances, as suggested by the average age of those involved in the English riots of 2011' (Shephard and Patrikios, 2014, p. 237). This concern has encouraged national parliaments around the world to prioritise civic education in children to facilitate the "creation" of model citizens rather than merely granting them the vote. Hence, the rationale behind YPs is that involving children in a simulation of parliamentary life will help develop their political interest, while granting them the chance to influence policy and have their voices heard (Shephard and Patrikios, 2013, p. 754). Thus, in order to analyse how YPs are not enough to promote children's interests and voice, I shall

address YP's contributions to political literacy and policy influence separately.

The biggest success of YPs is their role in political education. Child parliamentarians are set in a learning environment where they are constantly encouraged to take on new skills and learn from experts and actual politicians. They familiarise themselves with the institutional procedures and have access to workshops where they develop the key qualities any politician is expected to have – e.g. leadership, communication, diplomacy and research skills (Shephard and Patrikios, 2013, p. 761). This training allows them to organise and deliver meetings where the agenda is discussed, and recommendations and bills are drafted. Furthermore, they engage in other extracurricular activities, such as managing the public aspect of political involvement. They engage in public discussions on social media and simulate press conferences and debates (Shephard and Patrikios, 2013, p. 764). These activities and training sessions facilitate a positive interaction between children and the system, contributing to an increase in their political interest and literacy (Shephard and Patrikios, 2014, p. 250). This initiative, however, also enables children to evaluate the system critically rather than just making them adopt adult values. They are encouraged to discuss in a civilised environment and to identify how current democratic practices fail to reflect their interests (Wall, 2011, p. 96). Therefore, YPs not only satisfy the national governments' need for model citizens but they also promote critical thinking rather than just shaping children into adult form. Hence, I argue that this aspect of YP is essential to awaken children's political interest and to give them a taste of what being an elected representative would look like. If we granted them the right to run for election, YPs would give them a notion of how prepared they are to face its hardships. Nevertheless, it is not sufficient to guarantee children's political participation and representation.

The main challenge YPs face is the level of impact they have. As stated previously, YPs are meant to be more than just educational. They are safe spaces for children to participate and have their voices heard not only by their peers, but also by policy-makers. This means that children's political participation would be rendered obsolete if it was confined to the limits of a simulation. Thus, the only way they can have direct impact in real-life politics is if they have some degree of policy influence. In practice, the problem with influencing policy resides on the fact that most YPs' bills are sent to MPs as recommendations and, as a consequence, they are seldom implemented (Shephard and Patrikios, 2013, p. 765). Particularly in Western countries, the real situations in which children do actually exercise their democratic political rights is very limited (Wall, 2011, p. 88). Even when adults do listen to their ideas seriously, they tend to favour the proposals of select groups, usually older children or children who appear to be more experienced, which tends to coincide with the wealthier groups (Turkie, 2010, p. 262). Hence, YPs fail to convey children's voices to national governments and their interests are misrepresented, as only few children from specific, usually privileged, backgrounds are being paid attention to. This does not mean that YPs should be eliminated on behalf of granting children the right to stand for public office. The educational value of

these organisations is commendable and ought to be encouraged to raise children's political awareness. They could be part of the infrastructure needed to integrate children into the political process better, if their right to stand for elections was realised. YPs are necessary accessories in shaping not only the leaders of tomorrow but also the leaders of today. They cannot, however, be a substitute for children joining adult parliaments. Equality and political representation cannot come for children if they are kept in a separate parliamentary system, as it was never the case for any other disadvantaged group. 'This is because a separate process of representation tends toward tokenism, placing an inherent distance between representation and real power' (Wall, 2011, p. 96). Therefore, the role of YPs in supporting children's introduction to political literacy should continue to be promoted. Their existence, however, should be complementary to children's right to run for election rather than a substitute.

## Children's space in deliberative democracy

This article has so far defended children's right to stand for public office in the context of representative democracies. I have argued that this right is necessary to represent children's interests accurately in policy-making. Furthermore, children being allowed to run for election is essential to representative democracies because the democratic process cannot be legitimate unless it represents the interests of all citizens. It is important to notice, however, that this right is intrinsically linked to representation, and that children's political inclusion could take different forms in other kinds of democratic systems. Hence, this last section explores deliberation as an alternative to representative democracy. My intention is to analyse how children could be better included in a deliberative system. On the one hand, I consider the macro-level, where the right to run for election is not necessary. On the other hand, I focus on micro-forms of deliberation where representation is necessary, and how children's involvement in deliberative selection processes would be a valuable substitute to children's right to stand for public office.

Deliberative democracy is a model developed from the notion that liberal democracies as they are today do not generate social equality. Research on civic participation shows that wealthier, more educated people tend to have easier access to governments and policy-making, while people at the margins lose interest and become politically disengaged. Thus, representative democracies tend to favour particular groups of people in decision-making while excluding those who do not make the cut from the democratic process (Chappell, 2012, pp. 5–6; Cohen, 2009, p. 248). Democratic deliberation is, therefore, a way to combat inequality by promoting the inclusion of all citizens and their political literacy. Furthermore, deliberative democrats regard electoral systems – and representative democracies by default – as unnecessarily competitive. Choosing one specific ideology or political programme to rule a country implies discarding many other proposals that could have valuable aspects worthy of consideration. Hence, elections are counterproductive in themselves. Consequently, societies would benefit more from 'reasoned discussion and a search for agreement' (Chappell, 2012, p. 3) than from such crippling competition. Thus, from their analysis of the inherent flaws of

the representative system, deliberative democrats advocate for an alternative system of 'un-coerced, other-regarding, reasoned, inclusive and equal debate' (Chappell, 2012, p. 7). This means that deliberative democracy puts reasoning at the centre of all decisions and submits the exercise of power to deliberation. In order to do so, all discussions require a common notion of the greater good and the protection of the citizens' personal liberties. These two requirements are necessary because people must be able to develop their arguments freely, and to set their personal preferences aside in order to decide what to do (Cohen, 2009, p. 251). Hence, the collective acquires new importance as deliberative democracy aims at including every citizen who is affected by policy. Decisions are meant to be reached after considering all relevant arguments. As a result, the discussion cannot take the form of a back-and-forth debate but rather it must be an open communication between citizens where the views of all groups are taken into account (Chappell, 2012, p. 9).

The practicality of such an approach can be challenging since most research is normative, and little is said about how it could be applied to the real world (Hardin, 2009, p. 235). Its basis, however, is still worth considering because it proposes an alternative and healthier way of communicating with each other and making collective decisions. Since it is void of competition, it goes beyond the mere electoral rhetoric and the constant fight between political candidates. Instead, it offers a space where everyone's opinion matters and is at least listened to. This model is important in the context of children's democratic political rights because it also considers them as citizens whose voices matter. For this reason, I highlight one of the main objections to deliberative democracy that is directly linked to previously discussed objections to children's right to stand for public office. Given that reasoning is at the centre of deliberative democracy, it could be argued that this is 'an acquired capacity, and not equally distributed among all' (Cohen, 2009, p. 253). Consequently, deliberation could attribute more political power to the naturally gifted with exceptional reasoning capabilities and children would tend to be marginalised as they are perceived as irrational and incompetent. This counter-argument, however, underestimates people's capacity to acknowledge and address this issue. Since one of the main objectives of deliberation is promoting inclusion and collective discussion, we can assume that participants would always attempt to uphold these principles and constantly work to improve communication. Hence, deliberative groups could 'undertake affirmative measures to address participatory biases' (Cohen, 2009, p. 254) and provide training on how to frame one's arguments in a political environment. Moreover, the fact that a decision is made based on multiple perspectives guarantees that the process is not reduced to the win of the most well-phrased idea. Instead, this means that the resulting decision will be nuanced and accommodating of multiple views, no matter how insignificant they appear to be. This aspect of deliberative democracy would thus benefit children as a group previously assumed to have opinions that need not be considered in decision-making in traditional representative democracies.

Another controversial component of deliberative systems is its selection process. At a macro-

level, deliberation is concerned with including as many diverse reasonings as possible from the people who are affected by specific policies. The construction of a policy proposal through inclusion and discussion is 'part of what makes a decision right, valid, or legitimate' (Martin, 2018, pp. 4–5). According to this principle, the deliberative model would have no reason to exclude anyone directly involved from the discussion. Chappell uses non-citizen immigrants as an example because despite their lack of citizenship, they are affected by the policies of the country they are living in. She argues that they should be included in the discussion but could be excluded from the final decision-making, which would be left to the citizens to vote on (Chappell, 2012, p. 45). This example can be applied to children, as it justifies their presence in deliberative democracy. As people who are expected to live longer than adults, they will be affected by certain policies for a longer period of time. Hence, 'the inclusion of children is as epistemically valuable as the inclusion of any other constituency affected by a political decision' (Martin, 2018, p. 5). Children from a specific state, however, are entitled to their citizenship status since birth, which means that they should be allowed to participate in the final decision as well. Thus, children can be included in deliberative processes that concern their well-being as individuals and as a group because their views contribute to legitimising the decision being made.

Nevertheless, this inclusive aspect of deliberation is only evident in macro decision-making scenarios where everyone's opinion counts. It is reasonable to assume that this system would be highly inefficient when running a state. National decision-making tends to require certain promptitude, particularly in times of emergency, whereas this kind of deliberation would turn making decisions into a very slow process. This is why this initiative proposes a micro-level deliberation, where the same principle of discussion applies but people are selected to represent the views of the different constituencies. Intuitively, from our experience in representative democracy, this selection process would be implemented through elections. The competitive aspect of current electoral systems, however, is one of the main characteristics that deliberation rejects. Chappell suggests that in order to maximise representation, 'constituents will choose representatives who will behave during deliberation similarly to how they would themselves behave' (Chappell, 2012, p. 43). Despite the logic of this argument, it would be difficult to assess who is most likely to behave as themselves during an election, as people would be tempted to change their behaviour in order to attract more voters. Hence, the most viable alternative would be to select representatives from different communities randomly in order to create an accurate sample of the population to deliberate (Sintomer, 2010). This process would make it easier for children to be included in the deliberative system than standing for public office. Since they offer a unique point of view – nuanced by the intersection of their other identities – that comes from their experience as a traditionally excluded group, their selection would be necessary to legitimise the decision-making. While in representative democracies the right to run for election does not guarantee that children will become elected representatives, this system ensures that children's voices will be listened to, as all disadvantaged groups are guaranteed a seat at the table. Furthermore, this random selection

process improves representation prospects as it is no longer a given that only children from privileged backgrounds will be heard. Therefore, in deliberative democracy children's right to stand for public office is directly linked to the right to influence policy.

Deliberative democracy also has a positive effect on the whole population due to its transformative nature (Bentley, 2011, p. 51). Two of the reasons behind the need for deliberative political decision-making is that it contributes to informing the public about the national state of affairs, and that it sheds light over the issues traditionally marginalised communities must face regularly. As a result, disadvantaged groups should join deliberative circles embracing their distinctiveness as an independent source of knowledge. This means that normative groups of people – the general public – are given the chance to learn about marginalised communities, while these communities get to make claims about justice and equality. In the context of children, deliberation presents them with the opportunity to 'make claims in the public sphere that reflect needs and interests that the state should take as seriously as any other claim from any other constituency' (Martin, 2018, p. 9). They are given a learning space to discover the intricacies of the democratic process, while adults welcome their ideas leaving misconceptions about children's nature aside. This is particularly positive when compared to the idea of incorporating children to the electoral process. Granting them the right to stand for public office is, as discussed previously, the only way to guarantee that children have at least the chance to represent their interests appropriately in representative democracies. Nonetheless, by including them in adult-managed parliaments, children are "groomed" to acquire adult values and participate in adult frameworks unless they attend Youth Parliaments first where they may learn how to be critical. On the contrary, deliberative democracy offers children the opportunity to thrive in their difference while participating, as it does not force them to reach adulthood early. Rather, deliberation provides a place where children can learn how to articulate and promote their own rights and interests without rejecting their distinctiveness (Bentley, 2011, p. 51).

Despite its unclear applications, deliberative democracy appears to be a viable solution to children's misrepresentation in politics. In the context of representative democracies, I have argued over the course of this article that children should have the right to stand for public office because their interests and identity are not mirrored in national parliaments as they are today. Without the presence of children in the democratic process we cannot ensure that the resulting policies are legitimate, as they have not been directly backed by a significant percentage of the population. I have acknowledged, however, that the complex and stressful nature of adult politics could become a limitation in children's development. Therefore, I have only argued in favour of children having the opportunity to run for election rather than suggesting the need for children quotas to enforce their presence in decision-making. Nevertheless, these limitations can only be considered within the representative framework. Both at the macro- and micro-levels, deliberative democracy solves this problem because its premise is based on inclusion. Its non-coercive, equal and reasoned format eliminates the

exclusive nature of adult representative systems because it allows children to join without giving up their status as children. Children are guaranteed a seat at the table because their experience offers a different perspective that can enrich the process. Thus, they do not have to adopt adult values in elections in order to be considered as valid candidates. In this sense, children are respected as equal democratic agents and, therefore, deliberative democracy becomes a valid alternative that can substitute children's need for the right to stand for public office.

## Conclusion

Children's current position in society has proven to be a controversial one. Despite their increased political awareness, displayed through activism, and their consistent involvement in unofficial political institutions, i.e. Youth Parliaments, children are still marginalised from formal political decision-making. Throughout history, misconceptions about their capabilities and maturity have created a very strict separation between what constitutes a child and an adult, turning the child into an under-developed, incompetent being that needs to be protected from their own decisions. As a result, this has fuelled a societal patronising of children intended to keep their existence separated from the adult world. Increasing political disengagement in contemporary Western societies, however, has made policy-makers and scholars revisit their conceptions of childhood. In an attempt to improve voter turnout and political literacy, children's participatory rights have been brought to the table, paying particular attention to children's right to vote and consultation. Although the literature surrounding children's participation has developed significantly over the last few decades, there is one democratic political right that has remained in the shadows: the right to stand for public office. Thus, this article has explored the gap in the literature regarding this specific right and analysed why it is essential to allow children to run for election in order to legitimise representative democratic systems.

First of all, I have considered the need for this right in terms of representation. Descriptive representation is essential to legitimise political decisions. People belonging to disadvantaged groups, which have traditionally been excluded from the franchise and political participation altogether, cannot expect elected representatives from privileged backgrounds to understand and accurately represent their interests (Hayward, 2009, p. 113). Having argued that children are indeed a disadvantaged group – currently the largest minority in Western societies – and that adults cannot represent their interests appropriately, I have established that their inclusion in parliaments is necessary to legitimise democratic policies and can only be implemented through their participation in free elections. Secondly, I have addressed competence as the main excluding factor keeping children alienated from official political processes. This counter-argument overlooks the heterogeneous capacity levels that children as a group possess, and assumes that competence is directly linked to adulthood. It is unjust to exclude an entire group of people based on preconceived notions of incompetence but allow incompetent people to run for election just because they meet the age requirement. Thus, using competence – or

lack thereof – to justify children's denial of rights is unreasonable. Moreover, I have argued that the party selection process and the electoral system are competency tests in themselves because they filter the qualified candidates from the unqualified ones (Ludbrook, 1996, p. 292). Therefore, allowing children to run for election does not mean that they will have access to power. It will depend on the voters to determine if they are prepared enough or not. Thirdly, this article has considered possible limitations to children's right to run for election by focusing on the possibility of them getting elected. Representing the population's interests in legislatures is indeed a career and, thus, it may cause concerns regarding child labour. Having compared this prospective job to that of child performers, I have concluded that similar arrangements could be made to guarantee that elected children could proceed with their education without neglecting their responsibilities as representatives. Finally, I have evaluated the role of Youth Parliaments in supporting children's education in politics as a complementary factor to children's right to run for election. Their existence, however, is not sufficient to grant them political influence and, thus, YPs cannot be considered as a substitute for children's access to elections.

In the last section, I have considered the issues that may arise from granting such a right to children despite it being the only option to ensure their representation in parliament. By including children in adult frameworks, they are expected to adopt adult values and are groomed to fit in the existing structures as miniature adults. Despite Youth Parliaments encouraging critical thinking through their educational programmes, not all children have access to platforms that enable them to become critical of the system they are joining. Therefore, they may end up rejecting the key aspects that make them children on behalf of an accelerated growth in order to be welcomed to adult institutions. As a viable alternative to these issues, this article has used deliberative democracy as an example to show that other democratic systems could in fact be more inclusive and adaptable to children's presence than representative democracy. As a normative theory, it does not have clear physical applications, but it can highlight the limitations surrounding children's inclusion in representative systems. Its non-coercive, equal and reasoned format enables children's political participation without requesting them to give up their status as children. Instead, they are welcomed to the discussion because their experience offers a different perspective that can enrich decision-making. Therefore, deliberative democracy recognises children as equal democratic agents and can be considered a valid alternative that can substitute children's right to run for election.

As a contribution to Childhood Studies, this article has intended to show how research on children's rights has the responsibility to continue expanding to new areas of child participation in order to improve our understanding of the potential of children as democratic agents. Thus, it is important to encourage the reassessment of children's ability to influence public policy in formal politics in order to give new value to their presence in the democratic process. In addition, the normative approach used to analyse children's entitlement to run for election is relevant in the wider context of liberalism. I have argued that the alienation of children from

the political sphere violates the principle of equality upon which most liberal democracies are built (Fowler, 2014, p. 98). This means that considering children's right to stand for public office entails extending the principle of equality to recognise children as human beings and citizens in their own right. The present research can, therefore, be used to enrich both the field of Childhood Studies and the wider objectives of liberal political thought. Finally, the content of this article constitutes a critique of representative democratic systems. My analysis of children's participation in deliberative processes shows that representative systems as they are today do not guarantee the inclusion of all identities. Through hypothesising on the potential issues that contemporary institutions would present to the inclusion of children, greater deficiencies are revealed in their inability to represent interests accurately due to their inherent milieu of competition and processes of institutionalisation. Thus, the interests of all citizens are not perfectly represented in many contemporary forms of representative democracy.

The purpose of this article was also to encourage future research regarding the right to stand for public office. My normative study has argued that children are indeed morally entitled to this right. I have paid little attention, however, to the practical issues that could arise from granting it to children. Far beyond the problem of child labour, it is essential to realise the other potential issues that could render this right impossible to exercise. It would be necessary to address the accessibility of adult parliaments and to discuss how disruptive the electoral process could be for children in terms of their psychological development. The risks and threats associated with high-profile politicians, overexposure to the media or the increasingly demonising rhetoric in parliaments are just examples that showcase the potentially damaging nature of holding public office. Hence, there will need to be some guarantee that political exposure will at least be safe for children before they are introduced into parliaments. Furthermore, were children to be allowed to run for election and eventually get elected, future studies ought to examine whether children should be allocated exclusively to child-related departments or whether they are actually capable of undertaking any ministerial job. In addition, questions of taxation and the consequences of child involvement in other professions in the political sector should also be considered. Finally, further research should not only focus on improving the way representative democracies consider children, but it should also continue to explore viable alternatives to integrate children's interests effectively into policy-making, as seen with deliberative democracy. For example, children's increased participation in activism has meant that some of them now hold positions of leadership in many advocacy projects. This could lead to an increased influence of children in society and branch out their participation prospects to other areas such as lobbying. While this multitude of research and normative analyses may appear daunting, such work is necessary to promote and secure the long-ignored moral right children possess to hold meaningful positions in politics.

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## *Framing the U.S. news media as a threat: President Donald Trump's securitising move*

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## Abstract

While securitisation theory sees that the news media can be both a securitising actor and audience, the existing literature has not explored cases where the media are framed as the threat. This article illustrates how former President Donald Trump framed the U.S. news media as a threat, and argues that this constitutes a securitising move. Discourse analysis informed by framing theory is applied to a sample of tweets posted by Trump. These examples illustrate how Trump has continuously framed the media as a threat, highlighting the referent object as being a threat to the truth, the people and the country, thereby undertaking a securitising move.

**Keywords**: securitising move, securitisation, framing, Donald Trump, Twitter, U.S. news media, the news media as a threat, democracy

## Introduction

Former U.S. President Donald Trump consistently utters falsehoods and regularly challenges the legitimacy of the news media in a way that is 'unprecedented in the modern era' (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2017, p. 11) in a democratic state. Trump has consistently responded to criticism and unfavourable reporting of him as 'fake news' (Kellner, 2019, p. 55). Additionally, Trump dubbed the majority of the U.S. news media as 'the fake news media', labelling them as untrustworthy and as the 'enemy of the American people' among other things. In 2019, Reporters Without Borders' (RSF) World Freedom Index classified the media climate for reporters in the United States as 'problematic' (Reporters without Borders, 2019a), citing Trump's rhetoric as part of the cause. Through his rhetoric, Trump capitalised on a long-held perception of a liberal media bias in U.S. news amongst Republican party members and supporters (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2018, p. 4). Moreover, Trump capitalised on – and has exacerbated – the regime of post-truth and the considerable media distrust in the United States. Considering the above, can Trump's language be seen as securitising?

The Copenhagen School (CS) of securitisation argues that a securitising actor can make a 'securitising move' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25) by presenting an issue as an existential security threat in its rhetoric to an audience. Security actors were initially perceived to be elite actors, such as leaders or persons of authority in society (Wæver, 1995, p. 54); however, second-generation securitisation scholars have expanded upon the initial conceptualisation regarding who may constitute a securitising actor. For example, the media is a securitising actor (Vultee, 2010a; Mortensgaard, 2018; Watson, 2009) when it makes its own securitising framing choices on matters (Mortensgaard, 2018, p. 10). It is important to understand that the media can operate as a securitising actor because the more 'authority or credibility a medium has, the more likely it is to become a successful securitising actor' (Hass, 2009, p. 84). Thus, the media is 'an authority in itself' (Mortensgaard, 2018, p. 10). Ideally, the media are also able to work as a 'watch dog' (Hass, 2009, p. 84) for abuses of power conducted through the guise of extraordinary measures enabled by securitisation (Hass, 2009, p. 84). This latter point highlights the media's importance as the so-called fourth estate, with its implicit ability to check power (Mortensgaard, 2018, p. 10) – an ideal role that is tied to a well-functioning democracy (Hass, 2009, p. 78). Further, the understanding of audience has likewise been expanded from a narrow definition of the citizens of a state, to encompass other (Vuori, 2008, p. 72; Sperling and Webber, 2016, p. 21; Salter, 2008, p. 334), often multiple audiences (Roe, 2008, p. 624; Salter, 2008, p. 334; Côté, 2016, p. 547). For example, the media have been assigned the role of audience within securitisation theory (Vultee, 2010a; Mortensgaard, 2018). The media act as audience, for example, when they further a government's securitising move through the adoption of a governmental framing (Mortensgaard, 2018, p. 10). Despite, however, a widening in the understanding that the media can speak security and be a securitising actor, as well as the audience, securitisation theory has not considered whether the media can be designated as the *threat* – a notable gap in the securitisation literature.

As such, the initial research question that emerged was: can the media be designated as the threat in accordance with securitisation theory? Moreover, in light of Trump's discourse concerning the news media, this article became guided by the following question: can Trump's discourse concerning the news media be considered a securitising move? A democracy relies on a 'free and independent media sector that can keep the population informed and hold leaders to account' (Repucci, 2019). As Repucci (2019) argues, this is 'as crucial for a strong and sustainable democracy as free and fair elections'. Trusted news media are vital and, when they are absent, 'citizens cannot make informed decisions about how they are ruled, and abuse of power, which is all but inevitable in any society, cannot be exposed and corrected' (Repucci, 2019, p. 5). If the news media become a threat and are not seen as a reliable source on which the public can depend, they are unable to serve their vital democratic role. Additionally, Huysmans (2014) argues that securitisation poses a challenge to democracy, as '[e]nacting relations to others and one's environment as always dangerous, fearful and inimical translates into a politics that limits and hollows out democratic organisations based on principles of freedom and justice' (p. 3). As such, a securitising move against the media

is worth studying, as both the action of securitising, and the possible securitising of the news media in particular, pose grave challenges for – and undermine the legitimacy of – liberal democracy and its institutions.

## Securitisation and framing theory

This article illustrates former President Donald Trump's framing of the U.S. news media as a threat and as a securitising move. Thus, this literature review delves into securitisation theory, framing theory, the literature on the media in relation to securitisation and framing, and the literature on President Trump in relation to securitisation. This review informs the investigation and the analysis. Importantly, it highlights a clear gap in the existing literature, which outlines how the news media can be the audience of securitisation, speak security or be a securitising actor. It has not explored, however, the case where the news media are framed as *the threat*, as that which is being securitised, and it is this gap that this article seeks to fill.

## Securitisation theory

Securitisation theory was introduced by the CS (Buzan et al., 1998) and has been re-evaluated by a second generation of securitisation scholars who have critiqued, modified and expanded upon the original theory. This article will mainly apply second-generation theory; however, it will begin by reviewing CS theory to provide a comprehensive outline of its original tenets and a foundation for the later conceptualisations.

The CS asserts that securitisation is a form of extreme politicisation in which an 'issue is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure' (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 23–24) in order to deal with it. In so doing, the issue becomes prioritised over other issues (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 24). Further, the CS argues that security can occur in the environmental, economic, societal and political sectors (pp. 22–23), thereby extricating the understanding of security from the mere military sector held by traditional security studies (pp. 2–3). As Mortensgaard (2018) recounts, the CS infers that 'most issues can be *securitised*, that is, come to be perceived as an existential threat to someone/something' (italics in original, p. 5).

In understanding the process of securitisation as conceptualised by the CS, it is necessary to understand the different elements that make up securitisation. In order to initiate a securitisation process, a securitising actor makes a securitising move. The CS defines the securitising actor as a person in a position of authority, such as belonging to a political elite (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 33). The securitising actor attempts a securitising move with the goal of convincing an audience that something, a referent object, is existentially threatened and requires protection and emergency measures to ensure its survival (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25). Buzan et al. (1998) argue that if the audience does not accept the actor's securitising move, then the move fails (p. 25). If the audience, however, accepts the securitising move, the move is successful, and the securitising actor has the permission to deal with the issue and

to forego 'procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25). A sign of securitisation, for example, can be 'placing limitations on otherwise inviolable rights' (Watson, 2009, p. 24). The CS highlights that 'security should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 29).

The CS sees a securitising move as an illocutionary speech act and argues that 'the utterance itself is the act' (Wæver, 1995, p. 55). The speech act logic makes it possible for the CS to rationalise that the 'utterance of "security" is more than just saying or describing something' (Stritzel, 2014, p. 21), and allows the CS not only to understand security and threat construction through 'the traditional threat-reality nexus' (Stritzel, 2014, p. 22) but to study how speech can construct threats. The CS further argues that those in power may use securitisation 'to gain control over' (Wæver, 1995, p. 54) that which is securitised, and that 'something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so' (p. 54). After a securitising move is made, in order for it to be successful, the audience must accept the designation of the threat. As such, securitisation is also an intersubjective process according to the CS (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 31).

## Second-generation debates and developments

One of the main critiques levelled at the CS's conceptualisation of securitisation is that the school relies on the illocutionary act while it simultaneously argues that securitisation is an 'intersubjective process' (Côté, 2016, p. 542). The CS's dual explanation is viewed as a contradiction. Wæver argues that three illocutionary felicity conditions are necessary for securitisation to be successful, albeit they do not guarantee success: '(1) the grammar or plot of security, (2) the social capital of the enunciator, and (3) conditions related to the threat' (cited in Vuori, 2008, p. 70). Balzacq (2005) instead argues for a 'pragmatic act' (p. 178) or, as put by Vuori (2008), a fourth felicity condition: 'conditions related to the audience of securitization' (p. 70). Instead of focusing on the illocutionary speech act, Balzacq (2005) argues for a 'pragmatic act' (p. 178), which allows for the illocutionary force of the speech act while taking into consideration the perlocutionary effects in the audience. This way, the theory becomes 'audience-centered' (p. 171) because the audience is, through perlocutionary effects, granted a larger role in determining the success of the securitisation process and is not merely an actor that either accepts or rejects a securitising move.

Following from this, Balzacq (2005) argues that the audience, the context and securitising agent are 'congruent' (p. 174) factors, which condition the 'effectuation of securitization' (p. 192). The audience, according to Balzacq, has three components: the 'audience's frame of reference', 'its readiness to be convinced, which depends on whether it perceives the securitising actor as knowing the issue and as trustworthy', and 'its ability to grant or deny a formal mandate to public officials' (p. 192). Balzacq also outlines contextual factors that impact the receptiveness of the audience to arguments made by the securitising actor, among them the arguments' relevance within the zeitgeist (p. 192). The '[z]eitgeist can be rooted in collective

memory, it is mostly constituted by the predominant social views, trends, ideological and political attitudes that pervade the context in which participants are nested' (Balzacq, 2005, p. 186). Finally, the securitising agent component includes 'the capacity of the securitising actor to use appropriate words and cogent frames of reference in a given context' (Balzacq, 2005, p. 192) to resonate with the audience (p. 179) and secure its support (p. 192). Here, for example, the actor may invoke 'metaphors, emotions, stereotypes, gestures, silence, and even lies' (p. 172). Securitisation is, thus, dependent on all of these factors, and focusing merely on speech acts or one factor alone will not capture accurately the process of securitisation. Thus, Vuori argues, '[b]oth linguistic and social felicity is necessary to achieve successful securitization' (p. 94), but success is not guaranteed. According to Balzacq, studying the congruence among these factors allows us to determine what is 'driving and/or constraining securitization' (p. 192).

Several other scholars critique the CS's illocutionary speech act reliance. Stritzel (2007) argues that we more often experience 'a *process* of articulations' (italics in original, p. 377) rather than one speech act and, therefore, seeing the speech act as an illocutionary act will 'rarely explain the entire social process' (p. 377) that leads to securitisation. In a similar vein, McDonald (2008) argues that the CS sees 'the moment of intervention only' (p. 564) and fails to consider that security can be 'constructed over time through a range of incremental processes and representations', as well as 'why particular representations resonate with relevant constituencies'. Additionally, Oren and Solomon (2015) argue that '[t]he more constantly and frequently a securitising phrase is being repeated, that is, the more condensed the "historicity" of the phrase becomes, the more likely is the phrase to acquire an illocutionary force, to construct the security threat it ostensibly describes' (p. 320). Thus, Oren and Solomon (2015) draw on Butler's view of 'condensed historicity' (p. 319) arguing that past, present and future invocations of a phrase blend together to represent a threat (p. 324). The idea of 'condensed historicity' (p. 320), they argue, 'makes it possible to preserve an understanding of the act as illocutionary even as, or indeed precisely because, we incorporate temporality into our theoretical account' (p. 320). Moreover, the authors argue that 'simplified phrases' that are repeated by securitising actors are worth analysing (p. 320). When an actor continuously repeats ambiguous phrases, they may become repeated by an/ several audience(s); thus, the audience joins in on a 'ritualised chanting of the securitising phrase' (Oren and Solomon 2015, p. 313). Thereby, the audience is active (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 313) and contributes to the securitisation process regardless of whether its repetition of the phrase is in support or in opposition (p. 325). Active audience participation in chanting, thus, is a way of determining audience acceptance (p. 313) and successful securitisation (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 322). As such, upon reviewing the debate, it is clear that the CS's focus on the illocutionary act is insufficient when studying securitisation. Instead, it seems necessary, in order to analyse securitisation accurately, to evaluate it as a process with several contributing factors.

Another issue with the CS's original framework is its failure to define the audience in securitisation expansively (Balzacq, 2005, p. 173). Within second-generation scholarship, the audience has gone from being an underspecified homogeneous block, to several different types of audience, to multiple audiences (Côté, 2016, p. 547). For example, the audience can be 'fundamentalists' (Vuori, 2008, p. 72), 'the power elite', member states in an international organisation such as NATO (Sperling and Webber, 2016, p. 21), a single person such as a minister, or a government (Salter, 2008, p. 334) to name but a few. The media have also been designated the role of audience in securitisation (Vultee, 2010a; Mortensgaard, 2018). The media act as audience, for example, when they further a government's securitising move through the adoption of its framing, as this indicates media acceptance of that frame (Mortensgaard, 2018, p. 10). Essentially, as Vuori (2008) argues, 'audiences are dependent on the socio-historical situation: who has to be convinced of the necessity of security action changes with the cultural and political systems in which the securitization is taking place' (p. 72). Notably, Vultee (2010b) underlines that one can differentiate between audiences by arguing that securitisation 'only requires the consent of enough of the audience' (p. 84) and not the entire audience. O'Reilly (2008) conceptualises this as a 'critical mass': securitisation is successful when it obtains the consent of 'enough' (p. 67) of the 'majority of the target group'. Moreover, multiple audiences can exist and simultaneously require persuasion on an issue, such as the public, a political party and parliament (Roe, 2008, p. 624). Côté (2016) argues that 'multiple audiences may exist within a single securitization process, and that audiences often possess differential powers and influence, leading to differing effects on securitization outcomes' (p. 547).

As noted above, the CS frames securitisation as increasing the ability to enact emergency measures and exceptionalist policies. The Paris School (PS), however, places more focus on the 'reproduction of unease and insecurity in everyday life' (Nyman, 2018, p. 107) and while security may involve speech acts, it is not limited to them. Huysmans (2011) highlights that, apart from the speech act, 'little security nothings' (p. 371) can create insecurities, such as 'non-exceptional routine procedures that together add up to securitization, but who inadvertently reintroduce exceptional acts' (Floyd, 2016, p. 683). Huysmans (2014) also distinguishes between exceptional securitising and 'diffuse securitising' (p. 10), the latter of which involves 'dispersing and non-intensifying modes' of securitisation. Bigo (2002) further asserts that issues can become securitised as a 'result of the creation of a continuum of threats and general unease in which many different actors exchange their fears and beliefs' (p. 63). Furthermore, Côté (2016) notes that 'acceptance of a securitising move is, itself, a security action' (p. 544), and the requirement of policy implementation for successful securitisation is too high of a 'threshold' (p. 544). Additionally, exceptional measures are not always how securitising actors respond when dealing with a security threat (Floyd, 2016, p. 678), and a threat does not necessarily need to be existential for it to be securitised (p. 691). It is important to note that since the CS's conceptualisation, second-generation scholars have continued to explore and expand on what may be designated as a security threat in securitisation. For

example, non-state actors (Stritzel and Chang, 2015), religion (Cesari, 2009) and (im)migrants (Huysmans, 2000; Buonfino, 2004; Ibrahim, 2005; Ceyhan and Tsoukala, 2002) to name but a few, have been framed as threats. Securitisation scholarship, however, has not explored the case where the media are designated as the threat.

Another significant insight within second-generation scholarship is Huysmans' (2014) argument that securitisation poses a challenge to democracy, and its institutions and principles (Huysmans, 2014, p. 3). While Huysmans does not particularly discuss the securitisation of the media, this conceptualisation is important to the later investigation, as a free news media is often viewed as 'the fourth estate' (Kellner, 2018, p. 97) in democracies, and because 'Donald Trump's unceasing denunciation of the news media is without historical precedent' (Hyvönen, 2018, p. 126). Huysmans (2014) further underlines that the practice of security creates 'enemies and fear' and is not a practice of responding to them (p. 3). Moreover, Huysmans (2014) draws on Neumann, and notes that 'democracy and politics of fear do not go well together because the latter invited secrecy or emergency laws while democracy demands transparency and due process' (p. 3). As such, 'we should ask if insecurity is becoming the energetic principle of politics. If so, for anyone invested in democratic politics alarm bells should go off' (Huysmans, 2014, p. 5). Huysmans clearly lays out that liberal democracy and securitisation are, in essence, incompatible concepts.

## Framing theory

Cacciatore et al. (2016, p. 9) argue that framing as a theory has its origins in the fields of psychology (see Kahneman and Tversky, 1985) and sociology (see Goffman, 1974; Gitlin, 1980; Gamson and Modigliani, 1987). Within psychology, framing studies 'how a piece of information is presented to audiences' (Cacciatore, 2016, p. 10), while sociology sees 'framing as a means of understanding how people construct meaning and make sense of the everyday world' (p. 10). Due to the different understandings of framing, however, there is 'ambiguity around the concept' (Cacciatore et al., 2016, p. 8). Pan and Kosicki (1993, p. 57) argue that the different understandings of framing underline that frames can be, as Kinder and Sanders (1990) originally put it, 'internal structures of the mind' (Pan and Kosicki, 1993, p. 74), as well as 'devices embedded in political discourse' (p. 74). In a related understanding, Chong and Druckman (2007a) differentiate between 'a frame in communication' (p. 100), which relates to the words or phrases that a speaker uses, and a 'frame in thought' (p. 101), namely how a member of the audience understands a situation (p. 101). This section reviews scholarship on political and media framing, the function of schemas in framing, framing using repetition and hyperbole, as well as the link between securitisation and framing, due to the literature's applicability to the case studied. This overview allows for a greater methodological sensitivity to the data in the analysis.

Politicians frame an issue in discourse to 'define what a given issue is about' (Lakoff and Wehling, 2016, p. 87), decide what is up for debate (p. 87), choose how the issue should be

thought about, and may propose solutions (Chong and Druckman, 2007a, p. 136). Politicians decide what words make up the debate, thereby framing an issue from the outset. In a similar understanding, Entman (1993) argues that 'to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described' (p. 52). 'Elite frames', those put forth by a person of authority, can effectively target 'the partisan and ideological leanings of the audience' (Chong and Druckman, 2007b, p. 112). Politicians may highlight certain features of a policy which will resonate with people by linking them to certain values or opinions to gain support for a policy (Chong and Druckman, 2007a, p. 106). Compelling frames 'can be built around exaggerations and outright lies playing on the fears and prejudices of the public. Strong frames […] often rest on […] links to partisanship and ideology' (Chong and Druckman, 2007b, p. 111). Frames presented by those seen to be 'credible sources' (Chong and Druckman, 2007b, p. 112) and those that 'invoke longstanding cultural values' (p. 112) have a greater prospect for changing opinions. According to Sniderman and Bullock (2004, p. 347), an audience exposed to different framings will choose the framing that resonates with their values, and are less receptive to frames that contradict these. Those that are more informed about an issue, however, are less likely to be influenced by framing (Chong and Druckman, 2007b, p. 121). Political framing is often viewed as negative, and as allowing 'political elites [to] manipulate popular preferences to serve their own interests' (Chong and Druckman, 2007b, p. 120). As such, like in securitisation theory, a person with authority can be persuasive as a result of their position, and is especially so when they tap into the ideological leanings and concerns of the audience.

The news media is another often-cited actor which engages in framing. Framing is a way of 'constructing and processing news discourse' (Pan and Kosicki, 1993, p. 57). The media thus make decisions regarding what to highlight, stress or omit (Pan and Kosicki, 1993, p. 57), and can 'assign blame, encourage empathy or simply ignore certain aspects of an event' (Mortensgaard, 2018, p. 10). As a result, media frames shape how the public understands issues (Steensland, 2008, p. 4). Moreover, according to Entman (2004), 'the words and images that make up the frame can be distinguished from the rest of the news by their capacity to stimulate support or opposition to sides in a political conflict. We can measure this capacity by *cultural resonance and magnitude*' (italics in original, p. 6). Culturally resonant terms, such as those that are most '*noticeable, understandable, memorable and emotionally charged*' (italics in original, p. 6) are most influential. Magnitude refers to repetition, which when combined with resonance, increases the prospect that the frame will arouse 'similar thoughts and feelings in large portions of the audience' (p. 6). While Entman refers to news framing in this instance, these concepts can be extended and applied to politicians, thereby making them relevant to this study.

Furthermore, according to Chong and Druckman (2007b), the impact and strength of a

frame is dependent upon various factors such as 'the strength and repetition of the frame, the competitive environment, and individual motivations' (p. 111). Words evoke frames, and when these are repeated, they 'become common sense' (Lakoff and Wehling, 2016, p. 84) and 'right and real' (p. 84). This highlights how repetition can be a significant mechanism that can be utilised by a securitising actor, which, as already noted, is what Oren and Solomon (2015) contend. Further, Burgers et al. (2016) argue that the use of hyperbole is an influential persuasion device and a form of figurative framing (p. 412). Hyperboles can be used 'to exaggerate the threat' (Burgers et al., 2016, p. 415) and can thus 'be a powerful rhetorical tool in persuading the public of the existence, importance and imminence of a certain threat' (p. 415). Moreover, when 'repeated often, the exaggerated topic gets a place in the public debate that is different than when the topic is described without hyperbole' (Burgers et al., 2016, p. 415).

Further, Entman's (2004) conceptualisation of schemas provides further insight into frame evocation. According to Entman (2004), schemas function as 'interpretive processes that occur in the human mind' (p. 7). Mortensgaard (2018) argues that a reader has schemas relating to specific terms, which when employed, 'bring to mind people, concepts and value-judgements' (p. 9). These schemas exist in 'knowledge networks' (Entman, 2004, p. 7) linked to emotions and feelings. They are 'stored in long-term memory' (Entman, 2004, p. 7) and certain terms will bring to mind these emotions and feelings. As such, frames developed at an early stage become dominant (Mortensgaard, 2018, p. 9), and 'future mentions' of an issue activate the 'preestablished schema' (p. 9). Thus, an audience's '[f]irst impressions may be difficult to dislodge' (Entman, 2004, p. 7), while contesting frames are more likely to fail (p. 9). In a similar vein, Lakoff and Wehling (2016, p. 84) argue that individuals will ignore new facts that do not correspond with the frames they already have about an issue (Lakoff and Wehling, 2016, p. 84). Additionally, an audience's behaviour and responses to issues are dependent on their schemas and frames (Mortensgaard, 2018, p. 9), which highlights the potential power of framing actors.

### Framing and securitisation

Framing theory has been used in conjunction with securitisation theory by scholars such as Mortensgaard (2018), Watson (2012) and Vultee (2010b). As seen from the above, framing theory provides a way to analyse discourse. It is also linked to securitisation, highlighting its significance to this article's aims. This assertion is supported by Watson, who argues that 'securitisation should be viewed as a subfield of framing' (Watson, 2012, p. 279). Similarly, Vultee (2010b) argues that securitisation is a 'form of framing that highlights the existential threat of an issue' (p. 79). Frames define a problem, underline how it can be dealt with and decide 'which actors are protagonists and antagonists' (ibid.).

### News media as the threat

Having reviewed the above, it is clear that the media engage in framing but what is their role

in securitisation? The media have been attributed various roles in securitisation by different scholars. The CS does not see the media as a securitising actor and would rather label it as a functional one because the media 'popularize the security discourse' (Karyotis and Patrikios, 2010, p. 44). By this logic, the media are not in a position of authority in the same way as security actors are but can have a meaningful influence on security decisions. The media are, thus, a 'mouthpiece for governing elites' (Watson, 2009, p. 21). O'Reilly (2008) builds on the CS's view and conceptualises the media as a '*major* functional actor' (emphasis added, p. 66) that can play a pivotal role in securitisation. Further, Vultee (2010a) examines the role of the media in speaking security through framing, and argues that the media play an important role in 'amplifying or moderating a security frame' (p. 34), and that media frames are 'the lens through which the public sees an issue' (p. 33). The scholar also argues that 'in addition to (or instead of) being an independent check on centers of authority, journalism is itself a center of authority' (Vultee, 2010b, p. 82) and can decide who speaks security (p. 83).

> Securitization, in short, is conceptualized as a news frame that cues several results. When the right actor invokes the right threats under the right conditions to the right audience, the results should reflect a greater willingness to place authority, as well as civil liberties, in the hands of the government for the duration (Vultee, 2010b, p. 84).

Still, however, 'not all media securitize all things equally' (Vultee, 2010b, p. 83). They can adopt different frames, and different news media can have different impacts (Mortensgaard, 2018, p. 11). Further, drawing on Vultee, Mortensgaard (2018) argues that the media function dually as both securitising audience and actor (p. 10). The former role materialises when the media further a government's securitising move by adopting the government's frame, and the latter occurs when the media make their own securitising framing choices. As Mortensgaard (2018) states, 'the media does not necessarily accept and replicate a securitizing move uncritically' (p. 10). The media may also, ideally, function as a check on abuses of power conducted as a result of emergency measures legitimised through securitisation (Hass, 2009, p. 78). Further, Watson (2009) argues that the media can take on different functions within a securitisation, arguing that the media 'communicates the securitizing claims of other actors, […] can make securitizing claims of its own and […] can expose securitizing claims to contesting views. In most cases it serves all three purposes' (p. 22). As such, the media have been categorised as a (major) functional actor, securitising actor and audience. The literature, however, has not considered the possibility of the media being designated as *the threat* in a securitisation process, a notable gap which this article seeks to fill.

Another gap in the literature is revealed upon surveying the literature on President Trump and securitisation. Trump has made several securitising moves on a number of issues. For example, Magcamit (2017) examines Trump's attempts to securitise the U.S. economy (p. 17). Additionally, Floyd (2019) notes President Trump's securitisation of terrorism,

which led to several 'security measures' (p. 61), while Shipoli (2018) examines President Trump's securitisation of Islam and argues that Trump's election win was a consequence of the 'unsuccessful desecuritization of Islam in American politics' (p. 96). These articles underline that Trump can be a securitising actor; however, while covering several issues that Trump has securitised, the authors do not consider whether Trump has securitised the news media, despite, in the case of Shipoli (2018), acknowledging that Trump has a hostile and unconventional relationship with the media (pp. 211, 238). This article also seeks to address this issue.

## Context

### Post-truth and fake news

The election of President Donald Trump is an often-cited example used to illustrate that we currently live in 'an age of post-truth politics' (Forstenzer, 2018, p. 5). This assertion is based on the amount of 'falsehoods and outright lies' (p. 5) produced by the former President and his campaign. It was Steve Tesich who in 1992 coined the term 'post-truth' as it is understood today (Legg, 2018, p. 44). Tesich, in an article discussing Watergate, the Iran/Contra scandal and the Persian Gulf War (Tesich, 1992, pp. 12–14), used the term to argue that the U.S. 'had become a society where truth is politically unimportant' (Forstenzer, 2018, p. 5). Tesich (1992) stated:

> we are rapidly becoming prototypes of a people that totalitarian monsters could only drool about in their dreams. All of the dictators up to now have had to work hard at suppressing the truth. We, by our actions, are saying that this is no longer necessary, that we have acquired a spiritual mechanism that can denude truth of any significance. In a very fundamental way we, as a free people, have freely decided that we want to live in some post-truth world (p. 13).

D'Ancona (2017) argues that, according to Tesich, these events traumatised the U.S. population to such a degree that the public abandoned the truth and began to 'collude wearily in its suppression' (p. 9). Following Trump's election and the Brexit referendum (Forstenzer, 2018, p. 5), the concept of post-truth has 'exploded' (Legg, 2018, p. 44) and, in 2016, Oxford Dictionaries nominated the term for "word of the year" defining it as 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief' (Oxford Languages, 2016). Today's post-truth has come about as a result of 'societal mega-trends such as a decline in social capital, growing economic inequality, increased polarization, declining trust in science, and an increasingly fractionated media landscape' (Lewandowsky et al., 2017, p. 353).

Further, according to Harsin (2015), we are currently experiencing a 'regime of posttruth'

(p. 1), whereby 'regime' underlines that 'this epistemic turn is newly *systematic*' (Legg, 2018, p. 44 – italics in original). This regime is, among other things, characterised by a 'deliberate, continued repetition of talking points even when they have been clearly rebutted by easily verifiable facts. Consumers of the talking points are often even aware that these rebuttals exist, but don't seem to care.' (Legg, 2018, p. 44). Trump and his administration were noted for having employed the former behaviour, while his supporters the latter (Legg, 2018, p. 45). Although the perception that politicians can be dishonest is widely held in society (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 157), traditionally, when politicians are caught lying, they tend to 'provide complex justifications and near-apologies' (Sismondo, 2017, p. 3). Trump, however, departed from this practice (Sismondo, 2017, p. 3). His 'falsehoods seem to usher in an era of unprecedented political mendacity' (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 157). The Trump administration consistently rebuked criticism and unfavourable reporting as 'fake news', which also marked 'the first time that a president has so broadly delegitimized the mainstream media' (Kellner, 2019, p. 98). The Administration also introduced the controversial term 'alternative facts' in response to an accusation of lying from the news media (Kellner, 2018, p. 97). As such, post-truth is the current "zeitgeist". As already noted, Balzacq argues that zeitgeist is a contextual factor which impacts securitisation and, thus, post-truth and the public's apathy concerning the factual truth in this era is taken into account in the following analysis.

## Trump and trust

As noted above, Trump's supporters trust him despite his factually incorrect statements. Supporters point to his lack of 'inhibitions' and that 'he speaks his mind', and argue that 'his language is more genuine' (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 157). These qualities are valued more than whether his statements are factually correct. Trump, in the eyes of his supporters, does not hide his intentions like other politicians (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 157). While several news outlets consistently fact-checked Trump's statements and tweets, pointing out when the President lied, this did little to sway his supporters' trust. Instead, the consistent scrutiny and fact-checking caused his supporters to believe that journalists were 'out to get him' (Rutenberg, 2018), which thus nullified the findings and reinforced the feeling of a 'biased' press (Smith, 2016) – an already prevalent feeling about the media in the U.S. explored further below. This ineffectual fact-checking highlights the cornerstone of the post-truth phenomenon, namely that truth is unimportant (Jandric, 2018, p. 103). Post-truth also encompasses a reduced trust in experts and the 'elite' (D'Ancona, 2017, p. 8) to which, according to his supporters, Trump does not belong. Thus, Trump holds a certain position of authority and has the confidence and trust of his supporters, which highlights the persuasive potential of his words towards the audience to which he speaks. The above are critical assertions to understanding Trump's securitising move towards the news media.

## Distrust in the media in the United States

Another element to consider in relation to both context and audience is that of trust in the

news media in the U.S. According to Turcotte et al. (2015), trust in the news media has 'reached historic lows' (p. 520). A study conducted by the Poynter Institute found that while the majority of the public support the news media, this support is weak, and there is a 'dramatic polarization in media attitudes' (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2017, p. 1). Comparing Republicans, Trump supporters, Democrats and Trump opponents, the former two have 'vastly more negative views of the press' than the latter two (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2017, p. 12). Trump supporters and Republicans were 'far more likely to endorse extreme claims about media fabrication, to describe journalists as an enemy of the people, and to support restrictions on press freedom' (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2017, p. 1) with approximately half of Republicans supporting the latter (ibid., p. 11). In the updated 2018 report, however, Poynter found that since Trump became president, there has been some increase in trust in the press for both Republicans and Democrats (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2018, p. 7), albeit still highly polarised. Notably, in both the 2017 and 2018 reports, the opinion that 'news organizations keep political leaders from doing things that shouldn't be done' (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2018, p. 2) was upheld by around two-thirds of the public. The report also noted that conservatives have argued about a liberal bias in the news 'for decades' (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2018, p. 4), with fewer than ten percent of Republicans viewing the press as balanced. Thus, while Trump exploited and exacerbated these polarised attitudes, he is not their cause (Kalb, 2018, p. 130). The former president, however, has a 'remarkable ability to read, influence and change public opinion, especially among Republicans' (Kalb, 2018, p. 130). Trump invokes fear 'in concrete and abstract ways' (Ball, 2016) and 'grasps and channels the fear coursing through the electorate'. Guess, Nyhan and Reifler argue that elite messaging influences media trust, especially in regard to bias (2018, p. 4). Thus, Trump was in an influential position of power and seemed to understand the already prevalent attitudes of many within his party and amongst his supporters, on which the former President capitalised.

Notably, the U.S. is also in an 'era of media choice' (Turcotte et al., 2015, p. 521), where people are able to choose outlets that support their 'ideological leanings'. This has led to individuals placing greater trust in the news outlets which align with their ideology, and are distrustful of ones that do not. Media choice exacerbates partisan divides and the production of echo chambers, which is further aggravated by social media. Twenty percent of U.S. adults get their news from social media (Shearer, 2018), with sixty-eight percent stating that they do so 'at least occasionally' (Matsa and Shearer, 2018). These findings underline that there is lack of trust in the media generally, and that there are ideological divides on which a securitising move can capitalise. Moreover, as social media is increasingly becoming a platform for news, the usefulness of conducting a securitising move via social media, as this article argues that Trump does via Twitter, is made clear.

## The Age of Twitter

The rise of Twitter has further consequences. According to Ott (2017), we are currently experiencing a 'changing character of public discourse in the Age of Twitter' (p. 59). Twitter,

Ott (2017) argues, 'promotes public discourse that is simple, impetuous, and frequently denigrating and dehumanizing' (p. 60). The platform's character limit leads to simplicity because it is not possible to post 'detailed and sophisticated messages' (Ott, 2017, p. 60). This hinders real discussion and the ability to 'think about issues and events in more complex ways' (Ott, 2017, p. 61). It is also impulsive and does not command much reflection about the effects of a tweet (Ott, 2017, p. 61). Finally, it 'encourage[s] uncivil discourse' (Ott, 2017, p. 62) as a result of its informality, and because it 'depersonalizes interactions' (p. 62). These insights are important to note, as they show that Twitter fosters lack of critical reflection in users/consumers. This highlights the persuasive potential tweets can have and, thus, makes it an ideal tool for a securitising actor. Importantly, tweets that are 'emotionally charged' receive more retweets than those that are not (p. 61), highlighting that the use of emotion on Twitter is also effective for a securitising actor.

## Trump and Twitter

Trump's use of Twitter as 'one of his primary means of presidential communication' (Newport, 2018) was unprecedented. Stolee and Caton (2018) assert that we may be experiencing a 'major cultural shift' (p. 149) in presidential talk. It may be the case that there is a 'shift in the presidential rhetorical strategy from an address of a wide consistency (built on coalitions) to a core consistency (built on a base)' (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 164). This is because Trump's tweets and rhetoric were directed towards his base rather than meant to resonate with the greater American public (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 151). Thus, Trump framed issues in ways that his supporters identified with, sometimes 'at the expense of a wider reach of the electorate' (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 150). As such, it seems that Trump's audience, in terms of securitisation theory, is his base.

Trump used Twitter in interesting ways. Trump's tweets gave him an advantage as they 'always seem ahead of everyone else's in framing the message' (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 157). Thereby, Trump's framing had the potential to become the dominant frame. Additionally, Lakoff (cited in Ross and Rivers, 2008) argues that Trump used the 'trial balloon' (p. 4) tactic on Twitter; he would post a tweet with a contentious statement in order to test the audience's reaction to it. Trump also used exclamation points and caps lock, which 'reinforce the negative sentiment' (Ott, 2017, p. 64) of the content and 'heighten [its] emotional impact (p. 64). This emotion was then transferred to his followers in a manner known as 'emotional contagion' (Auflick, cited in Ott, 2017, p. 64). Thus, again, emotion becomes a noteworthy tool that will be brought into the analysis later on.

Notably, Trump's usage of Twitter led to his temporary suspension from the platform in January 2021 in the midst of the Capitol riot/insurrection[1] (*The Guardian*, 2021). Trump was subsequently permanently suspended from the platform 'due to the risk of further incitement of violence' (Twitter Inc., 2021). Trump had argued that the election was 'stolen' (Kahn et al., 2021) and that his loss was due to voter fraud, while he advocated for an overturn of the

election. Through tweets (among other things) Trump encouraged his supporters to protest his 2020 election loss with a march on the Capitol, which resulted in a riot/insurrection (*The Guardian*, 2021).

## A problematic media climate

Finally, in order to grasp fully the situation of the U.S. media in the current zeitgeist, the findings of the Reporters Without Borders (RSF)'s 2019 World Freedom Index should be reviewed. The report classifies the media climate in the U.S. as 'problematic' (Reporters without Borders, 2019a). The Index has categories ranging from 'good', 'satisfactory', 'problematic', 'difficult', and 'very serious' for journalists. The report cites the reasoning for the 'problematic' classification as 'an increasingly hostile climate that goes beyond Donald Trump's comments' (Reporters without Borders, 2019a). Further, the report argues that the Administration has denied 'access to information and events of public interest' (Reporters without Borders, 2019b) to reporters. The White House revoked *CNN* reporter Jim Acosta's press pass in November 2018 (Reporters without Borders, 2019b) (Wang and Farhi, 2018), while the Administration first went an unprecedented 42 days without a press briefing (Reporters without Borders, 2019b) followed by 100 days in June (Stelter, 2019b). The report further noted a record number of death threats towards journalists from the public, and noted that several newsrooms had received 'suspicious packages' (Reporters without Borders, 2019b) and 'bomb threats'. Additionally, reporters attending Trump rallies were 'physically accosted' (Reporters without Borders, 2019b) and intimidated by attendees. The Index also cited the 2018 *Capital Gazette* newsroom shooting, which led to the death of four reporters. Trump continued with his 'anti-press rhetoric' (Reporters without Borders, 2019b) in the direct aftermath of the shooting. While the media climate in the U.S., and these occurrences, are not solely attributed to Trump's rhetoric against the media, Trump's contribution is underlined as a contributing factor by the report (Reporters without Borders, 2019b).

Trump was impeached and charged by the House of Representatives for inciting the 2021 Capitol insurrection (Fandos, 2021),[2] which also saw attacks on the media by parts of the crowd. Hsu and Robertson (2021) describe journalists as the 'secondary target' of the insurrection. The words 'Murder the media' were etched into a Capitol door by insurrectionists, parts of the crowd chanted 'CNN sucks' and there were reports of journalists being surrounded, threatened, physically attacked and forced to take shelter. *Associated Press* camera equipment was destroyed, and a noose was seen 'fashioned out of a camera cord and hung from a tree' (Hsu and Robertson, 2021). As a precautionary measure, some reporters had opted not to wear their news organisation's insignia, and another reporter wore protective gear traditionally used for reporting in conflict zones, when covering the protest/insurrection (Hsu and Robertson, 2021). These occurrences further highlight the problematic climate for journalists in the U.S., as well as the views Trump's base has towards the media, to which Trump has contributed.

## Aims, theory and method

The aim of this article is to analyse President Trump's discourse concerning the U.S. news media, and to illustrate that this discourse frames the news media as a security threat, constituting a securitising move. In order to do so, securitisation theory is employed. More specifically, this article applies second-generation literature as a result of the critiques and expansions of the CS's original theory of securitisation. The qualitative method of discourse analysis is employed by applying framing theory in conjunction with securitisation theory to a sample of rhetoric posted by Trump on Twitter. Framing was chosen for the discourse analysis, as 'frames influence the way in which we view particular situations and issues' (Kuypers, 2009, p. 300) and because securitisation is seen as a type of framing that 'highlights the existential threat of an issue' (Vultee, 2010b, p. 79).

Further, as Twitter becomes an increasingly popular way through which the American public consumes their news, and as it was one of President Trump's 'primary means of presidential communication' (Newport, 2018), its use to study Trump's discourse is deemed appropriate. TheTrumparchive.com, a website that serves as an online archive of the President's tweets, was utilised to conduct word searches and obtain the President's tweets – including ones since deleted from Trump's Twitter profile. It is a source cited by the likes of *The BBC*, *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post* and other news outlets, rendering it a reliable platform. The time span chosen for this study ranged from Trump's inauguration (20 January 2017) to 22 August 2019. This period was chosen to investigate Trump's rhetoric while he presided as sitting president and extended to the latter date to encapsulate a picture of the consistency with which this discourse had been uttered over time.

Word searches were conducted on thetrumparchive.com using the following words, noting the respective number of tweets that they appeared in (up to 22 August 2019): 'enemy of the people' (35 times), 'enemy of the American people' (2), 'fake news' (496), 'fake news media' (159), 'dishonest media' (29), 'dishonest fake news media' (2), 'corrupt media' (19), 'corrupt news' (8), 'corrupt news media' (3) and 'biased media' (6). Further, "enemy of the people" without "media" (12) and "enemy of the people" without "news" (8) were searched; however, all of the tweets that included 'enemy of the people' used either 'news' instead of 'media' or the reverse, and/or included references to individual news outlets. This word search was done in order to make sure the phrase had not been used in other contexts, which could distort frequency findings. Finally, individual outlets were searched independently, which brought to light 'failing @nytimes' (75), 'failing new york times' (31) and 'fake news CNN' (21) to name but a few.

This article has chosen to focus on the phrases 'fake news', 'fake news media' and 'enemy of the people'. These particular samples were chosen in part due to the frequency of their appearance and also due to the publicity they have received in the news media. When researching Trump's relationship with the media, the phrases 'enemy of the people', 'fake

news' and 'fake news media' were consistently mentioned, which underlines the rationale behind their choice. Moreover, they clearly highlight an anti-media rhetoric which, for me, rang securitisation "alarm bells". Furthermore, as securitisation should be seen as a 'process of articulations' (Stritzel, 2007, p. 377) and studying a single speech act will seldom explain the process of securitisation, and because security is 'constructed over time' (McDonald, 2008, p. 564), analysing a sample of tweets posted over a longer period of time was deemed appropriate.

By conducting the above, this article seeks to fill the aforementioned gap in the literature. Thus, the discussion adds to securitisation theory – through analysing Trump's anti-media discourse – by identifying that the news media can be framed as a security threat, by illustrating Trump's securitising move against the U.S. news media, and by highlighting the danger such a securitising move has on democracy.

## Limitations and disclaimers

One limitation that this article has had to deal with is space. As such, other discursive practices were omitted from the study, which could have contributed to the data. Likewise, this article only uses a sample of Trump's tweets and phrases – obtained during the data collection period. It is also important to note that the terms searched for are targeted towards negative/securitising language. While these tweets are, I believe, representative of Trump's general tone concerning the media, they are only a fraction of the available tweets. Moreover, TheTrumpArchive.com, the source utilised to obtain and search through Trump's tweets, is missing 4,000 of those; however, these are mostly tweets posted prior to 27 January 2017. As noted, this article has chosen to study tweets posted while Trump was president, meaning from his inauguration on 20 January 2017 (Kalb, 2018, p. 1) onwards.[3] Further, it is necessary to underline that this article uses the phrases "U.S. news media", "news media" and "media" interchangeably throughout. All of these phrases always refer to the news media in the United States. Notably, Trump has criticised some news media organisations more than others, namely those which he classifies as 'mainstream' versus conservative outlets. This is taken into consideration in the analysis.

## Analysis and illustration

Trump's hostile rhetoric concerning the U.S. news media was present during his 2016 election campaign. During this time, the Republican presidential nominee referred to the media as 'disgusting' and 'dishonest' (Acosta, 2019). Trump's rhetoric extended into his presidency, and he consistently challenged the media's legitimacy (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2017, p. 11). As president, Trump was in a position of authority, since the presidency is 'the apex of political authority in designating threats for the United States' (van Rythoven, 2015, p. 461). Thus, Trump, as an elite securitising actor and in line with the CS's conceptualisation (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 33), has the power and influence to perform a securitising move (Wæver, 1995, p. 54). As already examined, Trump also speaks to his base, an audience that is receptive to

his arguments (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 151). Moreover, as noted earlier, Trump used his Twitter handle @realDonaldTrump as one of his main channels of presidential communication (Newport, 2018). Some of his most used phrases on Twitter, in his "anti-media" tweets, included: 'fake news', 'fake news media' and 'enemy of the people' (see Aims, theory and method). Thus, this section analyses a sample of these tweets, applying both framing and securitisation theory, and draws on the contextual information surveyed in the previous sections to illustrate that Trump's framing of the U.S. news media constitutes a securitising move.

## Fake news and the fake news media

### Truth and country as referent objects

Throughout his presidency, Trump consistently referred to 'fake news' alluding to the U.S. news media and their unfavourable reporting of him (Kellner, 2018, p. 55). The former president tweeted the phrase a total of 496 times according to my research (see Aims, theory and method). The extended version, 'fake news media', was tweeted 159 times. By doing so, Trump framed the news media as untruthful and accused them of producing fake news. This is exemplified in the following tweets:

> **Feb 24, 2017 10:09:18 PM** FAKE NEWS media knowingly doesn't tell the truth. A great danger to our country. The failing @nytimes has become a joke. Likewise @CNN. Sad! (The Trump Archive V2)

> **Aug 16, 2018 09:10:17 AM** There is nothing that I would want more for our Country than true FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. The fact is that the Press is FREE to write and say anything it wants, but much of what it says is FAKE NEWS, pushing a political agenda or just plain trying to hurt people. HONESTY WINS! (The Trump Archive V2)

> **Jan 7, 2019 08:09:03 AM** ...The Fake News will knowingly lie and demean in order make the tremendous success of the Trump Administration, and me, look as bad as possible. They use non-existent sources & write stories that are total fiction. Our Country is doing so well, yet this is a sad day in America! (The Trump Archive V2)

As noted earlier, the state has traditionally been viewed as the referent object in security studies (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 37). Since then, several second-generation scholars have challenged this view and expanded what can be considered a referent object (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 37–39; Watson, 2011, p. 5; Hansen and Nissenbaum, 2009, p. 1162). Applying this understanding to the above tweets, it becomes clear that by framing the news media as producing fake news and intentionally not telling the truth, Trump framed the truth as being

under threat. Thus, truth is the *referent object* that must be protected. Simultaneously, in the first tweet, Trump refers to 'our country', the United States as a whole, framing it as also threatened by the extension of the threat to the truth.

## The (mainstream) media as a threat

By claiming that the news media threatens both the truth and the U.S., Trump framed the news media as *the threat*. According to the CS's conceptualisation of securitisation theory, a threat is framed as existential in securitisation (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 23). Whether Trump framed the media as an *existential* threat, however, can be debated. On the one hand, framing it as a 'danger to our country' could warrant it existential status. One could infer that this means that it threatens the American way of life as we know it. Trump, however, does not always use obvious existential terminology in his framing of the media. He does not always reference the state and, instead, often uses words such as 'corrupt' and 'inaccurate', as exemplified in the following tweet:

> **Apr 9, 2019 07:44:17 AM** The Mainstream Media has never been more inaccurate or corrupt than it is today. It only seems to get worse. So much Fake News! (The Trump Archive V2)

On the other hand, however, Floyd (2016, p. 677) argues that a threat does not necessarily need to be existential for it to be securitised. One can, therefore, make the case that establishing the media as a threat is enough for it to become a threat in line with second-generation securitisation theory.

It is important to note that Trump has distinguished between the 'fake news media' and other news media. Initially, Trump did not label all media as 'fake news', referring to the 'mainstream media' (see tweet above) as those which produce fake news (Kalb, 2018, p. 3). These news outlets are argued to be those that are willing to criticise him (Kalb, 2018, p. 3). The news outlets to which Trump refers are among others: *The New York Times* (The Trump Archive V2, Feb 24, 2017), MSNBC and CNN (see below). Trump has mostly refrained from labelling conservative news outlets such as *Fox News* as fake news. Instead, he gives them praise more regularly, as exemplified in the tweets below:

> **Feb 15, 2017 06:40:32 AM** The fake news media is going crazy with their conspiracy theories and blind hatred. @MSNBC & @CNN are unwatchable. @foxandfriends is great! (The Trump Archive V2)

> **Mar 26, 2019 08:27:21 PM** The Fake News Media has lost tremendous credibility with its corrupt coverage of the illegal Democrat Witch Hunt of your all time favorite duly elected President, me! T.V. ratings of CNN & MSNBC tanked last night after seeing the Mueller Report statement.

@FoxNews up BIG (The Trump Archive V2)

On occasion, however, Trump has accused *Fox News* of fake news, as seen in the tweet below, where he references *Fox News* host Bret Baier:

> **Jun 17, 2019 06:49:43 PM** .@FoxNews Polls are always bad for me. They were against Crooked Hillary also. Something weird going on at Fox. Our polls show us leading in all 17 Swing States. For the record, I didn't spend 30 hours with @abcnews, but rather a tiny fraction of that. More Fake News @BretBaier (The Trump Archive V2)

Stelter (2019a) argues that Trump has a 'back-scratching relationship' with *Fox News*. The network has been criticised for serving as a platform for the President's 'propaganda' (Mayer, 2019), for killing stories unfavourable to Trump (Mayer, 2019), and for the 'steady flow of personnel from *Fox News* to the Trump White House' (Hemmer, 2019) among other things. This does not mean that *Fox* never reports news that are damaging to the President, and the network does criticise him on occasion. When it does so, however, Trump lashes out at *Fox* as well, and labels them fake news. As previously mentioned, the consistent labelling of "fake news" is generally applied to the news outlets that are considered a part of the "mainstream media", and those that are more inclined to criticise Trump or point out when he lies. It seems, however, that Trump is willing to criticise conservative outlets when they present him in a way that he deems unfavourable.[4]

Framing the news media as a threat taps into an already prevalent negative view of the media held by Republicans in the U.S. This negative sentiment, as noted previously, is based on a perception that the news media have a liberal bias (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2018, p. 4). Trump also tapped into this sentiment at a time when there was a historically low level of trust in the media in the U.S. (Guess, Nyhan and Reifler, 2017, p. 12), in the era of post-truth. As such, a negative view of the media was already a prevalent frame within Trump's base and, as already determined, this is the audience to which he spoke on Twitter. Thus, a frame in thought (Chong and Druckman, 2007a, p. 101) within the audience was readily available for Trump to tap into by using a *frame in communication* to exacerbate the former further. Trump took advantage of prejudices and ideological partisan leanings already held by a certain portion of the audience, a method of framing outlined by Chong and Druckman (2007b, p. 111). Moreover, this also underlines van Rythoven's (2015) argument that 'audiences fear threats because they represent phenomena they have already learned to fear or imaginably foresee fearing' (p. 467). This points to the fact that Trump's arguments are relevant within the zeitgeist – one of Balzacq's contextual securitising factors. By tapping into prevalent social views and political attitudes within the zeitgeist, a securitising actor can influence the receptiveness of the audience towards their arguments (Balzacq, 2005, p. 192). Balzacq's audience factor, the audience's fitting frame of reference, is thus clearly underlined.

As Trump spoke to his base, who perceive him as a trustworthy actor and an expert on the issues, he fulfilled another audience factor outlined by Balzacq. As such, Trump employed words and phrases that would resonate with his audience and win their support, utilising all of Balzacq's congruent securitising agent components of securitisation. Balzacq's congruent factors that condition the 'effectuation of securitisation' (p. 192) were thereby prevalent. Likewise, the CS's felicity conditions were also met, as Trump clearly used the grammar of security through words that resonated. He had social capital and authority, and could effectively point to the media as the threat considering the predominant hostile sentiments. As such, Trump's designation of the news media as a threat can be seen as a securitising move.

## Trump, the protector of truth

Trump also framed himself as the protector of the truth, and as the person that enlightens his audience by giving them the truth that the media does not. He argued that he was able to do so via social media. This notion comes to light in the following tweets:

> **Jun 8, 2019 11:08:26 PM** I know it is not at all "Presidential" to hit back at the Corrupt Media, or people who work for the Corrupt Media, when they make false statements about me or the Trump Administration. Problem is, if you don't hit back, people believe the Fake News is true. So we'll hit back! (The Trump Archive V2)

> **Jun 12, 2019 07:46:43 AM** The Fake News has never been more dishonest than it is today. Thank goodness we can fight back on Social Media. Their new weapon of choice is Fake Polling, sometimes referred to as Suppression Polls (they suppress the numbers). Had it in 2016, but this is worse… (The Trump Archive V2)

Here, the former president underlines that this behaviour may not be 'Presidential', which, evidently, is one of the reasons that Trump's supporters trust him. As noted earlier, Trump is not a career politician. He is not part of the establishment that uses correct facts but has 'entirely suspect' intentions (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 157). Rather, in the eyes of his supporters, he is an outsider who speaks his mind (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 157). Thereby, Trump's supporters see him as honest and a source for truth, despite the fact that he makes statements that are 'factually incorrect' (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 157). As mentioned above, in a post-truth world, *factual* truth becomes unimportant (Jandric, 2018, p. 103); however, that is not to say that his supporters do not believe there is a truth. Instead, they just do not seem to care when their belief in what is true is disproved (Legg, 2018, p. 44). Thus, Trump protects his "truth" and his supporters' "truth", claiming it to be the *factual* truth, and attacks the media when they report the actual truth, which includes news that are damaging to Trump. Additionally, when the media criticise Trump and his factual inaccuracies, this

further solidifies Trump supporters' trust in him and distrust in the media (Rutenberg, 2018). Thus, objective factual truths, the essential political and democratic good, are unimportant to his supporters. Trump argues that if he does not 'hit back' at 'fake news' – meaning if he does not call out the media's behaviour – then the people will suffer because they will believe falsehoods. By doing so, he frames himself as using his office to help the people. Additionally, Trump highlights that if the people want the truth, they should turn to him and social media, the new arena for that truth. As such, Trump frames himself as the uninhibited, unpresidential outsider and populist truth-teller, a frame already adopted by his supporters. By framing himself in this light, Trump was able to gain further legitimacy among his supporters as a securitising actor.

## Trump's use of repetition

Trump also employed the framing tactic of repetition. As shown in my research (see Aims, theory and method), Trump tweeted the phrases 'fake news' and 'fake news media' 496 and 159 times respectively, during the period studied. Moreover, Trump also had a tendency to tweet several times in one day, using the same terms, as seen in the employment of the phrase 'Fake News' in the tweets below:

> **Aug 15, 2019 11:30:03 AM** Wow! The Deputy Editor of the Failing New York Times was just demoted. Should have been Fired! Totally biased and inaccurate reporting. The paper is a Fraud, Zero Credibility. Fake News takes another hit, but this time a big one! (The Trump Archive V2)

> **Aug 15, 2019 11:52:53 AM** The Fake News Media is doing everything they can to crash the economy because they think that will be bad for me and my re-election. The problem they have is that the economy is way too strong and we will soon be winning big on Trade, and everyone knows that, including China! (The Trump Archive V2)

> **Aug 15, 2019 03:18:25 PM** Walmart, a great indicator as to how the U.S. is doing, just released outstanding numbers. Our Country, unlike others, is doing great! Don't let the Fake News convince you otherwise. (The Trump Archive V2)

As Lakoff and Wehling (2016) argue, repetition of words and phrases make a frame 'common sense' (p. 84) or 'right and real' to an audience, while contradictory facts are discounted. Additionally, as a result of repetition the phrase becomes memorable. As Entman (2004) states, repetition combined with cultural resonance, such as emotion, has the ability to create similar 'thoughts and feelings' (p. 6) in an audience. Moreover, short phrases, such as the simple "fake news", become readily memorable with repetition. As already noted, the regime

of post-truth is characterised by actors using 'deliberate, continued repetition of talking points even when they have been clearly rebutted by easily verifiable facts' (Legg, 2018, p. 45). The former president employed this tactic. In this post-truth regime, the audience is oftentimes aware of such refutations, but tends to discount them in favour of appeals to emotion and feelings (Legg, 2018, p. 45). As such, Trump's repetition in his tweets also made his audience more likely to accept his securitising language. Moreover, as noted earlier, Oren and Solomon (2015) argue that repetition of ambiguous phrases is one way to securitise an issue (p. 320). The authors note that '[t]he more constantly and frequently a securitising phrase is being repeated, that is, the more condensed the "historicity" of the phrase becomes, the more likely is the phrase to acquire an illocutionary force, to construct the security threat it ostensibly describes' (p. 320). Successful securitisation can be possible when the audience partakes and contributes to the repetition of the phrase (Oren and Solomon, 2015, p. 322). What is apparent from these tweets is that Trump continuously repeated 'fake news' / 'fake news media' – both ambiguous phrases – with the aim of framing the news as untrustworthy and decisively dangerous. Thus, this repetition created the opportunity for Trump's audience (including those who oppose him) to participate in the chant by echoing the phrases, thereby aiding Trump's initiated securitisation process.

## Framing using emotion

As noted, Trump also appealed greatly to emotion in his framing of the media, as exemplified in the following tweet:

> **Aug 16, 2018 07:50:44 AM** THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA IS THE OPPOSITION PARTY. It is very bad for our Great Country [sic]....BUT WE ARE WINNING! (The Trump Archive V2)

As discussed above, the use of exclamation points and caps lock heightens the emotional effect and negative feeling of a tweet, and this is transferred to the audience (Ott, 2017, p. 64). Tweets that are laden with emotion receive a higher number of retweets than those that are not, which heightens the impact and circulation of the message. Moreover, the function of retweeting shows that the portion of the audience that retweets plays a role in the spread of Trump's message, underlining the active role of the audience. Further, according to Balzacq's pragmatic act of securitisation, securitising discourse works at 'a level of persuasion' (2015, p. 172), where emotion is an artefact that can be employed. This is an effective instrument in the zeitgeist in which these tweets are posted because, in a post-truth era, appeals to emotions and opinions are more important for an audience than appeals to facts (Oxford Languages, 2016; Jandric, 2018, p. 106).

## Emergency measures

Securitisation, according to the CS, stresses that a speech act designates an existential threat which necessitates 'emergency action or special measures and the acceptance of that

designation by a significant audience' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 27). The CS has generally described policy measures as emergency action; however, Côté argues that this may be too high of a 'threshold' (2016, p. 544). Secondary scholars and the PS have underlined that securitisation need not focus on exceptionalist policies but rather on the 'reproduction of unease and insecurity in everyday life' (Nyman, 2018, p. 107). Considering these arguments, the following tweets are of significance:

> Jan 29, 2017 08:00:32 AM Somebody with aptitude and conviction should buy the FAKE NEWS and failing @nytimes and either run it correctly or let it fold with dignity! (The Trump Archive V2)

> Oct 11, 2017 08:55:44 AM With all of the Fake News coming out of NBC and the Networks, at what point is it appropriate to challenge their License? Bad for country! (The Trump Archive V2)

> **May 9, 2018 06:38:45 AM** The Fake News is working overtime. Just reported that, despite the tremendous success we are having with the economy & all things else, 91% of the Network News about me is negative (Fake). Why do we work so hard in working with the media when it is corrupt? Take away credentials? (The Trump Archive V2)

As already noted, Lakoff (cited in Ross and Rivers, 2018) argues that Trump used the 'trial balloon' (p. 4) tactic, in which he would post a tweet with a contentious statement in order to test the audience's reaction to it. The aim was to aid the President's understanding of how to proceed. This is especially interesting when considering the above tweets. The first can be interpreted as arguing that *The New York Times* should be 'bought' or 'fold' before its reputation worsens. The next two tweets offer more controversial statements, such as the questions 'at what point is it appropriate to challenge their License?' and 'Take away credentials?'. Such measures would be seen as extreme, and if put into effect they would challenge the right to free speech (Shepardson, 2017). '[P]lacing limitations on otherwise inviolable rights' (Watson, 2009, p. 24), however, is a sign of securitisation. As such, in line with securitisation theory, it may be understood that, in a sense, Trump is 'trial balloon'-ing emergency measures by testing audience acceptance. Whether or not one interprets emergency measures as necessitating policy changes, Trump is known to invoke fear 'in concrete and abstract ways' (Ball, 2016) and 'grasp[ing] and channel[ling] the fear coursing through the electorate', as exemplified by the studied tweets. Moreover, these tweets underline the consistent enunciation of a security threat and the production of unease. As such, Trump clearly used securitising language in reference to the U.S. media.

## Enemy of the people
On 17 February 2017, Trump tweeted:

The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American people (Kalb, 2018, p. 1)

This was the first instance of the news media, and specific news outlets, being called 'the enemy of the American people' by the recently inaugurated president (Kalb, 2018, p. 1). According to the available data, Trump tweeted 'the enemy of the people' and 'enemy of the American people' in reference to the news media 35 and two times respectively (see Aims, theory and method). The following is a sample of some of these tweets:

**Aug 2, 2018 03:24:33 PM** They asked my daughter Ivanka whether or not the media is the enemy of the people. She correctly said no. It is the FAKE NEWS, which is a large percentage of the media, that is the enemy of the people! (The Trump Archive V2)

**Aug 5, 2018 06:38:12 AM** The Fake News hates me saying that they are the Enemy of the People only because they know it's TRUE. I am providing a great service by explaining this to the American People. They purposely cause great division & distrust. They can also cause War! They are very dangerous & sick! (The Trump Archive V2)

**Oct 29, 2018 07:03:13 AM** There is great anger in our Country caused in part by inaccurate, and even fraudulent, reporting of the news. The Fake News Media, the true Enemy of the People, must stop the open & obvious hostility & report the news accurately & fairly. That will do much to put out the flame... (The Trump Archive V2)

**May 20, 2019 06:20:53 AM** The Mainstream Media has never been as corrupt and deranged as it is today. FAKE NEWS is actually the biggest story of all and is the true ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE! That's why they refuse to cover the REAL Russia Hoax. But the American people are wise to what is going on..... (The Trump Archive V2)

## The media as the enemy

By using the word "enemy", Trump unmistakably labelled the U.S. news media as the opposition. The word "enemy" elicits a schema of danger and of the other, an antagonist and a threat that must be protected against. In order to solidify this frame of the media as the enemy of the people, Trump stated that 'they can also cause War!', which likewise elicits a clear threat frame. The term "war" can allude to several other schemas related to threat, such as destruction, death and fear. Further, stating that 'they are very dangerous & sick' is another obvious threat image. If something is 'very dangerous' or 'sick', it is decisively threatening or

repulsive. Moreover, if it is 'corrupt' and 'deranged', it is immoral and unreliable. These are clear negative connotations that aid the framing of the media as a threat. Here, it seems that the media is also plainly framed as an *existential* threat, because schemas relating to 'enemy' in conjunction with 'America' may also activate the perception of a threat to the American way of life. This alludes to historical schemas related to previous enemies and wars, such as the language utilised in the run-up to the war in Iraq (Reese and Lewis, 2009, p. 779). If the media are 'the enemy', which can 'cause War!' and are 'very dangerous & sick', then the media are undoubtedly a considerable threat, not only to the truth but to the security of the state itself.

## 'The people' as referent object

Trump positioned the word 'enemy' in contrast to 'the people' and 'the American people', thereby framing the people as being threatened. If the media continue to produce fake news, then the U.S. may face severe threats, which the people must be protected from. In these tweets, Trump seems to refer to the entire U.S. public by using the phrase 'the people' and 'the American people'. As noted, Trump speaks decisively to his base, framing his messages with this audience in mind. Thus, the framing of 'the people' will likely create a feeling of collectivity for Trump's supporters and has a large chance of resonating with them because of the fulfilment of Balzacq's contextual, audience and securitising actor congruent factors, as well as Chong and Druckman's arguments concerning framing outlined above. The audience, however, may not accept this framing if they already have a very different and established schema concerning the phrase.

## The media as referent object: established schema

The phrase 'Enemy of the People' as a whole may elicit very different reactions and feelings for those who have previously established a negative schema related to it in their long-term memory and knowledge networks. The phrase has a long history and has been associated with the likes of Mao, Hitler, Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev and Nixon (Kalb, 2018, pp. 22–31). Kalb contends that the phrase has always consistently contained a similar understanding: '[i]n the land of the dictator, whether in Russia or China, the critic, the reporter, was considered the "enemy of the people"' (2018, p. 25). During Khrushchev's rule, the leader abandoned the term used by his predecessor Stalin, seeing that its usage was employed in order to eliminate any form of political disagreement. Speaking at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956 (Kalb, 2018, p. 26), Khrushchev stated that '[t]he formula "enemy of the people" was specifically introduced for the purpose of physically annihilating individuals who disagreed with Stalin, even communists thought to be in good standing' (Khrushchev, cited in Kalb, 2018, p. 28). In the United States, historically, the term is linked to President Nixon's 'enemies list' (Kalb, 2018, p. 31), which 'was his way of labelling journalists – those who pointed out the fallacies and fantasies about his policies – as "enemies of the people"' (p. 31). As such, the term may activate already established negative schemas of authoritarianism, oppression, distaste and fear of the actor that employs

the phrase. Therefore, individuals who have this negative schema stored in their long-term memory are less likely to accept Trump's framing. This is because, as already noted, 'first impressions are difficult to dislodge' (Entman, 2004, p. 7), and once a schema is established 'all succeeding information about any of these ideas has the potential to bring to mind (online, into working memory) associated feelings and concepts from the knowledge network' (p. 7). As noted earlier, Trump's framing sometimes came 'at the expense of the wider electorate' (Stolee and Caton, 2018, p. 150). Trump, however, may not have needed to convince the entire U.S. public in order to securitise the media, because as Vultee (2010b) argues, one only needs 'the consent of enough of the audience', or O'Reilly's 'critical mass' (2008, p. 67). Moreover, as Oren and Solomon (2015) contend, audience acceptance does not have to be measured by level of persuasion but rather in having enough of the audience repeating a securitising phrase (in agreement or opposition) (pp. 313, 321).

## Framing using hyperbole

As exemplified by tweets already mentioned as well as those that follow, Trump is no stranger to hyperbole:

> **Feb 17, 2019 07:56:09 AM** THE RIGGED AND CORRUPT MEDIA IS THE ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE! (The Trump Archive V2)

> **Mar 19, 2019 07:24:21 AM** The Fake News Media has NEVER been more Dishonest [sic] or Corrupt [sic] than it is right now. There has never been a time like this in American History. Very exciting but also, very sad! Fake News is the absolute Enemy of the People and our Country [sic] itself! (The Trump Archive V2)

Hyperboles can be utilised to exaggerate a threat and can effectively persuade an audience of the reality and 'imminence' of that threat (Burgers et al., 2016, p. 415). As we know from reviewing the literature, when a securitising actor wishes to persuade an audience of a threat, it is important to highlight its imminence. Additionally, the securitisation of an issue is a 'political choice' (Nyman, 2013, p. 53) and whether or not a security threat actually exists is irrelevant, underlining the need for hyperbole. Hyperbole can also increase the 'emotional attitude attached to a subject' (Burgers et al., 2016, p. 415) and, thus, the 'message['s] persuasiveness'. Repetition of hyperbole also effectively helps put the issue 'in a place in the public debate' (p. 415). Trump uttered the phrase 'enemy of the people' 35 times, which underlines his effective use of the framing mechanisms of hyperbole and repetition, in aid of his securitisation of the media.

## Trump's securitising move

Considering the above, Trump's securitising move comes to light. Trump employed securitising language in his tweets by identifying the media as a threat. He additionally

presented the referent object to this threat by highlighting a threat to truth, the people and the country. Further, Trump directed his rhetoric (tweets) towards a specific audience, his supporters. To these supporters, Trump is a person of authority. He has credibility and knows the issues. Trump appealed to this audience by using framing in line with their ideological views and views of him. He framed his discourse in ways which appealed to the context in which his securitising language took place: a regime of post-truth, social media and distrust in the "mainstream" news media in the country. By framing his discourse in line with the context, Trump attempted to persuade his audience. He employed several framing tactics, such as the use of emotion, repetition and hyperbole, and may also have trial-ballooned his audience's acceptance into action. By doing so, he further used securitising language, framing the media as a threat that needed to be addressed. Trump's securitisation move is, thus, clear. The former president decisively framed the media as a threat through his many tweets.

Having considered the above, a note on the state of insecurity in the U.S. in relation to Trump's rhetoric requires consideration. As noted in the literature review, Huysmans (2014) argues that securitisation poses a challenge to democracy, as it 'hollows out democratic organisations based on principles of freedom and justice' (p. 3). As the media is known as the 'fourth estate' (Kellner, 2018, p. 97) in democracies, its securitisation further underlines the extent to which securitisation can challenge a democracy. Trump is said to have generally engaged in a 'politics of insecurity' (Rojecki, 2016, p. 76). As Huysmans states, we need to consider when 'insecurity is becoming the energetic principle of politics. If so, for anyone invested in democratic politics alarm bells should go off' (p. 5). By consistently tweeting and framing the media as a threat, Trump regularly spread insecurities not only among his supporters but also within the news media. As noted in the context section, the climate for journalists in the U.S. has become 'problematic' (Reporters without Borders, 2019a), in large part due to Trump's securitising rhetoric, which has clearly spread insecurity not only among his supporters in relation to the media, but also among those which he labels as a threat. This further highlights the impact of Trump's use of securitising language.

Finally, while this article's aim was not to prove whether Trump was successful in his securitisation of the U.S. news media, recent developments may suggest that this is the case. The protests/riot and storming of the Capitol demonstrate clear lack of belief in the legitimacy of the 2020 election results reported by the media, and highlight the trust placed in Trump over the media by a large portion of his audience – his loyal base. Additionally, the physical, verbal and symbolic attacks towards members of the news media further underline Trump's base supporters' activated hostility and belief in Trump's securitising language. While Trump lost the 2020 election, his securitising move has had, at the very least, a real impact on his supporters and their perception of the truth and trust in the media, and contributed to a poorer climate for U.S. news media.

## Conclusion

This article argues that Trump conducted a securitising move against the U.S. news media. This finding has become apparent through the use of discourse analysis informed by the application of framing and securitisation theory to a sample of Trump's tweets. Trump framed the media as a threat in his tweets by using the phrases 'fake news', 'fake news media' and 'enemy of the people'. These phrases were supported by other words with negative and threatening connotations in order to solidify this frame. Furthermore, Trump underlined that the media are a threat to the truth, the American people and, thus, the country, thereby designating the referent object. Trump's audience is his base, an audience who sees him as a trustworthy speaker imbued with authority. The former president used several framing tactics in order to frame the media as a security threat, such as appealing to emotion, and using repetition and hyperbole, which strengthened his securitising language and increased the likelihood of audience persuasion. Trump's framing seems constructed to resonate with his audience, as he appealed to their prejudices, drawing on already established schemas and views which he then exacerbated. He effectively tapped into the contextual situation in the U.S., of a polarised political and media environment, notions of liberal bias to what he designated as the 'mainstream media', high levels of distrust in the media, a post-truth zeitgeist and the increasing use of social media as a source for news. Thus, over time, Trump produced securitising language in all of his "anti-media" tweets. He framed the media as a threat to truth and country, thereby performing a securitising move.

This article adds to securitisation theory by filling two gaps in the securitisation literature. The existing securitisation scholarship has not explored the conceptualisation of the media as a threat, while scholars have not explored Trump's securitisation of the media. More importantly, however, an investigation into the potential securitisation of the media in a democratic state is worth studying because the designation of a vital cornerstone for democracy as a threat has consequences for the functioning of that democracy. The news media perform vital functions in democracies, such as informing citizens of necessary facts, informing political discussion and debate, exposing wrongdoings and abuses of power, and holding leaders to account. When the media are unable to perform these functions because they are distrusted, stripped of legitimacy and seen as threatening, the public suffers from lack of objective information, informed political debate and even an understanding of objective reality. As noted, the climate for reporters in the U.S. has worsened in part due to Trump's rhetoric (Reporters without Borders, 2019b), and journalists have been threatened, intimidated, physically accosted and shot (Reporters without Borders, 2019b). Trump consistently spread a message of insecurity and, as Huysmans (2014) contends, politics of insecurity and securitisation itself threaten democracy and its organisations (pp. i–5).

There are several ways future research could build on and further the study of Trump's securitisation of the media. Future research could incorporate other methods of discourse than Twitter, such as public statements, comments, and discourse uttered at campaign rallies

and interviews. The securitisation of the media could also be studied in relation to other actors. Further, potential future studies may wish to explore how to desecuritise the media, possible counter-securitisations by the news media, as well as study potential contestations by the news media in response to the securitising move outlined above. *The Washington Post*'s slogan 'Democracy dies in darkness' (Fahri, 2017) that emerged in February 2017 was mistakenly understood to be a rebuke to Trump's hostile rhetoric towards the media. This turned out not to be the case. Securitisation theory, however, would benefit from a study of occurrences of actual contestation.

## Notes

1. There has been disagreement regarding which words to use to describe the events (see for example Bauder, 2021).

2. Trump was impeached by the House of Representatives but acquitted by the Senate (Cowan, Morgan and Brice, 2021; U.S. Congress, 2021).

3. Some tweets between 20 and 27 January 2017 are not available, which is a limitation when it comes to tallying the frequency with which terms and phrases have been used in tweets. One of the tweets posted by the President on 24 January 2017, which has since been deleted by him, was retrieved from Kalb (2018, p. 1). The remaining tweets in this article were obtained from www.thetrumparchive.com.

4. Trump's relationship with Fox News seems to have deteriorated to some extent since he lost the 2020 election (Wilson, 2020). Trump has more recently advocated for his supporters to tune instead into the 'far-right media outlet' (Wilson, 2020) *One America News Network (OANN)*. Reportedly, Trump feels betrayed by *Fox New*s for how it covered the election results (Wilson, 2020), for projecting Biden's win in Arizona, and for calling Biden 'president-elect' among other things (Sumlin, 2020).

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2021).

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Trump, D. (2018) *THE  FAKE* [sic] *NEWS MEDIA IS THE OPPOSITION PARTY. It is very bad for our Great Country* [sic]....*BUT WE ARE WINNING!*, 16 August [Trump Twitter Archive V2]. Available at: http://www.thetrumparchive.com (Accessed: 12 May 2021].

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Trump, D. (2019) *The Mainstream Media has never been as corrupt and deranged as it is today. FAKE NEWS is actually the biggest story of all and is the true ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE! That's why they refuse to cover the REAL Russia Hoax. But the American people are wise to what is going on.....*, 20 May [Trump Twitter Archive V2]. Available at: http://www.thetrumparchive.com (Accessed: 12 May 2021).

Trump, D. (2019) *I know it is not at all "Presidential" to hit back at the Corrupt Media, or people who work for the Corrupt Media, when they make false statements about me or the Trump Administration. Problem is, if you don't hit back, people believe the Fake News is true. So we'll hit back!*, 9 June [Trump Twitter Archive V2]. Available at: http://www.thetrumparchive.com (Accessed: 12 May 2021).

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*of that. More Fake News @BretBaier*, 17 July [Trump Twitter Archive V2]. Available at: http://www.thetrumparchive.com (Accessed: 12 May 2021).

Trump, D. (2019) *The Fake News Media is doing everything they can to crash the economy because they think that will be bad for me and my re-election. The problem they have is that the economy is way too strong and we will soon be winning big on Trade, and everyone knows that, including China!*, 15 August [Trump Twitter Archive V2]. Available at: http://www.thetrumparchive.com (Accessed: 12 May 2021).

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# *Peak water not to blame in the escalation of Peruvian socio-environmental conflicts*

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## Biography

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## Abstract

Over 1.5 billion people rely on more than 46,000 non-polar glaciers across the world for potable water, irrigation, industrial and hydropower uses. The melting of non-polar glaciers and its effects on socio-environmental conflicts are understudied in the rapidly expanding field of climate conflicts. Contrary to existing theoretical models, this article found that the Santa River Basin (SRB), having reached peak water, did not directly increase the number or length of the area's socio-environmental conflicts. The article identified and examined 23 socio-environmental conflicts in the Peruvian Ombudsman's monthly reports between 2004 and 2019. Instead of peak water, five other escalation variables were identified: violence, upstream–downstream dynamics, multiple stakeholder cooperation, decrease in the quality/ quantity of water and the utilisation of roads for protests.

**Keywords**: Melting glaciers; Socio-environmental conflicts; Climate change; Climate conflicts; Water scarcity; Human Security

## Empirical climate conflict studies have overlooked the melting of non-polar glaciers

Melting glaciers and their effects on socio-environmental conflicts have been understudied in the rapidly expanding field of climate conflicts. As a key feature in various hydrological systems from Central Asia to the Andean mountain ranges, melting glaciers have been examined mostly on a theoretical level with a focus on their social and political dimensions (Drenkhan et al., 2015). More specifically, the phenomenon of "peak water" has not been analysed against empirical data. Peak water is reached when annual glacier run-off continues to rise until a maximum (peak water) is reached, beyond which run-off steadily declines along with the river's streamflow (Huss and Hock, 2018).

Over 1.5 billion people rely on more than 46,000 non-polar glaciers across the world for

potable water, irrigation, and industrial and hydropower uses (Carey et al., 2017){Carey, 2017 #152}. Most of these glaciers will reach peak water in the coming decades if they have not already done so. Thousands of these glaciers have been carefully studied, though not always from a peak water perspective (Gurung et al., 2017; Lutz et al., 2016; Mukherji et al., 2015). In order to prepare better for the future and to understand the socio-political effects of reaching peak water, more targeted qualitative research must be conducted.

This article examines the evolution of socio-environmental conflicts in the Santa River Basin in the context of climate change. Upon examining the gaps in climate conflict literature on glacier-related conflict studies, this article focuses specifically on Peruvian hydrology and the relevant socio-environmental conflict literature.

Climate change is an inherently social problem, and it has the potential to undermine human security, namely the needs, rights and values of people globally. The communities that are most dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods are often the most sensitive to environmental change (Barnett et al., 2010, pp. 17–19). Socio-environmental conflicts, and more specifically climate conflicts, stemming from environmental change can be both violent and non-violent in nature (Barnett and Adger, 2010, p. 128). Climate conflicts can spread from the local to the international level. Some scholars argue that historical shifts in global and regional climates are linked with the rise and fall of entire empires and civilisations, spanning from the Americas to Europe and Asia (Zhang et al., 2011; Haug et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2006; Yancheva et al., 2007). Research into cases where modern climate change is considered the main causal factor of conflicts has been conducted on a wider and more diverse scale.

Climate conflicts as a topic of research have received an increasing amount of attention since the mid-2000s. A recent review found that 60% of articles related to climate conflict were quantitative, 18% were theoretical or review articles, 9% were qualitative, and the final 13% were a mix of various methods and designs (Ide, 2017). A plethora of dependent, conflict-related variables has been examined in these articles, from interstate war to local non-violent conflicts (Devitt and Tol, 2012; Koubi et al., 2012; Benjaminsen, 2008). Similarly, independent variables have included changes in rainfall, temperature, freshwater availability, land degradation, storms, floods, the Southern Oscillation and food prices (Salehyan, 2014). The conclusions of these articles vary greatly. Some found examples of climate-induced conflicts, while others did not. Meta-analysis reviews are similarly divided, with some skewing towards a strong relationship between climate change and conflict (Hsiang et al., 2013; Gleditsch, 2012). Most of the articles agree that, in the modern setting, climate change was not the main causal factor for interstate wars; instead, most conflicts caused by climate change happen on an intrastate level.

Qualitative examinations have the added benefit of being able to account better for local

complexities. This is especially true in climate conflict studies related to water scarcity, in which the sources and uses of the resource are many. These examinations have also been instrumental in discovering new exposure and vulnerability factors to climate change. For example, studies have examined the interconnectedness of cattle raiding and climate change in eastern Africa (Butler and Gates, 2012; Witsenburg and Adano, 2009). Qualitative examinations, which explored new variables, have also been juxtaposed with the findings of quantitative applications, such as risk indexes (Ide et al., 2014).

Climate conflict studies have had an extensive hydrological focus but the effects of melting glaciers and their connection to socio-environmental conflicts have not been fully explored. The various hydrological climate conflict studies have recognised that there is no simple or direct relationship between water scarcity and violent conflict. Some of the available studies have even demonstrated an increase in successful international water management efforts as a result of increased scarcity (Ide, 2018). The elevated risk of conflict has been associated more with increased shifts in water variability, such as sudden excessive rainfall and floods, rather than the steadily increasing risk of droughts (Raleigh and Kniveton, 2012). Previous studies have not examined the melting of glaciers and the reaching of peak water in relation to socio-environmental conflicts or as a climate conflict related to human security.

Glaciers are an important source of fresh water and they are rapidly disappearing due to climate change. They are not only a feature of notable mass ice sheet sites in Alaska, Patagonia, Greenland, Norway or Antarctica; they are also a key feature of complex hydrological systems in places like Italy and the Sierra Nevada in California, along the Central Andes, and in parts of Central Asia and Pakistan (Taillant, 2015). Reduced streamflow has the potential to initiate or intensify existing socio-environmental conflicts, as streams are a key feature in hydropower, irrigation and potable water systems, as well as in industries like mining.

Hydrological surveys are increasingly focusing on the concept of 'peak water' (Baraer et al., 2012; Bury et al., 2013; Bury et al., 2011; Chevallier et al., 2011). Peak water is reached when annual glacier run-off continues to rise until a maximum (peak water) is reached, beyond which run-off steadily declines along with the river's streamflow (Huss and Hock, 2018). Although cryosphere experts agree on the fact that glaciers are rapidly melting due to climate change, it is difficult to determine when a glacier and its rivers have eventually reached peak water. Glaciers are melting at different timescales, which depend on multiple factors. These include among others the glacier's latitude and altitude, its subglacial and supraglacial melt patterns, the existence of glacial lakes and debris cover, and a variety of human activities (Moore et al., 2009; Morán-Tejeda et al., 2018; Somers et al., 2018). These scientific studies, though numerous, have only rarely been linked with socio-political research elements and, specifically, conflict.

This article has chosen to focus on Peru, arguably the most water-stressed country in South

America (Bebbington and Williams, 2008). It uses the Santa River Basin from 2004 to 2019 as a case study. The research design and strategy sections further explain the case and temporal scale selection process. Peruvian glaciers have been the subject of many hydrological studies. Other reports examining social conflicts in the country have used a hydrological component. Most of these socio-environmental studies have addressed the consequences of mining and hydropower projects.

This article is the first to analyse socio-environmental conflicts in the context of glacial peak water for an extended period of fifteen years. Peru's dependence on glacier-fed water makes it highly vulnerable to climate change, as is the case with Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile (Briggs, 2010). The large body of hydrological investigations examining Peru's glaciers and their connected water system, along with its history of systematically recording social conflicts, sets the country apart from its neighbours (Baraer et al., 2012; Baraer et al., 2015; Huh et al., 2018; Mark et al., 2010; Saberi et al., 2019). An interdisciplinary literature review of hydrological, theoretical and general water management, previous climate conflict and mining-related articles demonstrates that peak water as a phenomenon has been understudied.

Those hydrological investigations that have included socio-political elements identify various stakeholders and vulnerability factors in the glacial run-off-based river basins (Vuille et al., 2018). A 2011 study combined hydrological and hydrochemical analyses of streamflow and glacial retreat in the watershed of the Cordillera Blanca with interviews and surveys, which were carried out in the Catac campesino community (Bury et al., 2011). Local household observations of hydrological variability demonstrated that shifting water resources, increasing weather extremes and climate-related threats to tourism were new perceived sources of vulnerabilities for livelihoods in the area. The worries of local households about glacial recession indicates that peak water and its connection to conflicts would be a socio-political factor worthy of analysis. Drenkhan et al. (2015) utilised an integrative review of water resource change and comparative discharge analysis in the Santa River (Cordillera Blanca) and Vilcanota River (Cordillera Vilcanota) (Drenkhan et al., 2015). The study combined this with an analysis of the drivers behind water demand and allocation in the river basins. It predicted that there could be 'increased water stress and potentially more conflicts between different water users in the lower Santa [river] and adjacent river catchments, particularly in the dry season' (Drenkhan et al., 2015, p. 724).

Articles such as the above have identified potential stakeholders and vulnerability factors which could be linked to violent and non-violent conflicts. Often, they lack an in-depth analysis of the conflicts themselves, especially on a timescale that could potentially capture the effects of peak water (Rasmussen, 2016). The interviews only provide a snapshot of the population's concerns and do not capture potential shifts or overlaps, which only a long-term analysis of data and sources could provide. Speculation over an increased number of conflicts can posit that these are either resolved or put aside for periods when there is more

water available.

Publications that approach vanishing glaciers and peak water directly as sources of climate conflicts only operate on a theoretical level (Postigo and Young, 2016). Theoretical papers lean towards worst-case scenarios and tend to sideline Peruvian agency and their collective efforts in organising sustainable water management structures (Drenkhan et al., 2015). Peru has a mediation strategy for hydrological conflicts, as well as a relatively functional Ombudsman's office, both of which should be considered when producing future water management models (Mills-Novoa and Taboada Hermoza, 2017; Moreno, 2016; Pegram, 2011).

Although important aspects relating to glaciers, peak water and the potential conflicts revolving around them are understudied, other socio-environmental conflicts in Peru have been widely covered. Such studies broadly concern either general water management or mining conflicts. Most of the mining conflicts are also water-related. Examining them can help outline how existing stakeholders are interconnected in terms of underlining power structures.

Conflict studies related to general water management cover a wide range of areas in Peru. Carey et al. (2014) argued that in the Santa River Basin, from 1954 to 2014, water management shifts were not driven by hydrological changes caused by the climate crisis but by five human variables: (1) political agendas and economic development; (2) governance; (3) technology and engineering; (4) land and resource use; and (5) societal responses. As the basis for its 'societal responses' variable, the study examined only three reservoir projects that were contested by the local populations. The report concluded that '[a] combination of local values, environmental impacts, irrigation needs, cultural perceptions, frustration with government management, concerns about future water supplies, and opposition to a foreign company fed local resistance to [the proposed reservoirs]' (p. 67). Arguably, the study misses the connections between the locals' concerns about future water supplies, their close relationship with the melting glaciers, and climate change. Also, it does not address the nature of the protests held by the locals, and whether they were violent, non-violent or cooperative among different stakeholders.

The small group of researchers who have explored the links between climate change and conflict in Peru have not had a specific peak water focus. A team of climatologists and social scientists compared farmers' perceptions of precipitation changes with precipitation records in the Santa River valley (Gurgiser et al., 2016). The precipitation records did not corroborate the study's perceived changes. This indicates that recent challenges to agricultural practices were not dependent on precipitation but other socio-environmental factors such as glacial shrinkage or changes in access to irrigation fed by river water. Another study in the Santa River valley published a few years earlier interviewed 50 water management leaders from the government, as well as from non-governmental institutions (Lynch, 2012). The study

concluded that rural communities at high elevations and poor urban neighbourhoods face an increasing threat of loss of access to a supply of clean water due to climate change and poor water management. Both studies address the key sources of conflict in the Santa River valley, including changes in water availability and management. Neither specifically addresses the melting of glaciers. Both studies note that they are restricted by people's subjective recollections of events and, thus, have a very limited temporal scale.

A vast number of reports examines different aspects of human security in relation to the expansion of the Peruvian mining sector (Gamu and Dauvergne, 2018; Himley, 2014; Lagos, 2018; Li, 2015; Loayza and Rigolini, 2016; Merino, 2018; Patrick and Bharadwaj, 2016; Salem et al., 2018). These reports incorporate a myriad of angles, including the ethnography of religious attitudes towards mining and glaciers, statistical studies on poverty rates in mining communities, and the mapping of communities' anti-mining efforts. Most of these investigations mention the disappearing glaciers, but do not connect the various mining conflicts to peak water. Instead, mining-related reports still maintain an overarching focus on water quality instead of its quantity (Salem et al., 2018). At the same time, they rarely address the fact that glacier retreat will also result in higher stream temperatures, possibly transient increases in suspended sediment fluxes and concentrations, and also toxic changes in water chemistry (Moore et al., 2009).

The publications point out that the number of socio-environmental conflicts has risen since the onset of the commodity boom in Peru, signalled by a sharp increase in the global demand for commodities in 2002, as a result of which the Peruvian economy grew at a remarkable pace of 6.4% for close to a decade. The economy has continued to expand but, in 2014, growth started to decelerate as the global demand for commodities decreased. This slowdown resulted in the annual growth rate dropping to 4.8% in 2014 and subsequently to 3.1% in 2015 (Dargent et al., 2017).

Studies largely agree that local communities experience few benefits from mining revenues. Instead, they face an increasing number of environmental problems including poorer quality of air, groundwater and surface waters. Several authors also point out that the government lacks the capacity and political will to regulate the industry. This lack of regulation has been connected to a weak and under-funded regulatory infrastructure, as well as the national leaders' desire to support neoliberal economic structures (Arellano-Yanguas, 2011). The mining companies have also been accused of inexperience in operating among Peru's traditional and campesino communities. Water-related mining conflict reports also have a distinct subfield, which specialises in the Peruvian indigenous peoples' rights regime (Andía, 2017; Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, 2015; Merino, 2018), and places emphasis on the right to prior consultation and land rights in general. The reports on indigenous communities, however, mention climate change briefly without explicitly examining it as a meaningful factor in the various socio-environmental conflicts.

## Selecting the Santa River Basin for Direct Qualitative Content Analysis (DQCA) escapes common pitfalls of past climate conflict studies

Past climate conflict research struggles with the case selection process, often choosing cases based only on the availability of data. The article chose to study the Santa River Basin (SRB) for five reasons: the SRB has reached peak water; it is not solely characterised by violence; it eschews the streetlight effect; it hosts a diverse set of stakeholders; and there exist high-quality conflict data for a sufficient amount of time. The conflict data in question are drawn from the monthly conflict reports created by the Ombudsman's Office of Peru, which were deemed reliable because they successfully meet Scott's four-point quality criteria. In order to assess the quality of official state documents in qualitative social science research, Scott set the following four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. Meeting the quality criteria requirements is crucial because using poor quality state documents can result in doing research with skewed and generally unreliable data. State documents may include falsifications, the distortion of facts due to political pressure, abridged record keeping or be unrepresentative of the wider country.

**The SRB has reached peak water**. Studies which assess the influence of water quantity and quality on the prevalence of conflicts often only study rainfall, instead of glacial meltwater quantities, let alone glacial post-peak water developments (Bury et al., 2013). Alternatively, studies which take glacial meltwater into consideration do not accompany their sources with long-term conflict data (Drenkhan et al., 2015). Arguably, the 15-year period explored by this article captures the gradual decrease in water resources and the evolution of social conflicts in the SRB. The Santa River originates in Lake Conococha (4,000 metres above sea level) and flows 300 kilometres to the Pacific Ocean, gaining most of its water from the Cordillera Blanca glaciers, especially during the dry season. Peru has had many hydrological assessments of its glaciers, and the Cordillera Blanca and Santa River have been by far some of the most researched ones (Baraer et al., 2015; Huh et al., 2018). These hydrological assessments, however, have not systematically linked decreased water quantities with social conflicts. An extensive study of the Santa River Basin has argued that the river has reached its peak water due to the glacial meltwaters of the Cordillera Blanca, which have also reached their peak, and that water levels have been slowly decreasing since the 1980s (Baraer et al., 2012).

**The SRB is not solely characterised by violence**. Various climate conflict research papers explore the connections between violent conflict and climate change in places where conflict has been prevalent, meaning they have been sampling on the dependent variable (Adams et al., 2018). Sampling on the dependent variable can be seen in papers which solely focus on countries that experienced conflict following a cross-border environmental shock. Multiple papers, for example, concentrate on the conflicts which followed a regional drought in Syria after 2011, but do not include the relatively conflict-free cases of Lebanon and Cyprus, which were also affected by the drought (De Châtel, 2014; Gleick, 2014). This article sidesteps the

sampling problem by focusing on Peru, and more specifically the SRB, both of which have had high exposure to climate change but no clear major climate-driven conflicts, such as a civil war or a rebel uprising. This high exposure, coupled with relatively low violence rates, enables the article to explore the role of non-violent conflict and actors beyond armed rebel groups and other factions. For example, the SRB, which is located in the Ancash department, is far away from the Shining Path rebel group, which has had its centre of operations in the Ayacucho department since the 1980s (Burgoyne, 2010). Preliminary research for this article revealed an interesting pattern of social conflicts in the Ancash department, which cannot be readily categorised as violent or non-violent. Relatively low levels of conflict were observed between May 2004 and December 2006 with an average of 2.9 conflicts per month. From January 2017 to May 2019, the average number of social conflicts in the department increased to a national high of 27.0. It must be pointed out that the format of the Ombudsman reports changed several times during the 2004–2019 period. These changes coincided with the public's rising awareness of the Ombudsman's Office, and its duties and processes (Pegram, 2011).

**The SRB eschews the streetlight effect**, which involves conducting research only where it is convenient. Adams et al. (2018) found strong evidence of this in their extensive climate conflict literature review focusing on sampling based on convenient data availability. Such data belonged to already existing conflict datasets, skewing the research towards African countries, which have been the focus of large-N conflict studies in previous decades. The team also noted the extensive representation of former British colonies, which had readily available weather data for climate modelling. In general, English-speaking countries were more prevalent, possibly because the language is dominant in the international social sciences community (Hendrix, 2017, p. 252). Conversely, SRB is in a Spanish language region, outside the former British Empire and removed from an Afrocentric viewpoint on climate conflicts.

**The SRB hosts a diverse set of stakeholders**, which make the case study complex but generalisable across Latin America and globally, as other glacial peak water river basins around the world similarly attract a myriad of stakeholders, including energy generators, mining companies, large and small agricultural projects, population centres and tourist attractions. A highly detailed and helpful illustration of the SRB and its stakeholders is available for reference (Carey et al., 2014, p. 62).

Hydropower accounts for approximately 71% of electricity generation in Colombia, 49% in Ecuador, 32% in Bolivia and 56% in Peru (UNEP Global Environmental Alert Service, 2013). All these countries face diminished water flows due to the approaching or surpassed peak waters of their glaciers or rivers in general. Most of the Ancash department relies heavily on hydropower generated on the SRB. Electroperú and, more recently, Duke Energy formed after the late 1990s neoliberal privatisation, have been the major players in the hydropower field in the SRB. Two main friction points exist in this river basin: the Parón Lake with its

outburst flood risk, drainage tunnel, irrigation and tourism dimensions, and the Cañón del Pato hydroelectric station (Carey et al., 2012). These two have switched ownership and have been the topic of numerous debates and protests, mostly because the glaciers attached to the SRB have produced excess pre-peak water.

The mining industry has been a fixture of Latin American economies since the Columbian exchange. Its presence is so dominant that it features in most socio-environmental analyses. Unsurprisingly, industrialisation on the SRB is mostly marked by various national and international mining projects. Even after the end of the commodities boom in 2013, mining still represents over 50% of Peru's national economy. The mining companies gathered strength during the boom and the neoliberal decentralisation and privatisation processes that took place during the 1990s. The largest mining companies in the SRB include Barrick, near the region's main city Huaraz, Pierna Mine and Antamina. Local campesino communities have blamed these companies for the degradation of local water and soil conditions (Patrick and Bharadwaj, 2016, p. 475). Reduced water quantity, due to post-peak water streamflow declines, has also been linked to decreasing water quality, as the streams are not able to dilute all the toxins entering them. This decrease in water quality is related to mining, whose impact on the waters of the SRB is poorly understood (Carey et al., 2014, p. 67). It is telling that most Peruvian socio-environmental conflicts have a mining component (Salem et al., 2018).

Unlike in the West, agriculture is still a key feature of Latin American economic and social structures, as manifested by large commercial projects and small subsistence farming (Barrientos-Fuentes et al., 2014). The SRB features both. The two mass-scale irrigation and agricultural projects in the SRB are called Chavimochic and Chinecas. They both take irrigation water from the river and benefit over 600,000 people. Although the amount of water in the SRB has decreased over time, the two projects are using more water than ever before, with the cultivated land area growing from 7,500 ha in 1958 to 174,000 ha in 2009 (Bury et al., 2013, pp. 371–372).

Latin America is heavily urbanised with 80% of the population living in cities (Leeson, 2018, p. 107). Growing urban population centres and tourism are among the most vocal stakeholders in the SRB. Ancash is experiencing around 0.6% population growth per year and, by 2050, Peru's population could increase from the current 30.8 to 40.1 million people. Of all urban and rural Ancash households, 9% and 16% respectively do not have access to permanent water supply (Drenkhan et al., 2015, p. 723). Rapid urbanisation in cities like Callejón de Huaylas, Chimbote and Trujillo have driven potable water use up without it being accompanied by adequate development of wastewater treatment facilities (Mark et al., 2017, p. 64).

The Peruvian Ombudsman reports allow in-depth structured analysis to take place. They

benefit from an inclusive definition of conflict along with detailed stakeholder categorisation. Social conflict is defined as 'a complex process in which sectors of society, the state, and firms perceive that their goals, interests, values or needs are contradictory and this contradiction can [but does not always] lead to violence' (Report 184, June 2019, p. 3).[1] This definition of social conflict is a necessarily inclusive term, as a solely violence-based definition would be limited in its ability to measure the various forms a protracted and complex disagreement can take. The Ombudsman reports consider a conflict to be violent if it is accompanied by casualties, instances of kidnapping, injury to people, violent invasion and/or damage to property (ibid., p. 4). The three parties named in the definition are 'sectors of society', 'the state' and 'firms', which might demonstrate that the Ombudsman's Office views the division of Peruvian society in terms of economic corporatism. Having 'firms' as a named party, along with the state and the ambiguous 'sectors of society', hints at the power of large companies in Peru.

The reports divide the stakeholders into three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary stakeholders are 'those who participate directly in the conflict'. Secondary stakeholders 'can be groups that support one of the parties: institutions, societal organisations or the people indirectly linked to the conflict'. Tertiary stakeholders '[are] people or organisations that, due to their characteristics, may have an impact on the course of the conflict' (Report 184, June 2019, p. 3). This division enables the examination of a wide group of stakeholders whose influence might have otherwise gone unnoticed if only primary stakeholders were recorded. For example, a mining conflict, which was resolved by governmental intervention but escalated by the national police, could not be fully analysed if the reports only recorded the local community and the name of the mining company. The reports are organised by departments and have grown to include various subcategories over the years.

**The reports fulfil Scott's four-point quality criteria**. Scott set four criteria in order to assess the quality of official state documents in qualitative social science research: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. The Ombudsman reports fulfil these and are, thus, an interesting and reliable source of data when analysing socio-environmental conflicts in the context of climate change and glacial peak water.

The documents are authentic, meaning they are genuine and of unquestionable origin, and are easily available online on the Ombudsman's official website at no cost.

Scott defines evidence as credible when it is free from error and distortion. An extensive study on the Peruvian Ombudsman's level of political independence concluded that the Office had not been subject to the dramatic, politically motivated budget cuts experienced elsewhere in South America (Pegram, 2011). The study also found that the Ombudsman's Office has maintained its autonomy and that it makes an important contribution towards facilitating human rights claims 'across an entrenched divide between state and society' (Pegram, 2011,

p. 245). Operating across societal divisions enhances the Ombudsman's credibility, as they can mediate between stakeholders with greater ease and without being seen as an organisation favouring the Peruvian government's political leanings, which has been prominently pro-mining for decades (Himley, 2014).

A source is considered representative when it is typical of its kind, and in cases when it is not, the extent of its atypicality is known. The reports cover all other departments of Peru, and it becomes evident that the Ancash region is typical of the rest of the country. As all other Andean states have an Ombudsman's Office of their own, a study with a larger scope could in the future analyse the effects of climate change on socio-environmental conflicts across the entire mountain region (Moreno, 2016).

Scott considered a source as having the required level of 'meaning' when it was clear and comprehensive. The Ombudsman has kept an unabridged record of social conflicts in Peru for almost 15 years. The reports retain consistent features across this period, such as organising stakeholders into different levels, main location and conflict type. Consistency makes the tailoring of an analytical process that fits the reports easier. This article used Direct Qualitative Content Analysis (DQCA) to build two databases.

## DQCA coding and selecting the most typical conflict in the Santa River Basin

The following section describes in three parts how the 184 Spanish-language Ombudsman reports, from 2004 to 2019, were organised, coded and analysed.

The reports were available on the Ombudsman's website from which they were individually downloaded (https://www.defensoria.gob.pe/). Each monthly report, in portable document format (PDF), was attached to a corresponding year–month according to section–page in an OneNote notebook. The reports were then studied to identify the Ancash department sections, which were subsequently screenshot into the report's corresponding OneNote page. The social conflicts in Ancash were then analysed and coded by utilising DQCA. The notebooks also included annual summaries of the conflicts.

DQCA is based on 'existing theory or prior research about a phenomenon that is incomplete or would benefit from a further description' (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). In this case study, prior climate conflict and Peruvian socio-environmental research guided the DQCA process. The existing interconnected dimensions with climate change helped to produce a coding system. As mentioned previously, the article utilised the Ombudsman Office's definition of social conflict, which brings together both violent and non-violent modes of analysis.

In the first stage of data analysis, the article identified the socio-environmental conflicts in the Santa River Basin (SRB). This meant categorising the conflicts from 2004 to 2019 into "in the

SRB" and "not in the SRB" codes. The following step examined the SRB-labelled codes and identified social conflicts which fell under the socio-environmental conflict category. With some of these, the article deviated from the Ombudsman's categorisations by re-labelling, for example, a 'conflict over matters of national government' as socio-environmental when the main friction point was irrigation projects across the region. The article utilised a system of labelling and re-labelling, which enabled the recognition of overlapping themes such as violence, resolution types and actor types.

This method is advantageous because the complex interaction between stakeholders is very difficult to quantify and measure statistically. A linear regression model would not fit the available data. Research conducted on mining conflicts and their prevalence in the mining projects' regional proximity does not capture the complex river- and glacier-specific conditions in the SRB or the department as a whole. If the country's hydrological systems were more systematically recorded and categorised, and then matched with the Ombudsman reports, a more reliable quantitative analysis would be possible. The article produced figures with descriptive statistics to demonstrate better how the conflicts have evolved over the period in question.

After each monthly report had been analysed, the 23 socio-environmental conflicts that were identified in the SRB were compiled into a database on Microsoft Excel. The entries were categorised according to 19 variables, which included basic information such as location, length of conflict, reactivation features, and primary/secondary/tertiary actors involved. More complex variables included the presence of violence, roadblocks, water authorities, resolutions, mining and water quality/quantity features.

Data analysis suggested that the peak water of the SRB did not have a direct effect on the conflicts. Five major factors, which escalated the 23 conflicts, were identified: violence, upstream–downstream dynamics, multiple stakeholder cooperation, depleted water quality and quantity, and the weaponisation of roads.

As the article identified a relatively small number of socio-environmental conflicts within the SRB, the most typical conflict was selected for further analysis. As Gerring and Cojocaru (2016) have argued, '[a] typical case is intended to represent the central tendency of a distribution, which is of course not the same as the entire distribution. To say that a case is typical, therefore, does not mean that it is representative in the way that a larger sample might be representative of a population' (pp. 395–396). In other words, selecting the most typical case for intensive analysis enabled the article to reflect on the rest of the conflicts and their central elements, while exploring complex causal pathways in the small-N sample. The most typical conflict had to have all five factors and approximate other conflict attributes, such as length, location and stakeholders involved. Based on these required attributes, the article selected the Three Rivers conflict (November 2010 – November 2012) as the reflection point

for further analysis.

## Peak water did not increase the number or length of socio-environmental conflicts

Reaching glacial peak water did not directly increase the number or length of the 23 socio-environmental conflicts near the SRB. These were not the dominant social conflicts in the Ancash region. This is surprising considering the vast amount of literature on the stakeholders of the SRB conflicts and the widely discussed decreasing water resources of the basin. Drenkhan et al. (2015, p. 724) theorised that there would be 'increased water stress and potentially more conflicts between different water users in the lower Santa [river] and adjacent river catchments, particularly in the dry season'. The number of conflicts did not increase in the SRB as the water resources were becoming scarcer each year. Furthermore, contrary to the expectations of Drenkhan's theory, the SRB notably reported zero socio-environmental conflicts between 2010 and 2011.



The number of monthly social conflicts in Ancash and socio-environmental conflicts in SRB, May 2004 to June 2019
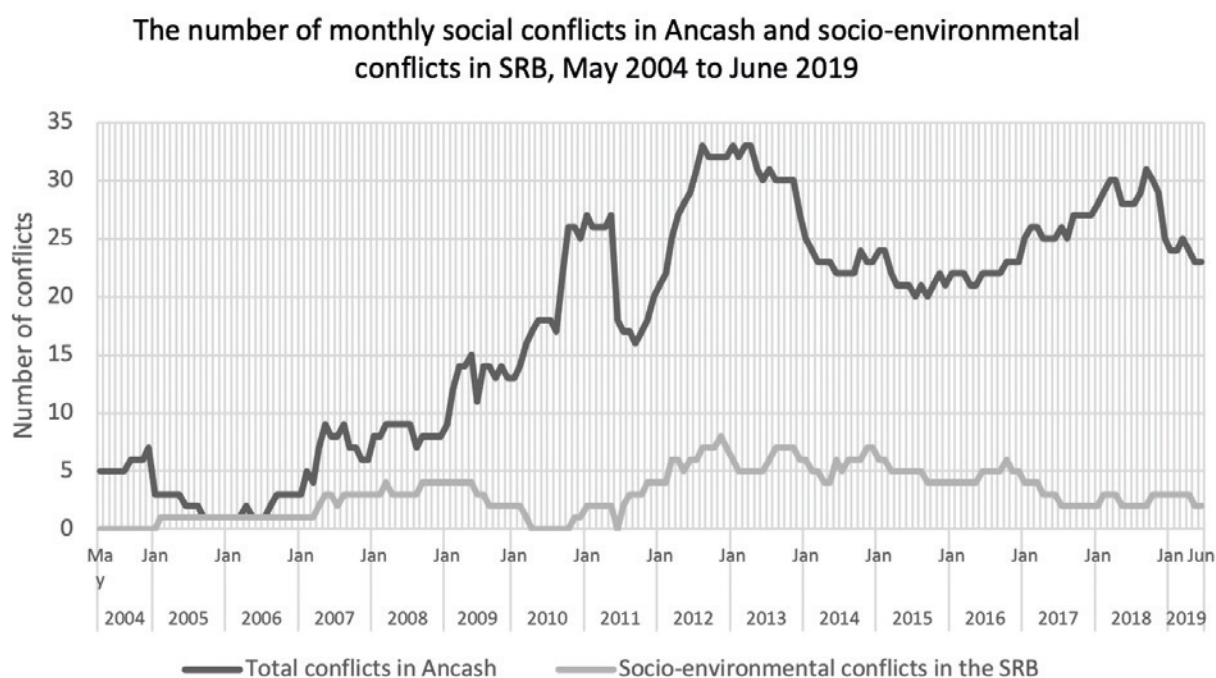
The moderate increase in SRB conflicts coincides with a regional rise in the number of conflicts, which starts in late 2011 and trails off at the beginning of 2014. This regional rise can be traced back to the Huari province, which lies outside the SRB, on the other side of the Cordillera Blanca's southern tip. The Huari province conflicts could have mobilised stakeholders in the SRB. This article discusses further the effect of Huari conflicts on SRB conflicts when referring to upstream–downstream dynamics.

Contrary to Drenkhan's theory, the conflicts do not display a seasonal pattern, with more conflicts active during the dry season compared with the wet season. In fact, the length of the 23 SRB conflicts decreases as the period in question unfolds. A full examination of the conflicts' length would require a regression analysis, which lies outside the scope of this article. Establishing how the length of the conflicts changed over time is impaired by the

"reactivation" of previously dormant conflicts. For example, three of them were reactivated, meaning that after an initial resolution or a period of latency, the conflict became active again, while two which began in March 2012 and October 2018 respectively are still unfolding. As a result, the length of a conflict should not be the sole factor analysed.

The first identified socio-environmental conflict started in February 2005 and, as of June 2019, there are two conflicts currently underway in the SRB. Excluding those two, the average conflict length was 20 months, with the shortest lasting three months and the longest 56 months. The small number of conflicts causes outliers such as the three-month- and 56-month-long conflicts to have a skewing effect on any trend line. November 2012 was the most active month in the SRB with eight overlapping conflicts. The clustering, with two-thirds of the conflicts unfolding between November 2010 and November 2014, might also have a skewing effect on future trend analyses. A full examination of the effects of the cluster would require the building of a linear regression model.

The recorded length of these conflicts can be deceiving as the reports keep marking some of them as active for a few months after each event that occurs within the conflict. This prolongs some relatively inactive conflicts and shows them as having deceptively long active periods. Keeping conflicts active and on the record is beneficial for the Ombudsman's Office from a bureaucratic standpoint, as this method skirts the confusion generated by an array of active and inactive conflicts. The relative decrease in SRB conflict duration during the period in question may be a sign of improved mediation efforts by the central government. For example, the National Water Authority (ANA) and its provincial and local branches (AAAs and ALAs) were created in March 2008 to help with mediation efforts in hydrological socio-environmental conflicts (The World Bank, 2017). Following their establishment, the national and local water agencies mediate nine out of 20 SRB-based socio-environmental conflicts in one form or another.

Instead of peak water, the conflicts were dominated by five other escalating factors: violence, upstream–downstream dynamics, multiple stakeholder cooperation, decreases in water quality and roadblocks. These five factors had a more pronounced effect on the conflicts, either in terms of their length and number or their complexity.

Although the number and length of the conflicts might have varied, their overall qualities changed little during the period in question. The most common form of conflict involved campesinos (small-holder farmers) or hamlets challenging a mining company (13 conflicts). All but one of these conflicts had a hydrological component, which was either quantitative or qualitative, or both. Five conflicts involved a region versus a mining company as primary actors, two conflicts concerned campesinos versus a hydropower plant, two involved regions versus farmers, and one included a region against a hydropower plant.

The primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders were found to be interacting in a highly complex manner. For example, two different campesino communities stoned a mining company's cars and its workers because their water source had dried up. It was only after a strike that the mining company agreed to an Environmental Impact Assessment with a local water authority, which installed flow meters supervised by the Mining Ministry (Atupa and Antauran Hamlets vs Barrick Misquichilca, March 2012 – present). Analysing only primary actors simplifies the complex web of interactions among stakeholders.

The Three Rivers conflict, which was active for two years from November 2010 to November 2012, was identified as the most typical conflict. It consisted of a number of communities in the dominant Santa River and two minor rivers, Pativilca and Fortaleza, protesting the proposed mining operations of Centauro Corporation S.A.C. in the Conococha Lake from where the rivers originate. Due to well-organised strikes, the national government sent representatives from five different agencies to coordinate round-table discussions between the communities and CENTAURO S.A.C. The central government directed organisations and the technical committee, whose reports effectively stopped the proposed mining operation in February 2011.

The Three Rivers conflict is the only one of the 23 conflicts, which covers the entire Basin, from the Conococha Lake to the town of Santa on the Pacific coast. As such, it involves all relevant stakeholders within the SRB. It lasted 24 months, close to the average conflict length of 20 months, and also took place alongside the highest number of simultaneous conflicts in the SRB, with seven other conflicts being active in November 2012.

The five key factors identified by the coding process were present in the Three Rivers conflict and they contributed to its escalation, which means that they increased its intensity or severity.

## Conflicts over the quality versus the quantity of water had a different impact on the prevalence of violence

An analysis of the role of water quality versus quantity and violence versus non-violence in Peruvian socio-environmental conflicts is a much-needed addition to the existing literature. Past studies have lacked clear distinctions between these two sets of elements when conducting large-scale statistical analyses (Salem, 2018). Measuring only the prevalence of violence in conflicts, instead of their content or length, deprives studies of much-needed complexity. As discussed previously, the streetlight effect of doing research based only on easily available data, is also visible here. The presence of water conflict, coupled with water-related fines or rainfall, as the key water-related variables in Peruvian conflict analysis, leaves the important question of glacial peak water out of the picture (Salem, 2018, pp. 6–8).

The article found that violence can act as a catalyst for the central government to become involved, but this does not guarantee a faster resolution. Violence tends to deepen grievances

and make them harder to solve. Previous Peruvian mining-related conflict research produced by socio-political scientists has addressed violence extensively (Bebbington and Williams, 2008). Interestingly, non-mining-related socio-environmental studies specific to the SRB do not address violence as a feature of the conflicts (Bury et al., 2013; Carey et al., 2014; Carey et al., 2012; Drenkhan et al., 2015). These studies are largely conducted by academics who specialise in the physical aspects of melting glaciers, the history of water sources or aspects of human–environment interaction, such as water consumption. This disconnect could be rectified by funding more interdisciplinary studies in the future.

In the Three Rivers conflict, the first escalating factor to appear was violence. It started with a mass protest, which resulted in the death of one protester and 12 wounded police officers. The passing of the protester and the fear of further escalation forced the central government to act rapidly. Nine different parties were sent to mediate between the communities and the mining company, including representatives from three ministries, the National Water Authority, the National Police, the National Congress, the Ombudsman's Office, the provincial government and a prestigious university. Flooding the province with experts and people working for a common solution arguably reduced the communities' anger, as this assured them that their concerns were being taken seriously.

Eight of the 23 conflicts involved elements of violence. As seen with the Three Rivers conflict, violence normally manifested itself in the form of serious injuries following clashes of protesters with the national police or private security personnel hired by mining or hydroelectric companies. The article counted at least two casualties in the protests.[2] The reports failed to record all associated acts of violence. Supplementary research into some of the more complicated conflicts, such as the Parón Lake conflict over the glacial lake's water levels, pointed to the kidnapping and beating of the secretary of the lake's defence league (Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos, 2012). Thus, the level of violence in the 23 conflicts could potentially be higher than that revealed by the Ombudsman's reports.

On average, violent conflicts lasted longer than non-violent ones (26 months compared with roughly 18 months respectively). The average length of violent conflicts is based on six of the identified conflicts, as the other two are still ongoing. The longer duration of a violent conflict may indicate that it is harder to solve, as violence tends to make grievances more complicated, leading to reparations, legal action or cycles of revenge (Barnett and Adger, 2010, p. 645).

The decreasing quantity of water is singled out as a strong precursor to violence, while the decreasing quality of water is not. The frequency of violent conflicts over the quantity of water did not increase during the period in question indicating that there is no direct link between peak water and violence. Eight out of the 23 conflicts were violent. Decreasing water levels were a dominant feature in six out of those eight violent conflicts (75%). Five out

of the remaining 15 non-violent conflicts were linked to decreased water levels (33%). The decreasing quality of water, however, was an unclear precursor to violence. Out of all the 23 conflicts, only one lacked a quality of water component to it (Vicos campesino community vs Toma la Mano mining company, July 2013 – March 2014). The more pronounced violence of water-quantity conflicts may be due to a number of issues. For example, in cases where water quality is compromised, it might still be fit for other purposes, such as agriculture and the industry, which in turn does not affect the economic security of local communities. There are also various levels of contamination, while some minor impurities can be treated with technological and infrastructural investments, such as water treatment plants. Conversely, when water quantity drops, competition among all stakeholders, including farmers and mining companies, intensifies. One could predict that socio-environmental conflicts will become more violent in the future as the SRB keeps losing more of its run-off water. At the moment, however, no clear evidence exists of conflicts intensifying and turning more violent over the period in question due to decreased peak water.

## Contrary to theoretical expectations, upstream conflicts were more prominent than downstream ones

Contrary to Drenkhan et al.'s (2015, p. 724) speculation that increased water stress would be focused on the 'lower Santa [river] and adjacent river catchments', the data indicated that conflicts that were upstream tended to be more numerous. The downstream focus is based on the view that incidents of water contamination potentially affect more people downstream, thus, attracting more stakeholders; however, the number of stakeholders involved in a conflict is relative to the attention paid to possible contamination events and mining companies upstream, while the total number of conflicts in this case decreases as one follows the river downstream. The SRB starts from the Conococha Lake in the Recuay province (four conflicts) and runs north through the small Aija province (two conflicts), then the Ancash capital region of Huaraz (five conflicts), and flows into the Ocean via Carhuaz (two conflicts), Yungay (three conflicts), Huaylas (three conflicts) and the coastal Santa province (two conflicts). Of all conflicts, two were province-wide: the previously discussed Three Rivers conflict and the Ancash farmers' irrigation conflict, which ran from November 2010 to November 2012 and April–June 2007 respectively. The first three upstream provinces account for more than half of all SRB socio-environmental conflicts. The Aija province is noteworthy as, despite the fact that only a small portion of its territory lies within the SRB, it still hosted two conflicts during the period in question (January–May 2011 and July 2011 – April 2012). Additionally, one must point out that Huaraz's large number of conflicts is partly associated with the fact that the capital of Ancash, Huaraz City, lies within its borders. Huaraz City is undergoing rapid urbanisation, meaning its demand for available water is rising, while strain is placed for the same reason on nearby rural communities, which are struggling with maintaining access to clean drinking and irrigation water (Lynch, 2012, p. 368).

The presence of mining operations also attracts more conflicts, as locals can identify polluting

activities at their source. Most mining operations are located in the upstream areas of the SRB, which was also one of the main escalating factors in the case of the Three Rivers conflict. If the CENTAURO S.A.C. mining operation were to contaminate the Conococha Lake, all three rivers and their downstream industries and populations would be affected. The Three Rivers conflict is unique in the SRB, as it involves dozens of stakeholders all along the Santa River, acting in unison against the proposed operation. Large-scale initiatives taking place downstream do not attract the attention of upstream stakeholders. For example, the proposed decrease of water levels at the Parón glacial lake conflict attracted a large number of stakeholders from a wide range of industries, including tourism and local farming. Although the conflict reactivated twice, was classified as active for a total of 56 months and ran on and off for nearly nine years (2007–2016), there was a notable absence of representatives from the Yungay, Carhuaz, Huaraz and Aija provinces. One could argue that this was because there were a few regional groups present, such as the Agrarian Federation of Ancash (FADA), but this does not explain why so many smaller downstream organisations were involved and none from upstream.

The absence of support from upstream organisations in cases of downstream conflict displays lack of unity and cooperative spirit among the various organisations. The SRB provinces differ from, for example, the Huari province, which is served by the very effective Municipal Association of Huari Population Centres (AMUCEP). AMUCEP has helped smaller communities organise against mining companies in cases of suspected water contamination and decreased water quantities (November 2011 – present). The SRB provinces lack a unified organisation such as this, which could help syndicate upstream communities in solidarity to downstream ones if the case arose.

More attention should be paid to intra-state conflicts, both violent and non-violent, when it comes to upstream–downstream river dynamics, which are mostly viewed from the perspective of international tensions or cooperation efforts (Karreth and Tir, 2018; Lawson, 2016; Tian et al., 2018). This partially applies to the wider South-American region, where international rather than domestic river boundary disputes have been prioritised (Hensel et al., 2006).

### Conflicting stakeholder interactions need an environmental peace perspective

Over the period in question, more actors became involved in the conflicts, often escalating them by adding new dimensions and contradicting priorities. As the overall length of conflicts decreased during this period, this could mean that the more parties were present, the more successful they were at resolving them. On average, violent conflicts had the highest number of stakeholders involved. Shorter conflicts and an increased number of stakeholders could indicate that environmental problems, under certain circumstances, act as catalysts for cooperation. This directly contradicts the previously discussed theories of water scarcity leading to more conflicts in glacial water basins (Drenkhan et al., 2015). Multiple stakeholder

interactions, along with ecological change, have been speculated to play vital roles in shaping the future of water resources and water governance in the SRB region (Bury et al., 2013). Although these speculations mention the future potential of governmental water management entities, such as the National Water Agency, they still exclude them from their analysis.

The article found that conflicts became increasingly complex as time went on in the period examined. This increase in complexity can be attributed to the National Water Agency's renewed efforts in resolving hydrological conflicts and multi-stakeholder cooperation. The initial conflicts concerned mostly primary stakeholders, meaning actors that were directly involved in the conflict itself (conflicts from 2005–2008). The mid-period conflicts (2010–2013) had mostly primary and secondary stakeholders, while the majority of conflicts towards the end of the period (2014–2018) engaged primary, secondary and tertiary stakeholders. A conflict comprised, on average, roughly seven stakeholders.

The increase in the number of tertiary stakeholders coincides with the National Water Authority's (ANA) implementation of the 'Protocol for the prevention and management of social conflicts related to water resources' (Protocolo para la prevención y gestión de conflictos sociales vinculados con los recursos hídricos) in 2014 (Autoridad Nacional del Agua, 2014b). This protocol helped the Ombudsman diversify its data sources, as the ANA uses a wider conflict categorisation system and acts independently from the Ombudsman's Office, with its own resources and investigative teams (ibid.). The ensuing diversification has contributed to the Ombudsman discovering more tertiary stakeholders involved in the conflicts.

Multi-stakeholder cooperation functions as an escalating factor in conflict. Three Rivers exemplifies this in practice. This conflict had the most stakeholders out of all conflicts, with 22 in total. Chronologically, it falls into the mid-period under examination, which mostly had primary and secondary actors, 14 and eight respectively. The conflict saw downstream macro-agricultural projects, small farmers and big urban centres, such as Catac and Huaraz, cooperating to stop mining activity. This is a rare occurrence, as ordinarily these three would be in competition over the same water resources. The large number of stakeholders could be tied to the fact that the conflict had features of violence, including one of the two deaths identified in the data (the other death being in the farming community of Mareniyoc vs Barrick Misquichilca conflict, March 2012 – October 2016). Violent conflicts had almost twice as many stakeholders compared with their non-violent counterparts. On average, a violent conflict had roughly 11 stakeholders, while a non-violent one had only six. The larger number of stakeholders involved in violent conflicts could indicate a collective desire to cooperate in order to solve high-stake conflicts.

The spirit of cooperation and conflict resolution as triggered by environmental problems has received limited attention in the field of climate conflict. Tobias Ide and Jurgen Scheffran

addressed this phenomenon under the term 'environmental peace perspective', where 'environmental problems are – under certain circumstances – not sources of conflict, but chances and even catalysts for cooperation between groups. The underlying assumption is that even hostile parties may work together if they face a common threat affecting the well-being of each party'. They go on to point out that environmental problems present some attributes that foster cooperation; for example, they are often long-term, cut across political borders and constitute a common threat to several groups (Ide and Scheffran, 2013, p. 14). This notion of environmental problems potentially triggering cooperation and conflict resolution attempts contradicts the previously discussed theories of SRB conflicts as exacerbated solely by water scarcity (Drenkhan et al., 2015).

Some of these features are also present in the SRB conflicts, with hostile parties, such as small farming communities and mining corporations, coming to the negotiating table due to drops in water quality. Additionally, the environmental factors in the SRB are also long-term, traverse political borders and threaten several stakeholders.

Ide and Scheffran's discussion does not expand on the role of the state and non-governmental organisations in facilitating cooperation efforts. In the case of SRB conflicts, the ANA and the Ombudsman's Office both became increasingly involved, throughout the examined period, in recording and facilitating discussions among conflicting parties. In their later work, the two scholars acknowledge the 'lack of integrative cumulation of knowledge' in the 'environmental peace' research at large (Ide and Scheffran, 2014). Further study would be required to map out fully the effects of growing resilience through accumulative institutional knowledge.

Ide and Scheffran's analysis can also be simplified into a dichotomy of cooperation or violence. In some SRB conflicts, violence was accompanied by an increased number of stakeholders, such as the ANA and the Ombudsman's Office, followed by a cooperative resolution. In other words, cooperation can follow violence or vice versa. Further investigation, including regression modelling, would be needed to determine and analyse these causal links further.

### Increasing water governance did not acknowledge the glaciers or the ENSO

Although the slowly decreasing quantity of water in the SRB did not have a direct effect on the number of conflicts in the area, water did play a major role in most of the basin's socio-environmental conflicts. Nevertheless, there has been a distinct lack of mentions about glaciers and other factors related to climate change. Multiple hydrological components have moved the focus of socio-environmental conflicts from quality to quantity, and from stakeholders to pollutants. There has also been a noteworthy absence of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon from discussions, which previous studies have identified as a key feature in some climate conflicts (Hsiang et al., 2011).

Although glaciers are the main water source of the SRB, especially during the dry season, the conflict reports mention them sparingly and in fact only twice, when referring to the Huascarán National Park and the glacial Parón Lake.[3] This lack of focus could be due to an organisational or educational deficit. The Ombudsman has a large mandate, which guarantees its independence but also renders it responsible for a multitude of social conflicts from labour disputes to human rights violations. As the glaciers are complex hydrological structures, the Ombudsman's Office could have purposefully focused on the social aspects of the conflicts and their immediate water sources, such as nearby streams. Alternatively, the lack of glacial connections could be attributed to the public and the Ombudsman's Office both being unaware that water sources are connected to glaciers via, for example, underwater aquifers. Carey (2010) notes that, historically, knowledge of complex water systems, which reach beyond the visible mountaintop glaciers, has been guarded by mining and hydropower companies, as they have a stake in keeping the public in the dark about the interconnectedness of water systems.

A simple guide targeting the public accompanied the already mentioned water-related social-conflict management protocol published by the National Water Authority (Autoridad Nacional del Agua, 2014a). Although the guide clearly addresses an adult audience, with extended text sections and statistics, it is filled with cartoon characters explaining how the water and consultation systems of the country work. The use of cartoons and other simple visualisations could be a sign of the public's relatively low level of understanding when it comes to Peru's highly complex freshwater systems.

The conflicts were divided based on their triggers: firstly, quality of water and, secondly, quality in addition to quantity of water. According to this classification, there were 13 and ten conflicts in each category respectively. Both types were constantly present during the examined period with no notable fluctuations. All conflicts in the first category involved a mining company as one of their primary stakeholders, while hydroelectricity plants and agricultural projects also featured in the second. The absence of agricultural projects as primary stakeholders facing accusations of water pollution is interesting, as agriculture can heavily damage water sources with fertilisers and livestock sewage. Their absence could be due to the fact that the largest agricultural initiatives, Chavimochic and Chinecas, are located at the edge of the SRB, near the Pacific coast. Alternatively, mining companies are easier to identify as culprits when previously absent metals appear in the water system, compared with the hundreds of campesino communities located along the SRB potentially using relatively similar fertilisers. Water sources have been reportedly compromised by a great variety of pollutants, from vague complaints about 'contaminating materials' to a specific highly dangerous case of lead poisoning (Macate community vs Fortaleza mining company, June 2012 – January 2013, Virgen del Rosario de Quillo community vs Copemina mining company, October 2018 – present).

The various water management authorities, from the National Water Authority (ANA) to the regional (AAAs) and local authorities (ALAs), are relatively small. These organisations are led vertically from the national to the local level. They were present in nine out of the total 23 conflicts and mostly in those featuring both water quantity and quality complaints, making up six out of the nine instances. They held technical and mediation roles to solve both violent and non-violent conflicts among various stakeholders. Considering that most of the conflicts had at least a water quality aspect in them and that the authorities were involved in only 40% of the cases, one could argue that they were relatively inactive in solving the SRB's socio-environmental conflicts. This could have been due to the Ombudsman's dominant role as a nationwide impartial mediator, while the water authorities were perceived as having a more pro-environment stance. Interestingly, the conflicts hardly touch upon other weather events, such as flooding and its wider climatic causes.

Although the Southern Oscillation has been extensively studied in the past, it did not feature in any of the socio-environmental conflicts of the SRB. The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) phenomenon is the dominant driver behind inter-annual climate variability. ENSO is characterised by a fluctuation between unusually warm (El Niño), neutral, and unusually cold (La Niña) oceanic and atmospheric conditions in the tropical Pacific (Muis et al., 2018, p. 1311). The fifteen-year period under examination included multiple fluctuations among the three conditions, including five El Niño occurrences.

Most of the people affected by El Niño live in coastal communities and work as fishermen. The macro-agricultural projects of Chinecas and Chavimochic were not affected by the ENSO cycle during the 15-year period. As the irrigation systems are mostly based on the melting glaciers and their annual dry–wet season cycle, macro-agricultural projects do not have to rely on other cycles associated with the Southern Oscillation, such as the monsoons. Arguably, the coastal plains and the Cordillera Negra protect the glaciers of the Cordillera Blanca from the ENSO cycles. In other words, ENSO-based conflicts, which are prominent in other countries, are not present in the SRB, as its water system depends on the melting glaciers.

## Protest utilisation of roads against mining companies

Road use and roadblocks were a common escalating factor in the socio-environmental conflicts of the SRB. Roadblocks are a cheap, non-violent method of protesting and an easy way of disrupting a mining company's day-to-day operations and, thus, their profit margins. Utilising roadblocks in anti-neoextractivist protests, and anti-neoliberal protests in general, has been common in the region for decades. This contrasts greatly with contemporary climate conflict literature, which views roads and "connectedness" as a simple proxy for resilience.

The wider climate conflict literature has not considered roads as a possible space for protests. For example, Kok et al. (2016) regard roads as a method for analysing socio-ecological patterns

of vulnerability. Roads are used as a proxy for the core dimension of "connectedness" more than a possible route for aid in the case of a climate-induced conflict. The idea of roads as a vulnerability variable is mostly rooted in Afrocentric scholarship (Detges, 2016; Carter and Veale, 2013). Afrocentrism and focus on humanitarian aid obscures regions and situations which are not reliant on imported food. As Peruvian towns do not fall into this category, the people are more willing to restrict their transportation options to gain leverage against corporations. Introducing Latin America into the climate conflict literature, thus, could modify current indicators for vulnerability and make them more global in outlook.

Roadblocks are frequent in the region, with the tactic transgressing traditional political boundaries. Anti-neoextractivist and anti-neoliberal protests, with roadblocks as their key leverage, have been common in the region for decades (Franklin, 2014). They have also been a feature in protests, where big corporations have joined with small farmers to fight government regulations. An example of this was the 2008 roadblocks targeting dairy production put up by Argentina's united agricultural sector going against government restrictions and price controls (Ferrero, 2017, p. 63).

The Three Rivers conflict, along with 12 other conflicts in the SRB, utilised roadblocks as a form of protest. The Ancash Farmers Union (FADA) organised a roadblock from the Conococha Lake to the coast. The blockade sped up the publishing of the Environmental Impact Assessment report, which ended up putting a halt to the proposed mining project (November 2011). The Ombudsman does not consider roadblocks as violent acts since they do not necessarily result in bodily harm or the destruction of property. Seven out of the 13 conflicts with roadblocks, however, did feature incidents of some level of violence, ranging from arson to murder, with roadblocks normally preceding the acts of violence. This could indicate that roadblocks help the primary stakeholders cross an escalation threshold within the conflict. Crossing the threshold makes the conflict turn from an illegal, but non-violent, action to one adopting violence (Dudouet, 2013, p. 404).

## Conclusion

Contrary to existing theory, the river basin reaching glacial peak water did not directly increase the number of socio-environmental conflicts in the affected area (Drenkhan et al., 2015). Instead of a direct and clear relationship between the diminishing glacial resources and conflict, a pattern of complex variables emerged. Previously, Carey et al. (2014) had argued that in the Santa River Basin, from 1954 to 2014, shifts in water management have not been driven by the hydrological variations caused by climate change but by human variables. Similarly, during the examined period (2004–2019), the Ombudsman reports also emphasised human variables, although these differed greatly from the ones presented by Carey et al. in 2014.

Exploring violence as part of socio-economic conflicts, instead of mining conflicts alone,

provided a much-needed broadening of scope. The article found that violence can act as a catalyst for the involvement of the central government. This does not guarantee a faster resolution, however, as violence can deepen grievances and make them harder to solve. Expanding the scope of conflicts helped the article explore the different effects of decreased water quantity versus quality, with the former being more prominent in violent conflicts. No link between peak water, quantity of water conflicts and violence was identified.

Contrary to a previously theorised increase of downstream conflicts, the SRB conflicts were more numerous and included more stakeholders when located upstream (Drenkhan et al., 2015). The absence of support from upstream organisations in cases of downstream conflict displays lack of unity and cooperative spirit among the various organisations. These intra-state findings are a necessary addition to the climate conflict literature's often international discussions on river dynamics and conflicts. With the SRB conflicts growing shorter but with more stakeholders involved, the element of "environmental peace" was addressed. This concept flies directly against the climate conflict literature's notion of ever-growing and worsening conflicts. Further research, including regression modelling, would be needed to explore fully the causal links between environmental problems triggering cooperation among normally hostile parties. Water quality and quantity were relatively constant but formed key factors escalating conflicts during the examined period. The reports barely mention melting glaciers or other factors related to climate change, such as the ENSO cycle. This was surprising considering that the existing literature is heavily driven by theories related to climate change (Hsiang et al., 2011). Further qualitative exploration into why the Ombudsman reports fail to mention climatic factors should be conducted by analysing the Peruvian political and social considerations surrounding the Ombudsman's Office itself.

Roadblocks were proven a cheap, non-violent method of protesting and an easy way of disrupting a mining company's day-to-day operations and, thus, their profit margins. Roadblocks were a common escalating factor for 13 SRB conflicts. The wider climate conflict literature has not considered roads as a possible space for protests. Arguably, this oversight is caused by the existing literature's Afro- and humanitarian-centric views, which value roads as signifiers of resilience against climate change instead of a stage for protest. Considering the widely used available sources on African road access and conflict data, roadblock protests could be relatively easily identified on a broader scale. The examination of these protests could then be linked to climatic factors, such as drought patterns.

These findings are an important addition to the rapidly expanding climate conflict literature because they touch upon the largely unexplored factor of glaciers on a relatively under-researched region. As the literature on climate conflict expands, mostly with advanced regression models, it is important to assess potential complex variables of exposure to climate change. Glaciers and their peak water are such variables, as they act as key features in many water systems around the globe. Although the article did not find direct links between the

SRB conflicts and the river's peak water, it did discover other factors which escalated the conflicts.

If three conditions are met, future research could add these escalation factors to an advanced regression model exploring the effects of peak water on conflict. Firstly, more glacier-based rivers must be identified as being in various stages of melting. A diverse set of glacial river systems would enable the model to assess how the conflicts and stakeholder interactions evolve over time, taking into account the decreasing quantities of available water. Secondly, a systematic categorisation of social conflicts would have to take place in order to enable the model to identify various conflict types and reactivations. Features of this categorisation could include whether the conflicts are near rivers and who the stakeholders are. The database created for this article could act as a good starting point. Thirdly, a more substantial categorisation system for violence should be developed. This article's violence/non-violence binary does not cover the full breadth of escalating factors. A potential jumping-off point could be the four levels of protest developed by della Porta and Diani (2009), which comprise three levels of non-violent protests and one that is violent. Della Porta and Diani also address the thresholds which separate the four levels, and how they are reached. This would enable the model to capture how the conflicts evolve over time under different conditions of peak water.

Studying the effects of glacial peak water on adjacent populations is crucial for producing successful climate change mitigation strategies. Understanding how stakeholders interact and what makes conflicts escalate in terms of length, number, reactivation or violence, enables governments to navigate and mediate these conflicts. As millions of people will face reduced access to fresh water in the future, tensions are bound to rise. Future scholars must find ways to include both violent and non-violent conflicts into their research. Including both types of conflict will enable us to forecast when communities will reach the crucial breaking point between violence and non-violence. This could help us learn from thousands of positive examples of successful conflict management and move away from merely pointing out the links between violence and climate change. Coherent conflict management will have to lie at the heart of climate conflict research now, at a time when we are facing the consequences of melting glaciers.

## Notes

[1] https://www.defensoria.gob.pe/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Conflictos-Sociales-N%C2%B0-184-Junio-2019.pdf

[2] The deaths occurred in the following conflicts: Campesina community of Huambo, Recuay vs Centauro S.A.C., November 2010 – November 2012 (Report 81, November 2010); Farming community Mareniyoc, Huaraz vs Barrick Misquichilca, March 2012 – October 2016 (Report 103, September 2012).

3   Buenos Aires community vs Greenex mining company, August 2013 – November 2013; Lake Parón downstream communities vs Duke Energy, 2007–2010, 2011–2014 and 2016.

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## *Spaces of desecuritisation:*
## *Understanding changing audiences within desecuritisation*

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## Biography

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## Abstract

Securitisation theory is at the centre of understanding how an issue becomes accepted as a threat. A concept that has received considerably less attention is "desecuritisation", the withdrawal of securitisation. This article examines the audience in different types of desecuritisation strategies, where a more comprehensive understanding of the audience is lacking. In considering multiple *spaces of desecuritisation*, this article focuses on the audience's active role in enabling desecuritisation and, as a result, develops a more comprehensive understanding of the audience. In this way, this article suggests a more thorough theoretical understanding of one of the fundamental puzzles within desecuritisation: how and when desecuritisation occurs. The theoretical development concerning the audience is conducted through engaging with a wide range of theories on spatiality, the everyday and the broader critical field of securitisation theory. Instead of what has previously been the case, where the audience was thought of as a passive, static and binary receiver of a (de)securitisation move, the audience in this article is theorised as changing and dynamic. This view of the audience has implications for securitisation theory in general, and for desecuritisation theory in particular. Envisioning the audience as an active part in shaping the conditions of desecuritisation provides a theoretical understanding of how securitisation's logic of particularisation, the distinctive separation between threat and referent object, can be loosened and, eventually, abandoned. Ultimately, this article contributes to the literature on desecuritisation by refocusing attention on the audience and theorising it as an important and enabling actor in the interactive game of desecuritisation.

**Keywords**: Securitisation Theory; Desecuritisation; Audience; Desecuritisation Strategies; Space; Everyday; Contestation; Israel-Palestine Conflict.

## Introduction

> At 4:15 a.m. on a dead-end street, a 33-year-old Palestinian man came
> running from the shadows between buildings with a rickety wooden
> ladder. He slapped it against the hulking concrete wall and climbed up,
> hoisting himself the last six feet.
>
> *Glanz and Nazzal,* The New York Times*, 2016*

> The specific political distinction to which political action and motives
> can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.
>
> *Schmitt, 1996 [1932], p. 26*

The nine-metre concrete wall casts long shadows on the dry and dusty ground as I walk along the separation wall. The wall cuts through the Occupied Palestinian Territories on the West Bank, a physical wall that separates Palestine from Israel. Walking alongside the wall, the villages and cities bear signs of the everyday experience imposed by this seemingly impenetrable structure.[1] Movement in, to and from the West Bank is getting increasingly difficult, and roads from cities and villages are being cut off, making social and economic life demanding. After walking along the wall, I take a taxi heading for Hebron. The driver is a young Palestinian man in his early thirties. On the drive south, the wall, the fortified Israeli settlements and the military outposts are present reminders of the ongoing conflict. The unwavering and intrusive architecture is a powerful cue as to why so many academics have deemed an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be a 'logical impossibility' (Roe, 2004, in Olesker, 2014, p. 379). On the journey south through the West Bank, the driver explains that many Palestinians without ID or work permit enter Israel by climbing over the wall. Usually, people will only go to Israel for a few days and then come back the same way they left, he says. Looking into these informal routes into Israel, I understand that this incongruous commute is something that around thirty to sixty thousand Palestinians regularly complete (Glanz and Nazzal, 2016; Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, pp. 140–141; The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 2016). The wall, in all its manifested physical inflexibility, instantly seems less inflexible.

In academia, conflict, especially what has been described as 'ethnic conflict', is perceived as particularly problematic to resolve (e.g. Rouhana and Bar-Tal, 1998, p. 762). This broad notion of the word "conflict" is commonly used in studies on peace, conflict and security issues in order to understand how identities and ethnic binaries become perceived as existential threats. According to securitisation theory, this is when a group is threatened and when extraordinary measures, such as border walls, violence and extensive surveillance are permitted in order to tackle this perceived threat (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 12–14). The theory of securitisation has been extremely influential in shaping the understanding of how something, not necessarily physical or objective, becomes constructed as a threat. When exploring Israel's security

measures on the West Bank, it becomes evident that the tautological theoretical understanding of security is seemingly limited. The informal routes into Israel, the messages of pacifism adorning the separation wall or the common spaces of cooperation existing in parallel to the securitised environment (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 75) might be signs of other processes.

This introduction aims to achieve three things. Firstly, it intends to establish the purpose of this article and its contribution to a central conundrum within desecuritisation: how and when desecuritisation occurs. Secondly, it seeks to describe the usefulness of engaging with spatial theories as an arena to capture important, unseen practices of the audience. Thirdly, it presents the main limitations and scope of this theoretical development.

Desecuritisation has received comparatively less attention in academia, which has severely limited its usefulness (Aradau, 2004). Hansen (2012) employs the thoughts of the Algerian-French philosopher Derrida in order to explain securitisation's dominance over desecuritisation, emerging as a 'hierarchical pair […] as one term is seen as the real, original, or essence, and the other as the supplement' (Hansen, 2012, p. 530). Prior to progressing to this article's contribution to the 'radically underdeveloped' field of desecuritisation (Balzacq, 2005, p. 171), it might be useful to introduce, very briefly, the concepts of *audience and desecuritisation*.

First of all, theorists engaged in securitisation theory argue that to securitise something refers to the justification of certain extraordinary measures for a relevant audience (commonly known as the recipient of a speech act), in which the 'normal rules' are broken (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 23, 26). On the contrary, *desecuritisation* has broadly been understood as the process of getting out of securitisation. It has been perceived in terms of returning to 'normal politics' or 'the unmaking of securitization' (Huysmans, 1998; Buzan et al., 1998, p. 29; Hansen, 2012, p. 530). The first theorists reflecting on the securitisation process expressed a normative preference for desecuritisation, where securitisation and 'security should be seen as a negative, as a failure to deal with issues of normal politics' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 29; Wæver, 1995, pp. 75–76). Desecuritisation, however, has, for the most part, been neglected in the midst of broader theoretical developments. As a result, audience practices and their effects on desecuritisation have rarely been considered. Little scholarly work has so far explicitly set out to conceptualise the role of the audience within desecuritisation, although this is still being considered as an 'essential part' of (de)securitisation (Wæver, 1995).

With this definition of the concepts and the stated need for further conceptualisations, we return to the task at hand: presenting the specific aim and purpose of this article. The primary aim is to develop an in-depth (theoretical) understanding of how the audience operates within desecuritisation. In doing so, this article can also address a central conundrum within desecuritisation, namely, how desecuritisation unfolds, which has been at the centre of a variety of debates, including the conceptualisation of *desecuritisation strategies*. Through

an active consideration of the audience, the article contributes to this discussion with a holistic approach to the conditions that enable the unfolding of desecuritisation. Additionally, the theoretical considerations presented here could also be constructive in evaluating why desecuritisation interchangeably fails or succeeds on a "downward scale".

Secondly, in order to approach and conceptualise the audience in a more comprehensive way, an alternative framework to consider the routine of everyday life has been included. This article makes use of spatial theories, including an understanding of the everyday as 'the seen but unnoticed' (Featherstone, 1992, p. 159). For the sake of conciseness, it has been imperative to narrow down the myriad of frameworks considering space. In order to fulfil the purpose of this article, space and the everyday should only be regarded as perspectives which allow to explore the, perhaps mundane, interactive game between a receiving relevant audience and a (de)securitisation speaker.

Finally, following this line of inquiry allows this article to contribute to the cumulative understanding of (de)securitisation theory by categorising the scattered debates on desecuritisation and considering the effects of audience practices. This broad scope needs to be narrowed down. The key limitation of this work is its specific focus on the "societal sector". The already established framework of securitisation, often referred to as the "original" framework, conceptualises five sectors of security. These correspond to political, military, economic, societal and environmental contexts (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 7–8). In the literature concerning the societal sector, the referent object is most often perceived to be the 'collective and national identities' (Snetkov, 2017, p. 260; McDonald, 2008). In this article, however, one is aware of the difficulty in separating the sectors, as these are regularly interrelated (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 142). The particular question that has been at the centre of debate regarding the societal sector is that securitisation creates a threatening "Other" from which the "Self/We" needs to be protected. In desecuritisation, this has been associated with the revoking of the 'friend' and 'enemy' distinction (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 143; Jutila, 2006, p. 173; Roe, 2004, p. 280), which stems from the Schmittian dichotomy where a securitising actor divides the world into one of 'friends' and 'enemies'. This dichotomy has been fundamental within (de) securitisation theory and its implications will be further considered later on (Schmitt, 1996 [1932], p. 26; Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 143–144).

The in-depth theoretical focus of this article limits any large-scale empirical consideration. The article does, however, provide two shorter empirical illustrations of spaces of desecuritisation located in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the empirical illustrations are seemingly limited, the aim is rather to visualise the theoretical relevance of the proposed concepts and illustrate where spaces for audience practices might enable desecuritisation. Thus, in contrast to other analyses focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this article does not aim to unpack the empirical intricacies of the securitised "Other" in the conflict. Instead, through these empirical illustrations, it sets out to theorise the audience as an active, important and

enabling actor in the interactive game of desecuritisation.

## Theoretical overview

Our understanding of how desecuritisation unfolds and what the process entails is somewhat of a conceptual battlefield. Divided into three subsections, this theoretical overview aims to disentangle the different concepts of desecuritisation and the role of the audience within them. The first section provides a more extensive understanding of securitisation theory and, more specifically, the debates about the different roles of the audience. The second section clarifies the concept of desecuritisation and the theoretical position of the audience. The final section examines previously identified problems with desecuritisation in the societal sector, and primarily how the audience's identity becomes intertwined with securitisation.

This summary draws upon a limited selection of the numerous critiques that have been posed against the so-called Copenhagen School of securitisation theory. This selection has shaped the following section in which the article presents its theoretical understanding of the audience. While drawing on the most cited scholars in securitisation theory with a focus on desecuritisation and the audience, it is acknowledged that there are other relevant theoretical insights that could expand the understanding of the audience. The theoretical suggestions in this article should only be considered as initial steps towards the explicit inclusion of the audience within desecuritisation, meriting further development and critique.

## (De)securitisation theory and the audience

Desecuritisation was developed 'in tandem' with securitisation (Hansen, 2012, p. 529). Thus, much of how it is understood is drawn from the framework of securitisation (ibid.). Therefore, a short introduction to securitisation is needed and, in particular, an introduction to the audience's role.

Securitisation theory is an analytic tool that explains how an issue becomes discursively constructed into an (existential) threat (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 25; Taureck, 2006). The theory primarily attempts to explain 'when, why and how' an issue becomes (de)securitised, rather than if it 'should' be (Taureck, 2006, p. 55). As identified in the influential work of Wæver (1995), titled *Securitization and desecuritization*, threats are understood as 'the sheer product of a subjective perception' (Roe, 2004, p. 286; Wæver, 1995). Scholars following this line of thought have become known as the Copenhagen School (McSweeney, 1996, p. 81). In order to securitise a threat, an actor with social capital or authority, henceforth referred to as *elite or speaker*, needs to articulate a threat that is accepted by an enabling audience. Once securitised, the securitising speaker gets 'permission to override the rules that would otherwise bind it' (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 23, 26). It is this intersubjective process between audience and speaker that is of great interest in this section.

Although Wæver (1995; 1998; 2003; Buzan et al., 1998) argued that the audience was a crucial part of securitisation theory, it has remained 'radically under-determined' (Salter, 2008 in Zimmerman, 2017, p. 228; Stritzel, 2007, p. 362). In addition, it has been noted that there is a tendency to equate the audience with the general public (Buzan and Wæver, 2003, p. 12), although the audience tends to be more dynamic and varies depending on the context and what is being securitised (Wilkinson, 2007, pp. 5, 7). The Copenhagen School and the subsequent adaptations of the theory have primarily focused on the moment of immediacy, or when the extraordinary measures are implemented, which has left the audience in the background of the development of the theory (Balzacq, 2005, p. 179).

The original understanding of securitisation, considering its intersubjective nature, has been criticised by the "second-generation" securitisation scholars. This group of thinkers, frequently referred to as the Paris School, argues that the social and contextual practices inherent in the intersubjective nature of securitisation have been left unaccounted for within the Copenhagen School (Lupovici, 2016, p. 415; Stritzel, 2012, p. 553). Balzacq (2005), a prominent second-generation scholar, argued that the Copenhagen School has a tendency to become self-referential, so much so that the audience is excluded from the framework (Balzacq, 2005, p. 179). Following this critique and alternative conceptualisations, the understanding of the audience has become increasingly diversified and nuanced (Topgyal, 2016, p. 167). Some scholars, however, including Côté (2016), maintain that the treatment of the audience is 'inconsistent and at times non-existent' (Côté, 2016, pp. 542–543). The second generation's understanding of the audience shifts depending on what issue is being securitised and what position the elite holds to articulate a threat (Salter, 2008, p. 322). Thus, it oscillates between different locales and contexts. As such, the audience might, for example, be associated with parliamentary approval of military commitments, public opinion supporting a suggested security measure, or an allied state whose support is needed to carry out a particular military operation (Roe, 2008; Zimmerman, 2017, p. 229). In sum, the audience can take on a number of different constellations and is hopefully not limited to the 'general public' with a binary and fixed identity (cf. Buzan et al., 1998, p. 119). The audience, as the 'recipient of a securitizing move', is rather understood as changing based on *contextual factors*. One might wonder then, what do these quite vague "contextual factors" involve, on which the second generation places that much emphasis? Any securitisation move needs to convince the audience based on its identity produced by 'social process[es], power relations, context, background knowledge, and discourse' (Lupovici, 2016, p. 415). Alternatively, in Balzacq's (2005) words, a securitising actor needs to tailor their speech 'based on what it [the audience] knows about the world' (Balzacq, 2005, p. 173). Securitisation is, thus, understood to be dependent on a specific social context. Both Vuori (2008) and Salter (2008) have studied audience reactions and the role of cultural and sociological factors in determining its response. Salter (2008, p. 322) adopts Foucault's 'regime of truth' to take account of the sociological and psycho-cultural disposition of the audience, where a securitisation act is performative, based on what the audience knows. Accordingly, once securitised, the performative nature of securitisation

maintains and continually produces the legitimacy for that securitisation (Stritzel, 2007, p. 370). Still, it is debatable whether a securitising actor aims to 'convince as broad an audience as possible' (Balzacq, 2005, p. 185) or rather targets a specific narrow audience (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011, p. 61; Salter, 2008, p. 327). Nonetheless, these representatives of second-generation securitisation scholars bring to the foreground an essential insight for this article: relevant audiences might change depending on contextual factors. This is a simple idea that is crucial in attempting to answer the question of how the audience acts within desecuritisation.

Keeping these contextual factors in mind, is it possible to separate context from identity and vice versa? Identity in the societal sector is central since both the threat and what needs to be protected (the referent object) are in themselves both identities. The vulnerable Self is constructed in relation to the dangerous Other. The Copenhagen School treats identity somewhat rigidly, recognising it as 'the self-conception of communities, and those individuals who identify themselves as members of a particular community' (Wæver, 1995, p. 67) or a 'we feeling' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 119). This 'we feeling' is threatened when a group is 'no longer […] able to live as itself' (Wæver, 1995, p. 67). This has been conceptualised alongside the understanding that 'security is articulated only from a specific place, in an institutional voice, by elites' (Wæver, 1995, p. 57). This focus on an elite's assumed relationship with an audience presumes the existence of a fixed, monolithic entity of a state or groups where securitisation takes place. Securitisation theory, thus, assumes the existence of a coherent society where elites are 'strategically located' to articulate a threat for an already determined audience (Doty, 2007, p. 129). This state-centric approach to the audience–elite relationship consequently limits the potential for identifying and understanding alternative positions of audience–speaker. In this article, identity is considered as more complex and mutable, thus altering the position or role of the audience(–speaker) in (de)securitisation.

The next section takes this debate on securitisation further, to its opposite: desecuritisation. It shows that much of the understanding of the audience has been derived from securitisation. Additionally, it demonstrates how opening the (otherwise) fixed position of audience–speaker, perceiving securitisation moves as elite articulation, is particularly beneficial to our understanding of desecuritisation.

## Desecuritisation

This section will begin by establishing desecuritisation in its academic context, namely how it has been understood among scholars, and will introduce the typologies of desecuritisation. This general introduction will allow the subsequent sections to engage in more depth with the gaps in the existing desecuritisation strategies.

The desecuritisation process is defined by Buzan et al. (1998) as the 'shifting of issues out of the emergency mode and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 4). Desecuritisation is commonly used in the societal sector of security to

understand a threatening 'Other' (Åtland, 2008, p. 289; Huysmans, 1998; Morozov, 2004; Roe, 2004). Against this setting, desecuritisation has been described by theorists as the unmaking of a 'threatening institutionalisation' (Huysmans, 1998, p. 572) or the questioning of a particular 'regime of truth' (Aradau, 2004; Salter, 2008). Ultimately, the employment of, and focus on, desecuritisation in the societal sector has been associated with a loosening of the threatening identity of the 'Other' (Roe, 2004, p. 280).

Wæver (2000) conceptualised three ways or, as referred to in this article, strategies of desecuritisation. The first strategy concerns the avoidance of speaking in the language of security, specifically avoiding to speak about issues in terms of threats (Wæver, 2000, p. 253). The second strategy can be described as 'desecuritisation through management' (Åtland, 2008, p. 292) or attempting to manage an issue without causing a security dilemma (Wæver, 1989, p. 52; Wæver, 2000, p. 253). Finally, the third strategy focuses on the transformation of a securitised issue, which means actively initiating desecuritisation, moving an issue back into the realm of 'normal politics' (Wæver, 2000, p. 253). Among these different conceptions of how to desecuritise, the first two have received criticism as rather concerning 'non-securitisation', since they do not address the complexities of escaping emergency politics (Floyd, 2015, pp. 127–128; Roe, 2004, p. 285). The critique of not addressing the root problem of securitisation is still valid, with the concept receiving 'scant attention' and still holding an 'underdeveloped status' (Aradau, 2004, p. 389; Hansen, 2012, p. 527; Floyd, 2007). Next, this section provides an updated understanding of Wæver's (2000) third strategy of desecuritisation.

The conceptualisation of desecuritisation has gone through different stages of interpretation. Bourbeau and Vuori (2015) identified three different debates concerning desecuritisation. The first concerned how desecuritisation occurs (e.g. Huysmans, 1995; Wæver, 2000). This was followed by a discussion on the ethical or normative obligations within (de)securitisation theory (e.g. Aradau, 2004; Floyd, 2015). The final debate, where this article is primarily located, is concerned with the strategies of desecuritisation (e.g. Roe, 2004; Jutila, 2006) and indirectly with how these unfold (Hansen, 2012; Rumelili, 2015, p. 61).

Desecuritisation occurs in numerous ways (Hansen, 2012, pp. 539–545; Huysmans, 1995, p. 57). Conceptual typologies have tried to encapsulate some of the different types of desecuritisation (ibid.). Among these efforts to categorise desecuritisation, Hansen (2012) has envisioned four types. The typology has been developed in depth by later scholars (e.g. Snetkov, 2017, p. 267) but is here used in its original form to provide an understanding of the different types of strategies found in the next section of this article. The four types of desecuritisation that Hansen (2012) identifies are *change through stabilisation*, *replacement*, *rearticulating* and *silencing*. 'Change through stabilisation' is envisioned as a 'détente' (Snetkov, 2017, p. 267), and focuses on a gradual move out of a security discourse where security is removed for the benefit of politics (Wæver, 2000). 'Replacement' is to move one issue out of the realm of security and replace it with another (Bilgin, 2007). 'Rearticulating' is created by

offering political solutions to the proposed threat (Åtland, 2008). 'Silencing' concerns an issue that does not respond to security discourse. Focusing on silences, desecuritisation is understood to downplay the urgency of an issue. These typologies all illustrate a speaker-focused desecuritisation. Hence, in considering the audience, desecuritisation needs to be scrutinised from the perspective, and specifically focused on the idea, of an active audience.

Importantly, desecuritisation is generally viewed as a gradual process, contrary to the 'immediacy' of securitisation (Floyd, 2015, p. 128). Empirically, as well as theoretically, there seems to be a consensus among scholars that the process resembles more an 'interactive game' (Vuori, 2011, p. 31). Unlike the immediacy of securitisation, desecuritisation allows for communication between the audience and the desecuritising speaker. Consequently, instead of a passive audience and an active speaker, desecuritisation probably includes several (de) securitising moves and countermoves in a contextually bound space (Salter 2008, p. 333; Stritzel and Chang, 2015, p. 560). Viewing desecuritisation as an 'interactive game', there are a few distinct conceptualisations of which to take account. Firstly, does the process occur either through an active desecuritising move (Donnelly, 2015, p. 5) or as a 'gradual fading away' (Behnke, 2006, p. 65)? On the one hand, Behnke (2006) argues that desecuritisation happens when a threat 'no longer exercise[s] our minds and imaginations sufficiently' (ibid.). On the other hand, Donnelly (2015) proposes that an elite reconciliatory articulation or symbolic act can initiate the desecuritisation process (Donnelly, 2015, p. 5; de Wilde, 2008). While this division does not include the full consideration of Donnelly (2015, p. 927) and Behnke's (2006) arguments, both acknowledge the difficulty in finding a start or end to any desecuritisation process. This article uses the distinction to differentiate between an elite-initiated desecuritisation and a more passive one (similar to Bourbeau and Vuori, 2015, p. 254; Gustafsson, 2019).

Accepting desecuritisation as an 'interactive game' shows the significance of approaching desecuritisation holistically. The exploration of how symbolic acts or a gradual fading away are products of the everyday life of the audience has more explanatory value than envisioned by Hansen's (2012) typologies.

The next section introduces the existence of audience(s) and presupposes that these are multiple, describing them as both active and passive in accepting/contesting a (de)securitisation in the 'communicative struggle of adversarial wills' (Stritzel and Chang, 2015, p. 560). What follows seeks to unpack further this communicative aspect of desecuritisation in a securitised space of "Selves" and "Others".

## The audience, identity and desecuritisation

In the societal sector, the audience becomes interconnected with processes of (de) securitisation. This and the following sections unpack the complexities of desecuritising a threat from the "Self". As Huysmans describes, 'if the threat were [sic] really eliminated, the

political identity would be damaged and, depending on how strongly it relies on the threat, it may very well collapse' (Huysmans, 1998, p. 239). Like Huysmans, many scholars have dedicated their efforts to examining how the 'Self' is constituted in relation to an (often alleged dangerous) 'Other' (e.g. Campbell, 1992; Doty, 1996; Neumann, 1996; 1999). Consequently, for desecuritisation to occur, the audience's sense of the "Self" needs to change.

The process of securitising the "Other" often makes (direct, cultural and structural) violence appear rational when dealing with the assumed threat (Galtung, 1990; Hansen, 2006). Thus, securitisation not only allows (violent) extraordinary measures, but it also makes the violence 'look, even feel, right – or at least not wrong' (Galtung, 1990, p. 291). The next section presents a similar notion of the securitising actor's use of violence to order and (re)legitimise a position of authority (Doty, 2011, pp. 609–610).

Wæver (1989, p. 301) notices that different societies' specific fears and vulnerabilities are related to their historical experiences. The coherence of a society, group or nation focuses on a singular identity, whose survival is equal to security (cf. Stern, 2006; Roe, 2004). This singular approach to identity limits the theoretical possibilities for desecuritisation. In the theoretical scope of securitisation theory, this has been recognised as the Schmittian dichotomy of dividing groups into 'friends' and 'enemies' (Buzan et al., 1998, pp. 143–144). This notion, and particularly the idea about unitary groups within the theory, limits any spaces in between the friend–enemy configuration. The idea of identities as fixed or primordial has been widely challenged, often seen as something that lacks a pre-ordained, objectively distinguishable essence (Campbell, 1992, p. 11). In securitisation, the practice of creating "Others" could ultimately be perceived as the state's need to (re)produce its authority and/ or identity (ibid.). The *making* of the 'Self' might, hence, rely on 'Othering' or creating an opposite construction of the 'Self' (Neumann, 1996, in Jæger, 2000, p. 23; Said, 1978, p. 43). Thus, the intersubjective portrayal of a threatening 'Other' might construct a discourse about the 'Self' (Wæver, 2000, p. 262). The discourse might, in turn, act performatively on the 'Self' and the 'Other', making them similar in perceptions of the securitised discourse (Topgyal, 2016, p. 182). Focusing on how threats and the "Self" are produced and sustained explains securitisation but gives little insight into the possibilities of desecuritisation.

Kinnvall's (2004, p. 241) work shows how this dichotomy can be destabilised and, eventually, desecuritised. Kinnvall suggests how, by using the concept of 'ontological security', one can find 'ambiguity and uncertainty' that might question the ordering of the 'Other'. Thus, by focusing on the 'stranger', the immigrant, 'Arab' or 'Jew' within a society as both an insider and outsider might illustrate how the binary securitised regime of identities can be questioned (example from Derrida, in Žižek, 2016, p. 302). As Kinnvall shows, however, identity markers are often more complex than those of the friend–enemy configuration. Through problematising the ideas of identity and belonging, this article understands how complex individual identities are not only the concern of states (cf. Hobsbawm, 1983; Mitzen,

2006). Rather, this article perceives alternative identity configurations as having relevance in the (de)securitisation communication between speakers and audiences. The complex webs of identities within any audience might have a transformational capacity. For example, Floyd (2015, p. 127) demonstrates how non-state actors can break the securitised regime and carry out measures that would not be allowed by an elite. Likewise, this article locates possibilities to question the dominant securitised "Other" in the periphery of the speaker–audience relation. This is something that, in the literature at large, has remained outside theoretical understanding.

The notion of breaking away from the common conception of where the audience–speaker is located might be relevant to this article's main purpose: theorising and developing a more comprehensive understanding of the audience in desecuritisation. The audience identity in (de)securitisation theory has often been linked to broad identities of belonging, e.g. "nation", "ethnicity" or "religion", taking on the fact that there might be multiple audiences that horizontally reconfigure possibilities for desecuritisation. At this point, however, it becomes necessary to conceptualise what is meant by periphery and what relevance it has to desecuritisation.

There are reasons to believe that the periphery has been under-appreciated within (de)securitisation literature. In peacebuilding literature, for example, the inclusion of the feelings and interpretations of the periphery of the audience is viewed as a prerequisite for the de-escalation of conflicts (e.g. Lederach, 1997, pp. 34–35). Accordingly, the peacebuilding literature assumes that if not all relevant audiences (including the periphery) are convinced that a threat has transformed (been desecuritised), a society is likely to fall back into conflict. In other words, if the idea about the enemy remains, even only within the periphery of the audience, the conflict continues (Georgi, 2016). The problem remains that, once securitised, groups perceive one another as threats to the "Selves". Yet, if it is possible to visualise the numerous discrepancies within these binary identity constructions, it might also be possible to enable a destabilisation of this particular 'regime of truth', as Salter (2008, p. 322) describes it.

Having shifted the focus to the audience's role within desecuritisation, one essential question remains. Following the understanding of the second-generation scholars, who argue that securitisation has a performative effect, if the acceptance of a securitising move alters how the relevant audience views the world (Stritzel and Chang, 2015, p. 550), can the audience really retain 'a capacity to revoke its accept [*sic*] of a securitisation' (Bigo, 2000, p. 87; Hansen, 2012, p. 532)? According to Hansen (2012, p. 533), desecuritisation must occur through the 'shifting interrelatedness' and transformation of both the 'Self' and the 'Other'. Given that desecuritisation cannot exist independently of securitisation (Aradau, 2004, p. 405; Hansen, 2012, pp. 5–7; Roe, 2004, p. 284), any desecuritisation is going to be a response to a partly failed or successful securitising move (Topgyal, 2016, p. 168). It is problematic for a group to

transform its identity and ontological security of the "Self". Rumelili (2015, p. 54) describes it as a need for the 'blurring of [the] Self/Other distinction'. This, however, is complicated because the 'blurring' may be limited by each group's freedom and its right to constitute a 'Self' (Rumelili, 2015, pp. 64–65). Thus, desecuritisation from a position of power might involve 'demands that seek to make the "Other" similar to the "Self" as far as is possible: by privileging the so-called "moderates" over the "radicals"' (Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard, 2017, p. 321). Desecuritisation, according to Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard (2017), works to order 'Other' threatening ontologies. Desecuritisation is, thus, about making the "Other" similar to the "Self". This has been mentioned in the critique against desecuritisation, where desecuritisation is not regarded as something necessarily better than securitisation (Inayatulla and Blaney, 2004; Hom, 2016). Some critics have also pointed out that it is the weak that are affected the most by this binary speech act, hence 'the paradox […] that a process – desecuritisation – that has been described as potentially emancipatory, may, in fact, become deeply oppressive' (Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard, 2017, p. 321). This line of argumentation has also featured prominently in early critiques against the Copenhagen School's embedded binary oppositions within (de)securitisation (McSweeney, 1996, p. 82). In sum, it would perhaps be counterproductive to approach desecuritisation as a binary process. Again, this shows the need for a holistic take on desecuritisation, as envisioned in this article. The speech act performed by the elite encompasses, according to Rumelili (2015), a fundamental problem of locating the relation between the 'Self' and the 'Other' on one 'single axis of sameness-difference' (Rumelili, 2015, p. 64). Consequently, in suggesting the inclusion of the audience, it becomes paramount to reflect on the possibility that desecuritisation involves multiple different processes.

In the next section of this article, which involves theory development, it is argued how there might be multiple ontologies and overlapping groups that the elite speech act (violently) 'makes similar' (Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard, 2017, p. 321). It might be worthwhile to conceptualise several parallel axes of difference. Indeed, the threat–defence sequences of the Copenhagen School and some of the second-generation scholarship do not enable a shift from binary desecuritisation so that it may be possible to visualise the existence of space(s) in between the two opposites. It is within this space that this article searches for alternative positions that might become stepping stones in considering other forms of desecuritisation.

## The audience within desecuritisation strategies

The previous section conceptualised the rather under-explored concept of desecuritisation. This section focuses in more depth on the audience and where it is located within the different strategies of desecuritisation. In order to do this, the various strategies will be dissected using two different approaches: firstly, by adopting the above-described framework and locating inconsistencies and contradictions, and secondly, by accentuating the contrast between the different strategies. Such a comparison will allow the identification of current gaps in the understanding of the audience and is where this article will make its contribution.

The material surveyed has been limited to the central debates concerning desecuritisation strategies and the scholarly frameworks that are most commonly cited (see Donnelly, 2015, pp. 915–917; Balzacq et al., 2016, pp. 498–501; Gad and Petersen, 2012, pp. 332–333), which, in turn, will be analysed through a close comparative and critical reading. The section begins by considering the *management* and *reconstructivist* strategies, before moving on to another central strategy, namely the diverse concept of audience *contestation*.

Two of the key desecuritisation strategies are Roe's (2004; 2006) management strategy and Jutila's (2006) reconstructivism strategy. The empirical question that they both attempt to address concerns the issue of desecuritising ethnic conflict. Both Roe and Jutila perceive the audience as embodying a certain degree of agency to resist desecuritisation; however, neither of their works really unpacks this. Rather, their focus lies on how to conceptualise a functioning desecuritisation. Roe (2004) describes the difficulty with desecuritisation as located wherever the audience possesses a certain 'security-ness'. In his account of security-ness, Roe writes that if it were removed, the result would be 'the death of the minority as a distinctive group' (Roe, 2004, p. 279).

Both conceptualisations made by Roe (2004; 2006) and Jutila (2006) have been notably influenced by Huysmans' (1998) perception of desecuritisation as an instrumentally managed process by an elite (Roe, 2004, p. 279; Roe, 2006; Jutila, 2006, p. 169). In his reflection on desecuritisation strategies, Roe (2004) recognises the interconnectedness between the 'Self' and the 'Other'. Moreover, he argues that it might not be necessary to escape security entirely, which might not even be possible. Instead, his conceptualisation of the management strategy illustrates security as a necessary condition to establish order. Thus, within a desecuritisation process, security should be mediated, not removed. The securitisation of the 'Other', therefore, has to be normalised and security is to be 'moderate, not excessive' (Roe, 2004, p. 292). This perspective never explicitly announces the audience's role, although it involves an implicit understanding that an elite must initiate desecuritisation. Hence, it is the understanding of the audience's 'security-ness' that hinders a *full* desecuritisation (Roe, 2004, p. 280), ascribing this idea to the second generation of securitisation scholars. The audience, thus, implicitly holds an intersubjective role in accepting desecuritisation. The management strategy's aim for "normalisation" is, therefore, the gradual shifting of the audience's interrelatedness to the threat.

Jutila's (2006) article responds to Roe's (2004) work, arguing that the management strategy is deterministic. Jutila writes that a reconstructivist approach makes 'state-led multicultural policies' possible. Multicultural policies aim to create a common identity in post-ethnic conflicts (Jutila, 2006, p. 180; Al and Byrd, 2018, p. 613). Thus, the audience's identity needs to be reconfigured to one of belonging. Jutila (2006, p. 168) accuses Roe (2004) of perceiving identities in a primordial fashion, that is, as fixed rather than flexible. In other words, for as long as minority identities are perceived as equal to security, the language of security will

remain. Jutila (2006, pp. 180–181), instead, views identity as flexible through speech acts. Similarly to Huysmans' belief that 'to tell a story is to handle the world' (Huysmans, 1995, p. 67), Jutila (2006) argues that identity is formed by the narrative and discourses within which the audience exists. Based on this flexibility, it is possible to change what the audience 'knows about the world'. Jutila (2006, p. 175), however, focuses on the authorities' ability to change the perception of the world through speech acts. Any articulation of transforming one's identity must come from within the conceived identity group. Connecting this to the wider frameworks, one may assume that there is need for the speech act to resonate with a narrow audience (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011), where some actors might be 'differently positioned' to speak desecuritisation successfully (Björkdahl and Buckley, 2016, p. 5). Both Jutila (2006) and Roe (2004) are predominantly focused on the elite's ability to initiate and instrumentally manage desecuritisation. Neither of the two consider whether the audience has the capability of questioning an ongoing securitisation. It is here that the strategy of contestation could provide insights about how the audience might shape opportunities for desecuritisation.

The concept of contestation is diverse and has been approached differently by various scholars. Here, *contestation* as a strategy is defined as an audience's horizontal contestation of a securitisation. Drawing from works by Balzacq et al. (2015), Vuori (2008; 2011), and Stritzel and Chang (2015), one observes that different concepts may capture horizontal contestation. Before turning to a more in-depth discussion about this strategy and the ones that have been introduced above, it should be noted that these different conceptualisations are interconnected and, unsurprisingly, there is not one type of strategy *out there*.

In the literature on contestation, terms such as resistance or counter-moves are being used to include similar mechanisms. Approaching these concepts as similar will inevitably lead to a simplification of the more intricate arguments. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the horizontal contestation of a securitisation will not exclude vertical contestation (counter-moves/resistance) from being discussed. The strategy of contestation here focuses on the possibly mundane, interactive game between audience and speaker. Redefining a strategy for contestation is an essential part of providing a framework that is inclusive of the audience within desecuritisation. Balzacq's (2015, pp. 12–13) edited volume, *Contesting security: strategies and logics*, focuses mostly on audiences' strategic and intentional vertical contestations (e.g. Marx, 2015; Vuori, 2015). This focus reflects most of the literature on contestation, which might be deceptive because 'organized and non-organized political actions [might] not [be] separate realms' (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, p. 144). The relationship between vertical and horizontal contestations might be porous, while they merge in co-constitutive ways (ibid.). Contestation in this context includes both unconscious practices and conscious interactions. At any given time within securitisation, there is the likelihood of multiple contestations in different and overlapping audiences. A strategic vertical interaction aims to homogenise grievances among audiences. To the contrary, horizontal contestations are not a negotiation

within or between audiences but rather a creation of parallel *spaces* that might contest an authority's securitisation. It is, thus, necessary to comprehend these parallel and everyday spaces.

As noted above, there are numerous theories that recognise the micropolitics of the everyday but de Certeau's (1984) idea of 'tactics', which aims to capture the less intentional contestations, has been more widely adopted (e.g. Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018). In the following section, de Certeau's concepts are interconnected with the main securitisation scholars' approach to the mundane everyday in order to consider a framework for audience participation. De Certeau's 'tactics' focus on everyday movements such as creating momentary spaces that might subvert an elite authority. In this understanding, space is something flexible, separated from a fixed *place* (1984, pp. 34, 117). Tactics is to 'insinuat[e] [one]self within the space of the other' (Bleibleh, 2015, p. 167), acting within the produced rules and regulations that are never wholly determined. The 'art of doing' mundane practices contains components of contestation against the structures enacted from above (de Certeau, 1984, p. 90). This approach is relevant as it includes, as well as understands, these 'parallel spaces', and also because the focus on vertical contestation has a tendency 'to diminish agency to a reactive response to domination' (Ortner, 1995, in Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, p. 124), viewing it as the 'weapon of the weak' with a 'tactical' or 'strategic intention' (Balzacq, 2015, p. 13). Instead, using de Certeau's (1984) understanding one can visualise horizontal contestation as parallel spaces that might challenge a dominant authority. Yet, these horizontal, (non)strategic and (un)intentional practices of the everyday do not, by definition, have a purpose other than filling the everyday life of audiences. Nonetheless, in these less determined spaces, the binary audience–speaker boundary might be loosened and may alter where desecuritisation is taking place. Moreover, considering space acknowledges that desecuritisation moves do not necessarily take the form of speech acts. Rather, desecuritisation moves can also take the form of movements and practices.

The changing roles of audience and speakers in horizontal contestation propose an intricate question about who possesses the authority to (de)securitise. This should be seen in light of the discussion above, concerning whether an audience retains its capacity to withdraw acceptance for a securitisation (Bigo, 2000, p. 87; Hansen, 2012, p. 532). Contestation against a securitising actor, thus, becomes the process through which the elite's legitimacy is contested (Balzacq, 2015, pp. 4–5; Vuori, 2008, p. 93). It also becomes a matter of delegitimising the authorities' right to speak security on behalf of an enabling audience (Vuori, 2011, p. 194). The interactive and gradual process of desecuritisation involves 'moves and counter-moves in a continuous struggle for authority and legitimacy' (Stritzel and Chang, 2015, p. 549). Perhaps in the envisioned horizontal desecuritisation, there are numerous non-elite speaker–audience relationships which are, in turn, gradually shifting an audience's interrelatedness to a specific securitised threat. Against this background, with insights from second-generation scholars, one question to consider is whether the audiences can contest authority/power. The

audience might itself be located *within* power. By focusing on less strategic practices, this question additionally concerns whether the non-intentional can destabilise a 'regime of truth' or whether it primarily serves to uphold it. One should note that authority and power are conceived differently depending on different theoretical assumptions. Power, and especially non-sovereign power, is, in the Foucauldian sense, everywhere and often taking a disciplinary form (Foucault, 1980 [1978]; 1980). In addition, this article takes Scott's perception into account, envisioning how contestation can 'operate within an autonomous space or create one that remains out of the gaze of the dominant power' (Balzacq 2015, p. 11). Indeed, by viewing power from this perspective, the everyday is understood to hold the agency to contest or, to paraphrase Foucault, 'where there is power there is resistance' (Foucault, 1980 [1978], p. 95). Hence, power and resistance do not exist without embodying 'the trace of the other' (Balzacq, 2015, p. 12). Focusing on what Scott perceives as autonomous space makes it possible to see space as multiple, that is, as different spaces which might serve both to defend and resist the dominant modes of power. In Foucault's words,

> [w]e must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby a discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart (Foucault, 1980 [1978], pp. 100–101).

There is, thus, a possibility that the everyday becomes a producer of alternative (de)securitising discourses. Conceivably, (de)securitisation is a disorganised process where actors strive to gain legitimacy (Vuori, 2015, pp. 41–42), which includes the various types of desecuritisation strategies and their entanglement and interconnectedness. In the strategies mentioned in this section, the audience is implicitly viewed as either an active or a passive actor. As a result, this article would argue that the audience's role is often limited to "either/or", rather than being conceived in terms of "and/or".

By reviewing the interactive game of desecuritisation, this section has been able to explore how the audience's role remains disguised, yet considered a key part of the speaker–audience relationship and (de)securitisation. Furthermore, it points to a gap in the literature where desecuritisation might be determined in spaces with less defined authority. The next section takes this "and/or" approach and develops the discussion on the audience in relation to the frameworks introduced above.

## An alternative understanding of the audience in desecuritisation

The opening paragraph of this article, containing a short dispatch from the Israel- Palestinian conflict, illustrated how contestation exists in many unknown or everyday spaces. This section aims to develop a framework that considers these numerous locales of contestation. Beginning

with the gaps identified previously, it is further argued here that there are likely ongoing (de)securitisation moves in society which might not resonate with an audience or be articulated in a voice of authority. The predominant focus on an elite speaker–audience interaction hides how desecuritisation becomes facilitated by reconfigurations in the micro-locales of society. This re-conceptualisation is enabled by drawing on work that has already introduced spatial theory to securitisation. Addressing the conundrum of identifying how desecuritisation unfolds from below, de Certeau's (1984) concepts of tactics and spaces are contrasted with the understanding of space within current securitisation theory. Accordingly, the 'political aesthetic of everydayness' (Huysmans, 1998) and 'the politics of small things' (Goldfarb, 2006) are considered. With these concepts, this article firmly embeds its contribution on spatial dynamics towards understanding how desecuritisation occurs. The answer is, from a "downward scale", which considers a fuller aspect of the audience. Here, the concepts of contestation, as audience practice, and reconfiguration are essential to comprehending these numerous spaces.

The introduction of space and horizontal contestation is guided by three articles, including Doty's two articles on space and (de)securitisation (2007; 2011) and Gazit and Latham (2014). In 'States of exception on the Mexico–U.S. border: security, "decisions," and civilian border patrols', Doty (2007) opposes the Copenhagen School of securitisation. She focuses her analysis on 'border vigilantes' on the US–Mexican border, whose actions question the understanding of Schmitt's sovereign decisions (ibid., p. 128). Her main contribution is the reflection on, and inclusion of, the periphery. She visualises that including the periphery can challenge the idea about *when* the exception (from the rules of the game) can be instigated and *where* authority can be identified (ibid., p. 132). In 'Bare life: border-crossing deaths and spaces of moral alibi', Doty (2011) shifts her research focus on an analysis of sovereign powers' ability to create a 'space of exception'. The US–Mexico border serves as a moral void, where power can initiate and decide on the exception (ibid., pp. 600, 608). Both articles put human agency at the centre, determining how the seemingly unimportant has the potential of holding large security implications. With the focus on human agency, an understanding can be gained about horizontal contestation in different spaces. The two articles do so through reflecting on the ambiguity and uncertainty in how securitisation (the exception) is established. This inclusion and visualisation of different spaces and actors question the Copenhagen School's fixed ideas about what is of relevance in the process of (de)securitisation (Doty, 2007, pp. 115–116). Doty's work creates a conceptual pathway for questioning securitisation and incorporating multiple relevant audiences and their practices. In her work, she does not reflect upon the implications for desecuritisation. She does, nevertheless, acknowledge in passing that the dead bodies of migrants in the borderlands bear signs of contestation, indicating a belief that groups of individuals can contest securitisation through their actions in securitised spaces (2011, p. 605). The unknown death of a nameless migrant might appear as a contestation but is not discussed in terms of having the ability to desecuritise (2011, pp. 607–609).

In the absence of desecuritisation in the theory, this is where Gazit and Latham's (2014) article, 'Spatial alternatives and counter-sovereignties in Israel/Palestine', makes a needed amendment to accommodate practices in the periphery. They envision that different practices might establish alternative authorities, which in turn, through social interaction, challenge the dominant securitisation (ibid., p. 65). This reconfiguration of authority in different spaces is where desecuritisation might unfold. Hence, Gazit and Latham make an essential contribution to how alternative spaces of desecuritisation arise. They incorporate the idea that different population practices, including social, commercial and festive interactions, can produce spaces, where a securitised 'Other' can be questioned and transformed (ibid., p. 72). Gazit and Latham (2014) and Doty (2007; 2011) complement each other and, together with the above-mentioned theoretical insights on desecuritisation, provide a strong conceptual base on which to re-focus attention to the audience.

As noted above, Vuori (2008), among other scholars, argues that the audience contests securitisation in an interactive game of legitimacy. Indirectly, this tends to focus on the vertical struggle against centralised authority. In a somewhat alternative approach, Doty (2007; 2011) shows her readers the importance of focusing on and considering activities in the periphery and how they affect a securitisation process. Doty (2007) illustrates how mechanisms of a securitised exception 'can arise in numerous locales and can be made by seemingly insignificant agents' (Doty, 2007, p. 130). The 'insignificant agents' are those that have been dismissed, and which have no 'position of authority' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 33). Doty (2007) demonstrates how the vigilantes on the US–Mexico border can impact nationally enacted security policies. She draws upon Huysmans' (2004, pp. 321, 341) thoughts, who argues that securitisation often comes about in 'less spectacular' ways. If these less spectacular events and their everydayness are excluded from the analyses, insights about securitisation and the emergency/threat are obscured.

Moving on to implement these less spectacular spaces into the analysis, it is important to note the critique that earlier securitisation scholars have faced when approaching the everyday as an answer to several theoretical puzzles. Thus, in including these spaces, this article remains wary of the importance placed on the originally envisioned speaker–audience relationship. Of course, identifying the everyday as cutting the Gordian knot of all theoretical hitches might, unavoidably, provide misleading answers. This also applies to Huysmans' (1998) early work that incorporated the 'political aesthetic of everydayness', involving the 'complexity and plurality of daily human practices' (Huysmans, 1998, p. 588) that might desecuritise through the routine practices of interaction (ibid.). Notably, this idea has been scrutinised by several scholars, including Aradau (2004, p. 400), who argues that it is not possible to separate the securitising and desecuritising practices of everyday interaction. In addition, she argues that the everyday might be appealing but also misleading and, instead, may serve to uphold a hegemonic 'logic of particularization' (Aradau, in Balzacq et al., 2015, p. 107). She claims that the everyday might be redundant as 'securitization is only successful when it finds its

support in everyday life' (Aradau, 2004, p. 400). Thus, as demonstrated earlier in this article, the performative nature of securitisation is likely to be sustained by everyday practices. This article, however, maintains that the everyday and the discourses that are produced are diverse. These practices 'transmit and produce power' (Foucault, 1980 [1976], pp. 100–101) but can also undermine and expose it, rendering it 'fragile' (ibid.). The audience might, thus, serve to uphold securitisation but can also envision alternative pathways of desecuritisation.

Gazit and Latham (2014) adopt Goldfarb's (2006) 'politics of small things' to encapsulate the mechanism of the 'routine micro-politics and mundane practices undertaken by a variety of social actors, as well as official agents' (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 64). Similar to de Certeau's (1984) concept, these 'small things' of agency among non-elites can transform politics and make it possible to analyse desecuritisation. Returning to Doty's writings, she similarly argues that practices in the periphery have agency and legitimacy to securitise. One of the key questions posed by Doty concerns where sovereignty and the legitimacy to securitise are located. The Copenhagen School assumes that 'security is articulated only from a specific place, in an institutional voice, by elites' (Wæver, 1995, p. 57). In contrast, Doty (2007, pp. 132–133; 2011) views authority as social and argues that it can arise in less institutional and more informal milieus. The articulation of "Self", "We" and "Nation" might arise from 'insignificant' agents and practices. Doty's argument, hence, opposes Schmitt's central understanding within securitisation theory that '[i]n its entirety the state as an organized political entity decides for itself the friend–enemy distinction' (Schmitt, 1996 [1932], pp. 29–30) and that '[t]he sovereign decides whether there is to be an extreme emergency as well as what must be done to eliminate it' (Schmitt, 1996 [1932], p. 7). As for Schmitt, power is at the centre of Doty's analysis; however, this is understood in a significantly different way. She makes use of Agamben and Foucault's conceptualisations. The sovereign, similar to Schmitt's thinking, decides on the subjects and can create *bare life*, understood as a life that can be taken 'without apology, classified as neither homicide nor sacrifice' (Doty, 2011, p. 601). The sovereign/speaker is the one to (re)organise society into who can, and must, be killed to secure the Self. Additionally, however, and in contrast to Schmitt, she explains how these ideas encompass space for contestation. In the securitised space of the exception, there are always possibilities for 'tensions and cracks within which humans practice various forms of resistance' (Doty, 2011, p. 601).

These cracks in practices within articulated securitisations are where this article envisions that horizontal contestation can take place and has the capacity to desecuritise. In contrast to what Schmitt and the Copenhagen School presuppose, these cracks take place in a society that is a single coherent unit. By relying on second-generation securitisation scholars, this article moves away from this distinction. Instead, it sees society and audiences as multiple, contextual and overlapping units.

Against this background, further developments can be made. Returning to the purpose of this section, and by extent the whole article, what implications does this new appreciation of the spaces of desecuritisation have on the audience– speaker relationship? It is commonly presumed that the "crystallisation" of a (de)securitising move does not happen until it is articulated in a speech act. Following Doty's (2007) argument, however, there would be less need for such crystallising accentuation because sovereignty originates from the people, and the lower echelons of society have the ability, through their actions, to decide who remains included and excluded from the group. The audience can, thus, contest an elite securitisation (Doty, 2011) and, by its local practices, decide on the (perceived) threat and take the necessary measures to tackle it (Doty, 2007). Hence, the legitimacy to act for (de)securitisation might be relocated into a speaker possessing (or appropriating) the identities and experiences of a changed relevant audience. Expanding this notion, the speaker might be interchanging between being part of a relevant audience and a speaker articulating (de)securitisation.

We might, however, not be able 'firmly [to] locate' these things. Trying to do so might, inevitably, simplify the speaker–audience interaction. Nonetheless, these different practices are shown to have relevant large-scale implications for (de)securitisation. Located in the periphery, the audience has a capacity to decide on securitisation and reconfigure the world into one of 'friends' and/or 'enemies' (Doty, 2007, p. 130). As noted at the start of this section, Doty does not take desecuritisation into account, focusing instead exclusively on securitisation. Although the 'border space' involves relevant audience and/or speaker practices, as noted earlier, it does not leave much room for contestation. In sum, Doty's key contribution concerns her way of briefly pointing to spaces of contestation and the ambiguity and uncertainty of (identifying and separating) the 'Self' and the 'Other' in the periphery.

In considering spaces of uncertainty, Gazit and Latham (2014) are a helpful supplement, discussing places and spaces of non-violent coexistence, with a focus on desecuritisation. They also make many similar assumptions to Doty (2011), namely about the voice of authority in (de)securitisation being social rather than exercised by states (Doty, 2007, pp. 132–133; Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 68). Their understanding is an excellent addition to comprehending different spaces, where *space* is understood as ontologically given but 'discursively mapped and corporeally practiced' (de Certeau, in Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 67). Desecuritisation might, thus, work differently in various places. Both Doty (2007; 2011) and Gazit and Latham (2014) implicitly regard space as multi-dimensional, where social relations are (re)established as well as produced (Lefebvre, 1974, in Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 67; Doty, 2007, p. 134; 2011, p. 607). Space can, thus, take the form of 'the exception', be 'geographic' or 'the result of social and political practices' (Doty, 2011, pp. 600, 607). The most relevant insights for this article are that spaces can be desecuritising and that they can (re)establish a 'less securitized and violent manner with one another' (Gazit and Latham, 2014, pp. 64, 69). Similar to Doty (2007; 2011), Gazit and Latham (2014) argue that it is through everyday practices, involving contestations, that new articulations can be created to desecuritise a prior construction of

the 'Other' (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 63). The envisioned dynamic of the audience might contest a securitisation through, for example, (re)establishing social relations that are cutting across the 'Self/Other' distinction. In short, contestation or desecuritisation can be viewed as a 'space making practice'. Through Gazit and Latham (2014), this article can achieve what Doty's articles could not, namely to illustrate the theoretical alternative spatial formations that might form paths towards desecuritisation. This concept will, in the context of this article, be termed *spaces of desecuritisation*.

Adding to these spaces of desecuritisation, the audience is envisioned to hold a more active role in reshaping spaces and, especially, challenging when and how desecuritisation can occur. The conceptualisation of the *spaces of desecuritisation*, as pointed out earlier, will be illustrated in two empirical cases, given the limited confines of this article. As with Doty, the effort 'firmly [to] locate' these practices might, inevitably, simplify the speaker–audience interaction. Thus, these empirical vignettes, firstly, exemplify and locate where the conceptualised desecuritisation can be found and, secondly, point to where it is possible to search for alternative spaces and signs of desecuritisation. The two short illustrations also serve another important task of this article, which is to point out the implications this might have for securitisation theory at large.

## Breaking through walls (of securitised identities)

The individuals who are climbing over the separation wall dividing Israeli and Palestinian territory are tangibly breaking through the instigated securitisation measures. This section's two brief empirical vignettes similarly show spaces where the tactics of the everyday contest a securitisation. Both cases advance a re-conceptualisation of securitisation theory necessary for understanding desecuritisation. They conceive of how desecuritisation can occur in different ways. They also reveal how the practices of everyday life can be transformed into practices that destabilise a current securitisation. The two illustrations have been drawn from a similar setting in the post-2002 context after Israel's decision to build the separation wall, effectively cutting off any large-scale unregulated movement between the occupied West Bank and Israel.

The first case focuses on the many emerging heterogeneous groups resisting the decision to build the separation wall and makes use of Pallister-Wilkins' (2011) personal accounts from three villages, Budrus, Biddu and Bilin. The article analyses the reconfiguration of power through the groups of Palestinian and Israelis contesting the construction of the separation wall. The second case is similarly located within the Israel-Palestine conflict but, rather, considers how the practices of everyday, such as going to work in Jerusalem, can be a site of contestation and desecuritisation. In order to capture these mechanisms, the case study uses the ethnographical accounts of Mannergren-Selimovic (2018) on the different tactics used in the divided city of Jerusalem. Although the empirical examples share similar contextual settings, namely the securitised Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one can be seen as a more vertical

contestation (Pallister-Wilkins, 2011) while the other as more horizontal (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018).

With these two cases, this section introduces a comparative analysis and the visualisation of a more diverse and detailed discussion of different spaces of desecuritisation. It exemplifies how unlikely alternative spaces might be where the audience accesses possibilities or practices of desecuritisation. Importantly, this section does not show how 'the politics of small things' can change the system, as is the argument of Goldfarb (2006). Instead, it indicates that even in unlikely spaces, 'spaces of exception' (Doty, 2011, p. 600) or 'hyper-securitization' (Gazit and Latham, 2014, pp. 64, 66), it is possible to visualise desecuritising potential in the audience's everyday tactics. While the term 'hyper-securitization' is not entirely unpacked by Gazit and Latham, it is here connected to Doty's 'spaces of exception'. While it remains a debated concept, it will not be the focus here. It does, nevertheless, illustrate the specific extreme context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from where the empirical illustrations are drawn. Hyper-securitisation, implicit in Gazit and Latham (2014), refers to an environment where the duration of reoccurring securitisation has been performed to the extent that it has created a space of exception. In this hyper-securitisation, the hostile and dangerous "Other" is not only accepted but expected to be continually securitised by the elites, audiences and institutions of both sides. Thus, a hyper-securitised threat is not desecuritised even when a majority of actors on both sides acts for desecuritisation. The long duration of the conflict has, according to many academics, been conceptualised as a constant re-securitisation of the 'Other' (for an overview, see Lupovici, 2014, pp. 395–397). In this re-securitising process, the "Self" has been intensely intertwined with territory and identity. The potential for a desecuritisation into peaceful coexistence has been seen as problematic, as both sides claim that their security is dependent on geographically intersecting states. The empirical consideration is limited to the post-peace process after the Second Intifada that has been marked by Israel's creation of the separation wall and the continued and increased support of Israeli settlements on the West Bank (Pallister-Wilkins, 2011, p. 1853). Yet, in this sustained, violent and "hyper-securitized environment", there might still be space to reconfigure the audience through its local spatial practices.

Both the Israeli and Palestinian sides have ascribed to the traditional view on sovereign power over geographic places as the inevitable end goal of the conflict. Thus, geographic space has been, and continues to be, deeply interconnected with ontological and physical security (Olesker, 2014, p. 376). Rumelili (2015), for example, argues that the management of Jerusalem has been raised to a matter of survival. Similar to this, other scholars within securitisation theory on the Israel-Palestine conflict (e.g. Olesker, 2014; Coskun, 2010, p. 295) argue that desecuritisation is improbable. Even if the physical separation wall was to be removed completely, it would remain as a 'mental separation' for a long time (Klein, 2014, p. 215). Indeed, trying to identify one moment of transformation would potentially be misleading, and certainly obscures theoretical insights about complexity and ambiguity.

Similarly, the sole focus on discourse might be too narrow, restrictive and marginalising of other elements in society (Balzacq, 2005; Hansen, 2006; Stritzel, 2007), as is the focus on discourse concentrating on the 'silent' practices of the everyday (MacKenzie, 2009). Therefore, any consideration of desecuritisation must be inclusive of practices, movements and narratives as alternative ways of understanding audience reconfigurations. Thus, this overview of different spaces only illustrates spaces where more in-depth work is needed.

Given 'the complex, multitudinous, and fragmentary nature of sovereignty' (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 67) especially in the Israeli-Palestinian context (ibid.), this article's perspective on the conflict follows the methodological considerations of challenging the 'representational hegemony' that places Palestinians as either heroes or victims (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, pp. 132–133). This enables this article to go beyond 'acute pessimism' (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 66), as well as to refrain from a heroic narrative about contestation. Still, Israeli disciplining measures in the Israeli-occupied territories have been met by violent and non-violent agentful contestations (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, pp. 132–133).

Before going into the two specific cases, it is important to provide some background and, more specifically, place these cases within the larger historical context. Israel and the occupied territories have a history of contestation and securitisation (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, pp. 138–139). After the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Israel annexed East Jerusalem, which prior to this had been under Jordanian jurisdiction as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Israeli authorities view East Jerusalem as part of a united Israeli capital; yet, this area is not recognised as such by the wider international community (Gazit and Latham, 2014, p. 69). In April 2002, Israel decided to create a permanent structure around and inside the occupied West Bank to separate it physically from Israel. The wall in urban areas is made up of nine-metre-high concrete blocks and was built under the pretext of decreasing terrorist attacks (Pallister-Wilkins, 2011, p. 1856). The wall has limited the movements of the Palestinian population of the West Bank and has also made it easier to annex Palestinian lands for Israeli settlements. In the following paragraphs, the everyday interactions (which tend to be disregarded) within the state-centric securitisation dynamics are taken into account.

The first empirical illustration is drawn from Pallister-Wilkins' (2011) account of the joint Israeli and Palestinian groups contesting the separation wall. Pallister-Wilkins' article focuses on an understanding of how different relations of power become (re)initiated in the conflict, and the type of contestation they enable. The article maintains that elite and state-centric approaches 'fail to capture the complex reality of constantly shifting terrains of power' (2011, p. 1859). Pallister-Wilkins focuses on three villages in close proximity to the separation wall that have become places where a collective movement of contestations has been established including both Israelis and Palestinians (2011, p. 1851). The article is primarily interested in investigating how power and contestation are reconfigured, based on the idea that contestation is 'capable of generating its own structures of power' (2011, p. 1856). What is interesting in

Pallister-Wilkins' (2011) account in the scope of this article are the horizontal processes of contestation. Rather than focusing on the groups' joint resistance to the imposed Israeli occupation, this horizontal relationship is only mentioned briefly. For this article, however, the process of creating a space opposing a centralised securitised issue becomes the most interesting aspect. In order to illustrate these horizontal contestations, through the practice of ignoring a securitised binary, a few examples were taken from Pallister-Wilkins' (2011) article.

> Israeli activists engaged in weekly solidarity visits to the OPTs [Occupied Palestinian Territories] and had house meetings with occupied Palestinian activists. The physical act of entering a Palestinian's home in solidarity was radical in and of itself without even thinking about what was actually discussed and planned at these meetings (Pallister-Wilkins, 2011, p. 1867).

It is through these kinds of 'solidarity visits' that this type of horizontal desecuritisation is argued to be present. In such manifestations of solidarity, it is possible to identify the mechanism of discrediting the legitimacy of the securitised "Other". Rather than the more evident vertical contestation, this mechanism exists in the challenges of the Palestinian and Israeli "Selves", and in how small groups of cooperation might transform the wider narrative and discourses. In the words of an interviewed Israeli citizen, Kobi Snitz:

> This type of work of Palestinian-led struggle requires […] deprogramming in Israeli society. We […] exist in Israel and […] like it or not, we inherit in our group some features of Israeli society and we need to be aware of that enough to try and weed that out (in Pallister-Wilkins, 2011, p. 1875).

Undeniably, it is rather paradoxical that the physical manifestation of power, such as a separation wall, at the same time creates spaces of contestation. Connecting this case back to theoretical understandings of everyday activities in the spaces of exception, in the words of Doty (2011, p. 610), the physical manifestation of power is filled with 'cracks and fissures' where the light gets in. The clear non-metaphorical image of the borderlands for Doty (2007; 2011) and, in this example, the separation wall of inclusion or exclusion, can also be spaces where binaries of states and identities are questioned. In this particular case, one crack is the establishment of joint Palestinian and Israeli cooperation that might change who the relevant audiences are and where they are located.

The case of groups contesting the separation wall illustrates how alternative movements of cooperation are enacted simultaneously with securitisation. These social practices might question the distinction of the 'regime of truth' about the "Self" and the "Other". The above

example has a noticeable and self-evident flaw worth pointing out. The groups and individuals that contest a state-mandated securitisation are, perhaps most often, not part of a traditional enabling audience or elite. Hence, the focus is placed on joint contestation, as it formulates its own space that might speak desecuritisation. What Kobi Snitz is reflecting over is the 'Self's' security-ness (Roe, 2004, p. 279). Thus, the idea of the nation (imagined or not) seems to have a certain 'stickiness' (cf. Andersson, 1991; Varshney, 2007, pp. 288–290). Accordingly, and going beyond the analysis of Pallister-Wilkins (2011), simply acknowledging these spaces of contestation, or even of co-existence, could be viewed as a desecuritising space, either as a place from where securitisation starts to 'fade away' or as practices that speak to other audiences (Donnelly, 2015; Behnke, 2006). 'Deprogramming' in individuals and groups is part of this very central idea of spaces of desecuritisation. It is important to note, then, that even if these practices of contestation do not initiate desecuritisation, they still constitute a space of desecuritisation, where a certain regime of truth about the features of the "Self" and the "Other" is actively attempted to be 'weed[ed] out' (Pallister-Wilkins, 2011, p. 1875). In terms of horizontal or vertical contestation, it seems that this case is leaning more towards an organised vertical contestation, even if this section has shown its horizontal desecuritising aspects as well. The next case, instead, illustrates how the unintentional horizontal actions of the everyday can become an unintended speaker of desecuritisation.

The second case highlights the work of other researchers on the Israel-Palestine conflict (e.g. Jean-Klein, 2001; Rosenfeld, 2004; Abu-Zahra, 2008), who have underlined contestation and desecuritisation in the daily routine of confronting economic and political repression. In this process, and definitely in the everyday practice of living through occupation, there are fragments of possibilities for changing the relevant audiences and what elites 'know about the world'. The below case illustrates how the everyday practice of going to work in the city of Jerusalem can be a space of desecuritisation.

Mannergren-Selimovic's (2018) article develops a theoretical framework to understand everyday audiences through a framework of *place*, *body* and *story*. This article includes remarkable ethnological accounts. It visualises the unnoticed practices that might change the disposition of the population and the legitimacy of a securitisation. One of her many vigorous accounts reflects the story of a young Palestinian woman, who unintentionally defies a checkpoint when trying to get to work. The act of trying to escape the checkpoint becomes, through a video recording and postings on social media, a shared intersubjective experience. The video depicts the violent arrest of the young woman. She is thrown down on the ground by Israeli police officers, her hijab falls off and her hair becomes visible as she is dragged away through a crowded lane in the Old City. This short event is seemingly insignificant for the understanding of desecuritisation in the wider framework of securitisation theory. The experience reveals, instead, what is to be expected with the securitised measures of "flying checkpoints" enabled during occupation. Yet, the small, seemingly insignificant, event can be approached within the framework of this article. As the woman explains, the intent was

not to question or contest anything:

> she just really needed to work, and thought that she could probably talk her way through the checkpoint. It was a judgement call and it went wrong (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, p. 141).

This calls our attention to how the unseen and ordinary can be turned into an intersubjective experience, in this case, through the assistance of social media. Of course, the use of social media to spread this unintentional contestation in a securitised city is worth reflecting on. Addressing the informal networks established in various digital channels might alter who can practise (de)securitisation. Here, in a shifting digital landscape, the audience and speaker might interchangeably switch between being a speaker and/or audience. In this setting, fragments from the lived everyday securitisation can be shared through videos, images and stories. These fragments might affect how different audiences perceive a securitisation. Of course, as with the video of the woman being arrested, how this is understood is based on the psychological disposition of how the audience views its role in the world. The video is not viewed in a vacuum but from the standpoint of a particular discourse. Thus, in the intersubjective process of sharing a fragment of the everyday, interpreting what is viewed might require a negotiation among multiple audiences. While this negotiation is not within the scope of this article, it is highly interesting. What becomes relevant here is, instead, the ease with which a binary divide in a securitisation can be transcended. Perhaps, a negotiation among audiences will not result in desecuritisation, but engaging with, and seeing or feeling a securitised "Other" might create a space where the ambiguities about a binary opposite can be contested or 'deprogrammed'. This brief case shows how the unintentional contestation of a securitisation can be found in numerous locales, as part of the daily routine of getting to and from work in Jerusalem and the Palestinian Occupied Territories. The everyday moment can, thus, be interconnected with the exceptional and vice versa. Through different processes, it can create momentary audiences and spaces of desecuritisation.

The cases discussed include both a vertical and a horizontal contestation, illustrating how groups organise themselves and view the "Other". Where a predominant part of the literature focuses on repressive state power, this section indicates a need to view the everyday as created through power, but also how it embodies potential to reshape power and space. The two cases, and the dispatch about the Palestinians travelling over the separation wall in the introduction, show tactics on how to overcome repressive securitising measures. These tactics in any securitised environment embody ideas about a space of desecuritisation. The cases show the existence of spaces of desecuritisation (or destabilisation), which, in turn, might intersubjectively change the disposition of other individuals in the same web of structures. Of course, concentrating on these 'cracks' does not address the possibility that elites might appropriate these contestations to maintain legitimacy and speak (de)securitisation. Given the "insignificance" of the described event, however, it is likely that there are various and

recurring iterations in a multitude of spaces. The instability of these numerous spaces of (de) securitisation makes it unlikely for any actor to appropriate them fully, as any articulation is likely to create other spaces connected to different audiences. Considering how desecuritisation could unfold from these different spaces of desecuritisation, if a desecuritising idea about the "Other" is appropriated by a critical number of audiences and speakers, perhaps it can gain traction to change what is known about the world and withdraw the instigated securitising measures.

## Theoretical implications

This article has involved an in-depth elaboration and (re)conceptualisation of the audience within desecuritisation. The (re)conceptualisation has several theoretical implications for the study of securitisation theory in general and the role of the audience within desecuritisation in particular. Perhaps the most significant implication concerns this article's contribution to the role of audience practices in desecuritisation. Further, this article has challenged the Copenhagen School's binary logic centrality within (de)securitisation theory. These considerations are not "complete", in the sense of a fixed theoretical framework, but hopefully can encourage certain questions that may generate academic curiosity for future scholars to engage in and contribute to a cumulative understanding of desecuritisation.

By exploring the numerous locales of the audience's agency, this article has visualised how the audience can enable 'something new' through its speech and actions (Mannergren-Selimovic, 2018, p. 134). Indeed, by understanding the audience in this way, it is conceptualised as an actor (or, rather, as multiple actors) capable of generating new relations and realities (Honig, 1995, p. 149). Hopefully, through integrating this more comprehensive perception, it becomes possible to gain a better understanding of the audience's role in (de)securitisation processes.

Further, by combining desecuritisation strategies with the works of Doty (2007; 2011) and Gazit and Latham (2014), this article has produced a necessary discussion between these different concepts and has also been able to illustrate the active role of the audience. This audience-centric discussion and framework might leave out the role of the speaker or elite in (de)securitisation. Such an inclusive discussion, however, is probably not necessary here, as the speaker or elite have already received most, if not all, the attention of previous (de) securitisation theorists.

The article has focused on the audience's role in desecuritisation. Still, this understanding of the audience should not be seen as solely useful to understanding desecuritisation. The active role of the audience, as something more than a 'facilitating condition' of securitisation (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 17), is likely to be beneficial for other theoretical developments. Certainly, the conceptualisation of this article could also provide a valuable contribution to the understanding of how unsuccessful (de)securitisation can be explained. As noted by, among others, Topgyal (2016, p. 168), there is a tendency to focus primarily on successful (de)

securitisation, something which might omit relevant theoretical insights drawn from failed attempts to (de)securitise. Therefore, focusing on the audience's role and practices might be an opportunity to understanding why desecuritisation fails.

It would be interesting to explore where and when alternative spatial configurations can be established and how elite articulation affects desecuritisation. This updated notion about the role of the audience within desecuritisation could be used advantageously to update the understanding of desecuritisation in peace initiatives (Wæver, 1995). Using a framework sensitive to the audience might be able to, for example, explain the prior failures of peace talks in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Perhaps the popular revolts against these efforts might be an indication that they have been lacking horizontal desecuritisation.

Additionally, this article noted that there is a problem with elite desecuritisation due to the implicit dynamics of the binary speech act (Austin and Beaulieu-Brossard, 2017, p. 321). Following this assumption, the elite speech act will always "make similar" and, thus, simplify the complex identities that are the result of multiple interactions. This is evident not least in the, so-called, 'hyper-securitized' empirical case (Gazit and Latham, 2014, pp. 64, 66). Any peace initiatives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or peacebuilding at large, tend to "make similar" the two opposites, here Israelis and Palestinians. This might be a reason to re-engage with the desecuritisation strategies originally envisioned by Wæver (2000), and accounted for in the theoretical section of this article. Wæver's first strategy of desecuritisation was to avoid framing issues in the language of security, and the second was to manage an issue without generating a security dilemma (Wæver, 2000, p. 253). The common theme of the two strategies is for elites to refrain from articulating issues in terms of security. Wæver (2000) focused on issues that have not yet been securitised but his strategies could, perhaps, be adapted to a securitised issue as well, seeing as the elites avoid engaging in (de)securitisation. While Roe (2004, p. 285) critiqued these strategies for incorporating 'non-securitization' rather than desecuritisation, this elite passiveness might hold the possibility to open alternative spaces of desecuritisation. This could, at least as the start of a desecuritising process, avoid tearing apart the delicate alternative spaces of overlapping and blurring identities. These spaces of desecuritisation might, thus, constitute stepping stones, not of similarities but of differences, or one might even argue, of *différance* (Derrida, 1976). It might not be an original unit of the "Self" and "Other" but a condition of possibilities where one does not try to "make similar" the two groups. If the elite refrains from uttering the "We" against the "Them", the "radicals", it just might leave space for *différance* to emerge in the spaces in between groups.

## Conclusion

As stated above, this article has explored and reconceptualised a theoretical inclusion of the audience(s) different role(s) within desecuritisation. The article first established the current under-developed status of the audience and desecuritisation. Through comparing the implicit role of the audience within the current academic strategies of desecuritisation, the concepts

have been defined and developed. With the inclusion of different theoretical understandings, alternative to the instrumental and managerial state-centric positions, desecuritisation strategies have been criticised. Instead, an alternative theoretical understanding of desecuritisation has been conceptualised through the use of everyday spaces as an arena in which to explore how the audience is rearranged through horizontal contestation. This contestation has allowed for a consideration of how securitised audiences operate and change. The article offers a conceptual pathway to understanding the audience's interconnection with context and practices as a priorly unnoticed area. Exploring these spaces of the everyday has allowed for an appreciation of how desecuritisation can occur differently in changing spaces, captured in this article as *spaces of desecuritisation*.

This study has, hopefully, been able to advance the understanding of the different roles of the audience in the spaces of desecuritisation. In its limited scope, however, it is likely to disregard scholarship important for future developments. An identified gap where more work will be needed relates to the inclusion of spatial theory. It is the article's belief that a thorough examination and integration of the many new additions in the field of spatiality, together with ethnographical accounts, could bring novel insights to securitisation theory. Hence, this article has not been able to integrate fully earlier scholarship on the politics of the everyday that exists within security studies. Space does not focus explicitly on the speaker–audience dynamics but holds essential insights into how culture, practices and context are shaped. Illustrating this in relation to the physical separation wall visualises contestation and makes it possible to identify these spaces (of desecuritisation). The non-metaphorical separation wall, as seen in the adopted empirical illustrations, tends to create clear vertical securitised oppression, against which contestation becomes identifiable. The (re)construction of subjects is evident in this asymmetrical relationship. In challenging this, future works will need to take into account less evident acts of securitisation, forced upon subjects and those rendered excluded and disposable. The article recognises that there are several types of contestation, here categorised as vertical or horizontal. While both are likely to be interconnected and interdependent, this article maintains that horizontal contestation holds a particular, under-appreciated potential to contest or destabilise the idea about the ontologically securitised "Other". More work is needed in the societal sector's periphery to take account of the mechanism of (unconscious) negotiation among multiple audiences. Hopefully, this article has generated the necessary academic curiosity to examine the, at times uncharted, terrain of desecuritisation.

The credibility of this work is, evidently, dependent on the frameworks and theoretical approaches that it has included. With the vast emerging body of literature on securitisation, there is a multitude of arguments that could have been included. For instance, while this article has been able to involve some significant thinking on the topic, others might find it productive to dive deeper into the second generation's emphasis on culture, practices and context. In their theories, there is likely to be an abundance of important ideas that need to

be adapted and incorporated into desecuritisation.

Finally, this article encourages future scholars to appreciate the role of the lower echelons of society. The puzzling lack of attention to these mundane practices has certainly motivated and shaped this article's purpose. Of course, in theoretical debates, the dominance of securitisation over desecuritisation might remain, not least because these spaces of desecuritisation always face the risk of being torn apart by (re)securitisation. For instance, direct physical violence instigated and "made right" through securitisation might cut through these more delicate horizontal spaces of desecuritisation. The production of alternative spaces, thus, always runs the risk of being absorbed by a speaker's securitisation that is reordering societies according to the divide between dangerous "Others" and vulnerable "Selves". Still, even if the audience's sense of 'security-ness' is increased, the objective should be to search for moments of political transformation. This could be especially important currently, when the global elite rhetoric of the "enemy", "illegal migrant" or "infected" "Other" is attached to the dominant discourses that fuel movements and actions of hatred. The audience can uphold securitisation but also, as shown in this article, enable desecuritisation. It might, thus, be worth considering that the 'political distinction to which political action and motives can be reduced [might not be] between friend and enemy' (Schmitt, 1996 [1932], p. 26) but can be found instead in various overlapping spaces in between.

## Notes

1   Impression gathered from living in the region during 2019.

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## Why have the People's Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam been able to create and sustain maritime militias?

Author: Conor Steeds ✉

### Biography

Conor Steeds has an MA in History from the University of Glasgow where he studied abroad at the University of Texas at Austin. He remained at Glasgow and went onto gain his MSC in Global Security (Strategy and Defence). He is now a Civil Servant for the UK government.

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### Abstract

Providing a unique comparison of the maritime militias of the People's Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, this study analyses why these two countries were able to create and sustain maritime militias, and their importance to hybrid warfare. By studying the history, organisation, ideology and the economic support provided to these maritime militias, it highlights the similarities between the countries' systems, and how this has allowed for their creation and subsequent maintenance. Based on my findings, I have hypothesised that in order for a country to create and sustain successfully a maritime militia it must have a history of "people's war" and a highly centralised state.

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### Introduction

The South China Sea is one of the most disputed territories in the world. At the forefront of these disputes is the People's Republic of China. Carrying a third of the world's trade, this region should be of concern to all (China Power, 2021). Through its nine-dash line, the eponymous nine dashes on the map of Southeast Asia, which demarcates China's alleged territory, it claims the vast majority of the region beyond the norms of international law. China does this through a combination of strategies, including information warfare, island building and aggressive resource extraction.

"Hybrid warfare" first came into prominence through the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014. China, however, has arguably been practising it for some time in the South China Sea. At the forefront of China's expansion is the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (PAFMM). Made up of fishermen operating on fishing boats and support ships, the PAFMM is used in a variety of missions, including supporting island building, collecting intelligence and clashing with other countries' warships; the PAFMM is never far from the frontline. It has been used so extensively by the PRC that, in 2009, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) decided to

create its own version of the force, in order to compete directly without escalating through the use of traditional assets. Made up predominantly of fishermen, maritime militias are a type of naval force unique to these two communist/Leninist states.

Presently, the only countries to possess operational maritime militias are the PRC and the SRV. In recent years, however, the government of the Philippines have expressed interest and have tried to create their own version passing a law to that effect in 2016 (Government of the Philippines, 2016). As of 2019, they have not had any success in creating a maritime militia. This study, therefore, aims to answer the following question: *why have the People's Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam been able to create and sustain maritime militias?* In doing so, it aims to contribute to the academic debate on this increasingly relevant topic. By looking at how the two countries have created their maritime militias and at the factors that have allowed them to be sustained, this research aims at comparing the two cases. Through a comparative case study, it also aims at identifying the key factors conducive to the success of both countries.

Furthermore, the study professes to use this comparison to form a hypothesis on whether it is possible for a non-Leninist state to create an effective maritime militia. This is of importance to both academics and policy-makers. For the former, this is an understudied area but one of rising importance. In particular, the Vietnamese People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (VPAFMM) is frequently only mentioned in recognition of the fact that the PAFMM is not the only maritime militia in existence, and has received far less scholarly attention than the PAFMM. Moreover, no study has examined why these two countries are the only ones to have been able to create these forces. As such, it will add to the academic literature on the topic. Secondly, as shown by the Government of the Philippines' decision, there is an interest among regional policy-makers to create similar forces. Thus, by studying the existing examples, this study aims to explore whether it would be possible for a democratic country to create and sustain a successful maritime militia of its own. To this effect, this article concludes that it would not be possible. Through a comparative analysis, it was shown that the shared history of the two countries, which have both undergone a communist revolution followed by a Leninist government, coupled by their centralised systems of governance provide a unique set of circumstances for the creation of maritime militias.

## Previous research on Asian civil-military relations and maritime militias

As stated, the purpose of this study is to contribute to our understanding of Vietnamese and Chinese maritime militias, whilst contributing to the field of civil-military relations in Asia. It also aims to ascertain whether maritime militias can only be the products of socialist countries, as will be explained further in the methodology. This literature review will, therefore, concentrate on two main aspects: firstly, literature related to civil-military relations (CMR) in Asia and, secondly, literature on maritime militias in both China and Vietnam and the limits of the current research. This is important since it is only in the last decade

that the PAFMM has come under academic scrutiny and the attention of policy-makers. Consequently, there has been an increased number of publications on the topic, although the literature is still young. In contrast, the literature on the VPAFMM is almost non-existent.

**Civil-military relations**

Civil-military relations as an academic topic can boast a vast literature with a number of key developments. One of the most significant works that pioneered the regional approach under which my research falls, is Morris Janowitz's *Civil-military relations: regional perspectives* (1981). The book's strategy of concentrating on one region in particular allows both for an in-depth analysis and the identification of similarities between nations, which 'reflect underlying uniformities in sociocultural patterns'. Within this work, Harlan W. Jencks' chapter entitled 'China's civil-military relations, 1949–1980' is of particular relevance indicating the link between armed struggle and the future nature of civil-military relations in a country, something that can be seen in the development of both Vietnam and China's maritime militias.

Another of Janowitz's works is also extremely important and has proven pioneering in the field. In *The military in the political development of new nations* (1964), he posits five types of civil-military relations: authoritarian-personal control, authoritarian-mass party, democratic competitive and semi-competitive systems, civil-military coalition and military oligarchy. This has influenced other scholars, such as Paul Chambers and Napisa Waitoolkiat (2017), whose study of the role of militaries in the economies of Southeast Asia uses a modified version of the Janowitzian system to categorise the countries that they study.

There is also extensive research regarding civil-military relations within communist/Leninist countries, most notably Amos Perlmutter and William M. LeoGrande's (1980) work entitled *The Party in uniform: towards a theory of civil-military relations in communist political systems*. This work looks at the influence of the military in communist states through its relations with the state and the party, the so-called "iron triangle", which sets out the stages of development post-revolution.

The majority of the literature regarding civil-military relations in Asia, however, though extensive, is increasingly outdated. The speed of development in China in recent years and Xi Jinping's consolidation of power has meant that much of the pertinent literature now finds itself increasingly irrelevant. Despite this, a lot of the research is still germane; take for instance Andrew Scobell's 'China's evolving civil-military relations: creeping Guojiahua' (2005), which tracks the PLA's development from a party army to a party–state army, and 'Analysing Chinese civil-military relations: a bottom-up approach' by Sofia K. Ledberg (2018), which uses a bottom-up analytical approach to examine the professional autonomy of the Chinese officer corps.

## Maritime militias

The literature on maritime militias is both new and limited. Mainstream writings on the Chinese military mention the militia forces whilst generally failing to reference the maritime element. This is true of David Shambaugh's *Modernizing China's military: progress, problems and prospects* (2002) and Mark Ryan et al.'s Chinese warfighting: the PLA experience since 1949 (2003). Though the PAFMM has existed since the Chinese Civil War, both books fail to mention it despite the fact that it was recorded as having 750,000 members on 140,000 craft in 1978. This is partly because both of these works were written before the current Chinese expansionism in the South China Sea through the PAFMM. As such, though detailed on regular Chinese forces, these studies fail to mention the PAFMM, indicating the gaps in mainstream literature on the Chinese military. One notable exception, however, is Bruce Swanson's *Eighth voyage of the dragon* (1982). This provides a useful history of the PAFMM in China and its relationship with the state; however, it is now rather outdated due to the militias' shift from coastal control to maritime sovereignty and towards operations in the South and East China Seas.

Andrew Gawthorpe, in his chapter 'Civil-military responses to hybrid threats in East Asia' in Cusumano and Corbe's *A military response to hybrid threats* (2018), explores the history behind hybrid warfare in East Asia, and principally Chinese use of its maritime militia in 1974 and the Vietnamese experience during the Vietnam War. The principal purpose of Gawthorpe's chapter is to highlight effective countermeasures to current Chinese hybrid warfare in East Asia. To do this, he uses historical examples, principally the US experience in Vietnam, to provide learning points for the current climate. Gawthorpe touches upon how the centralised communist/Leninist state of each country allows for the use of hybrid warfare and the integration of civil, military and paramilitary means as a way of furthering this. The focus, however, is predominantly on current Chinese operations and how these can be combatted from a US perspective. The analysis of why China and Vietnam can wield hybrid forces is limited to a brief overview of the civil-military power dynamics in communist/Leninist countries, something that leaves room for further exploration of this complex relationship.

One author who has produced a plethora of work on the PAFMM is Andrew Erickson. Perhaps the most notable of these is the aptly titled *China's maritime militia* written with Conor M. Kennedy (2019). This work goes into detail about the PAFMM, compiling numerous sources such as PRC documents and interviews to provide a detailed analysis of the PAFMM. Much of Erickson's work, however, is not formally academic; rather, it is a collection of articles, reports and studies conducted on the PAFMM through his role at the US Naval War College's China Maritime Studies Institute. Another important piece of work is his 2017 report, again written with Conor M. Kennedy, titled *China's third sea force – The People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia: tethered to the PLA*. This highlights the close connection between the PAFMM and the PLA. Erickson has also recently written a book with Ryan D. Martinson,

titled *China's maritime gray zone operations* (2019), providing deep insights into the use of the PAFMM in the South China Sea, as well as how it interlinks with the PLA Navy (PLAN) and the Chinese Coastguard. Still, it fails to look at the make-up of the PAFMM itself. Some of the most important research conducted by Erickson involves the Tanmen, Hainan and Sansha maritime militias. Using Chinese documents, interviews and other sources Erickson explores the history, role and leadership of these individual militia units. Moreover, it helps to put an identifier on what are otherwise considered faceless fishing boats, constituting perhaps the most in-depth exploration of individual PAFMM units (down to the company level) and is, therefore, an invaluable source.

Another important published text in relation to the PAFMM is Toshi Yoshihara's article entitled 'The 1974 Paracels sea battle: a campaign appraisal' (2016), which explores the Chinese use of militia forces in its occupation of the Paracel Islands in 1974. It provides an important exploration of the historical role of the PAFMM, as well as the Vietnamese experience of dealing with the PAFMM and how this has influenced its strategy in relation to Chinese expansionism.

A major gap in current research exists in relation to the VPAFMM, as unlike China, Vietnam is not considered a major power. China has attracted research interest from the US since it is increasingly seen as a strategic competitor. This is easily recognisable in the research conducted by Erickson, who as Professor of Strategy in the US Naval War College also informs his own government's strategy directly through the education of officers and government officials at all levels. In contrast, Vietnam's Maritime Militia has received little attention academically, not excluding articles written about Vietnamese strategy in combatting China. Whilst China regards the VPAFMM as something to be concerned with, this does not seem to have filtered through to academic research, save for in the Chinese Press. An example is the writings of Zhang Tao in 2019, who scarcely mentions the Vietnamese Maritime Militia and its expansion. Unfortunately, since 2019, this and a number of other PRC primary sources are no longer freely available. Impermanence is one of the hazards of using primary documents directly sourced from the PRC's own government outlets. Carlyle A. Thayer's article, titled 'Vietnam's strategy of "cooperating and struggling" with China over maritime disputes in the South China Sea' (2016), provides an insight into the continuing maritime tensions between the two nations and thoroughly explores Vietnamese moves towards the modernisation of its navy. It fails, however, to mention the VPAFMM and its role in Vietnamese strategy towards China.

## Theory and methodology

In order to assess the reasons why the PRC and SRV have been able to create and maintain maritime militias, I will use a comparative case study analysis. Case studies are one of the oldest forms of qualitative research with much of what is known about the empirical world coming from case study research. More importantly, they provide a means of identifying

common themes to allow an effective comparison of the two countries and the analysis of their respective maritime militias.

**Epistemological assumptions**

A shift away from the empirical research of the 1950s and 1960s epitomised by Janowitz and Finer (Blondell, 1999) towards a post-positivist and constructivist approach in civil-military relations research, typified by Norgaard (1994) and Jachtenfuchs (1995), has been observed in recent decades. Their focus on questioning the assumptions underpinning CMR was a very important development. As with the research before them, however, there was a certain focus on questioning civil-military relations among Western democratic states and in doing so they generally ignored CMR in Asia.

Within the study of civil-military relations in Asia, however, this empirical approach has survived. Until the 1970s, no work existed which compared civil-military relations in South East Asia and it was not until Johnson's seminal work in 1972, which included three Asian case studies, that comparisons were drawn across the region. Since then, other works have focussed on the issue of civil-military relations in Asia, such as Croissant's (2018) comparative overview of 24 Asian societies. There have also been several works concentrating on China alone due to its size and role as the region's dominant power (e.g. Finkelstein and Gunness, 2007; You, 2016). The use of comparative case studies in these works demonstrates the breadth of insights that can be drawn by comparing different countries in the region.

These studies are predominantly based on the empirical tradition also known as positivism. This approach underpinned not only civil-military relations research but also research in International Relations and Security more generally. In this study, the aim is to look at two relatively understudied bodies within the Vietnamese and Chinese maritime militias. The objective is to identify the key factors in the creation and continued maintenance of each force, and what this can tell us about the unique nature of maritime militias and the two countries that possess them. Therefore, an empirical approach is the most sensible, as despite the relative age of the PAFMM it has only become relevant in the last decade or so alongside the creation of the VPAFMM. Consequently, my approach is an inductive one aiming to formulate a theory based on the findings rather than testing any particular theory through the study.

**Case study justifications**

The reason why the PRC and the SRV have been selected for this case study is simple. They are the only two countries to possess maritime militias. As such, it is important to define what a maritime militia is and what differentiates it from both traditional navies and other forces. It is important, however, to justify further this area of research. The South China Sea is one of the most contested areas on Earth with numerous countries making claims to all or some of the territory. Claiming all territory within the so-called nine-dash line (Gao

and Jia, 2013), the PRC has begun an extensive island-building operation in contested areas, such as the Spratly Islands and Scarborough Shoal. At the forefront of this mission is the PAFMM. Their exploits have been reported more often in recent years, as they engage in a variety of missions including intelligence collection, the transport of building materials and, increasingly, presence missions around contested islands and shoals. The militia has also been used in confrontations with other countries operating in the region.

One confrontation that brought the PAFMM into the forefront of international attention was when a PAFMM vessel nearly collided with the USS Lassen, whilst using a grappling hook to try and grab a towed array sonar (Odom, 2010). Other notable instances include actions around the Scarborough Shoal, where the Tanmen maritime militia clashed with the Filipino coast guard and naval vessels, even shooting back at these when caught poaching. The PAFMM has been present at every major clash in the region in recent years including the clash over the HYSY-981 oil rig, where it came at loggerheads with Vietnamese fishing vessels sinking a number of them (Erickson and Kennedy, 2016). In all of these instances, the PAFMM was used as a means of creating plausible deniability and an air of doubt. Much like Russian President Vladimir Putin's deployment of his 'little green men' in Crimea as a means of sowing doubt, the PAFMM has been deployed in similar circumstances to make other nations more hesitant in their responses, as they are unsure if they are operating against fishing vessels or maritime militia members.

The operation of the PAFMM in maritime and legal grey zones has led to it being labelled as the "Grey" force, setting it apart from the "Blue" traditional deep-water navy and the "White" Coast Guard (Erickson and Kennedy, 2019). Through these actions, it is placed at the forefront of hybrid warfare, defined as threats which make use of 'a wide range of overt and covert, paramilitary and civilian measures […] employed in a highly integrated design' to achieve outcomes (NATO, 2014). It is also marked by actions that are made with calculated ambiguity, something that is especially the case with Chinese operations in the South China Sea (Gawthorpe, 2018). Given the rising importance of hybrid warfare and the deployment of maritime militias in this region, it is important to study them further.

Despite their rise to prominence, no official definition of a maritime militia exists; however, in 2012, the Zhoushan garrison commander and the garrison's mobilisation office defined '[t]he maritime militia [as] an irreplaceable mass armed organisation not released from production and a component of China's ocean forces [that enjoys] low sensitivity and great leeway in maritime rights protection actions' (Erickson and Kennedy, 2019, p. 1).

Further to this, both countries are under what Janowitz (1964) labels as authoritarian-mass party control. As mentioned in the literature review, Janowitz posits five types of civil-military relations. Both the PRC and SRV fall under the category of an authoritarian-mass party in the above system, which is typified by a highly vertical single party system exercising complete

control over the military. Their power resides in the politburo or directorate. Civilian control is strong; however, there is little to no pluralism and, as such, is representative of communist/ Leninist countries like the PRC and SRV. Both countries are also typified by the fact that the military is allowed to engage in its own economic and commercial projects to supplement their government financing (Chambers and Waitoolkiat, 2017). This raises the question as to what extent this system is important for the creation and maintenance of a maritime militia.

This study seeks not only to explore what factors helped to create and maintain the maritime militias in question but also whether maritime militias are only possible in countries of the same system, namely communist/Leninist countries with a high level of civilian control over the military and with violent revolutionary origins. With tensions continuing to rise in the South China Sea, and other countries in the region discussing the idea of creating maritime militias, this research aims to test the hypothesis of whether maritime militias can only be created and maintained by authoritarian-mass party socialist countries. Unfortunately, due to the fact that these two countries are the only ones with maritime militias, it is not truly possible to ascertain whether other countries are unable to develop and maintain militias. Whilst the Philippines have expressed an interest in creating their own maritime militia, as of 2019 this project has not progressed and, as such, there are neither sources nor an actual militia available for comparison with the SRV and PRC. This is not to say that it is impossible for them to develop a maritime militia in the future but, presently, it is not possible to include them in the study. What can be examined, however, are the unique factors that have allowed the two case studies to develop maritime militias, and whether these factors are unique to them. In order to accomplish this, the study will compare the two countries in question based on the criteria listed below, which have been identified as key areas for such an assessment.

**Research methods**
Having considered several different methods to assess why both countries have been able to create and maintain maritime militias, I settled upon a comparative case study. Unlike more traditional case studies, however, my analysis is not focussed on why two countries with similar systems ended up with different outcomes, but rather what are the similarities between them. Case study research has a long and respected tradition, especially regarding Asia. As maritime militias are still understudied within the area of military studies, especially the VPAFMM, we need to approach them from an empirical standpoint, something that a case study design allows for. Furthermore, other methods such as interviews would be impossible. This is not only due to language difficulties but also the reluctance of members of the maritime militias to speak to foreigners. The research conducted by Erickson and others into the PAFMM provides a wealth of open-source documents, white papers and Chinese language news stories offering direct insight into the PAFMM. As such, they are among the main sources of information. This, however, is not the case for the VPAFMM. Therefore, I have endeavoured to locate sources on the VPAFMM online. Using open-source government documents, news articles, press releases and official interviews, I have been able to build a

picture of the VPAFMM, how it was created and how it is maintained.

There are, however, some severe limitations to the data available. First and foremost, there is the problem of language. Whilst technology has allowed for the much easier translation of web pages, in particular, there are still some documents that cannot be translated. Thus, the work of Erickson and Kennedy in bringing these sources to light for the English-speaking world is invaluable. As already mentioned, the general literature around this topic is thin. Though it has grown in recent years, much of the research done by the US government is not available to the public. Conversely, articles written for public consumption within the PRC are difficult to access beyond the language barrier. Many articles that contradict statements made about the PAFMM to a global audience have since been deleted as a means of reinforcing the official line. As such, finding Chinese language sources that have already been discovered can be as difficult as finding new sources. In terms of data on Vietnam, nowhere near the same amount of research into their maritime militias has been conducted as into the PAFMM. Therefore, we must rely to a large extent on official documents, such as white papers and government laws.

In analysing the various sources, it was these factors which repeatedly appeared throughout.

**Areas of comparison**
During the analysis of the various sources, three key factors emerged as central themes for both countries: their history, their political system and organisation, and their control of the economy. Coincidentally, whilst these factors are somewhat unique to each nation they share many commonalities, providing a solid basis for comparison and contrast. Other potential areas applied to one country rather than the other, such as individual leaders, but also seemed to have less bearing on the maritime militias themselves and were, therefore, disregarded for the purposes of this study.

**History** – The PAFMM came about due to its struggle against the fleet of nationalist China. Since then, it has continued to play an important role in Chinese defence matters, such as the 1974 Paracel Islands campaign. Vietnam's maritime militia is, by comparison, very new; however, as a nation, Vietnam has a long tradition of "people's war", most notably the National Liberation Army during the Vietnam War. As such, this section will analyse the extent to which a nation's historical experiences can affect its ability to create and maintain an effective maritime militia, and whether or not this is the predominant factor.

**Political system and organisation** – Both China and Vietnam are socialist countries with a high degree of control over civilian and military life. As such, this section will analyse the civil-military relationship as well as the overall political control in these countries. Furthermore, it will look at the state's relationship with its citizens and how this ties in with recruitment for and maintenance of the maritime militia, through analysing the extent

which participation is compulsory.

**Control of the economy** – Both China and Vietnam have supported the relationship between maritime militias and the fishing economy. Government support towards building large ocean-going steel-hulled vessels and higher salaries than would otherwise be provided to fishermen have both been used to incentivise fishermen to place their livelihoods at risk. This is particularly the case for Vietnam, where fishing vessels sent into conflict with China have been sunk, ostensibly leading to the loss of these fishermen's livelihood. This study will analyse state documents, news reports and interviews to ascertain not only the extent of financial support but what role it plays in the maintenance of the respective maritime militias.

**Analysing the data**

As an empirical study on an understudied aspect of international relations and security policy in Asia, the data is not only important for the conclusions that can be drawn but also for understanding both organisations better. Such analysis, however, is very Janowitzian, aiming to draw conclusions from the data in an empirical manner.

Therefore, the purpose of the analysis is to draw conclusions directly from the empirical findings isolating the major factors by identifying commonalities in both states and their respective prominence in reports, secondary literature and laws. Through this, I aim to analyse the respective importance of each factor, isolate the key reasons why both countries have been able to create and maintain these increasingly specialised militia units and whether or not that would be possible for a country that does not have an authoritarian-mass party government. I will also make use of process-tracing to track which causal mechanisms have led to the creation of these maritime militias.

## The People's Republic of China

**History**

In 2018, the Chinese defence minister General Chang Wanquan implored the nation to prepare for a 'people's war at sea' (Holmes, 2019). In this statement, Chang builds upon a concept of warfare that has been key to the Chinese approach to warfighting since before the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) itself. "People's war" as a concept arose out of the Chinese Communist Parties' (CCP) battles with the Japanese Empire and the Kuomintang (KMT). The concept of "people's war" was developed by Mao Zedong in response to the inferiority of his forces in arms, equipment and training. As such, it became necessary to wage a protracted war of attrition until the two sides reached a degree of technological parity (Godwin, 2003). Mao Zedong (1972), however, also recognised that such a war required the support of the people, stating in 1938 that:

> The mobilisation of the common people throughout the country will

create a vast sea in which to drown the enemy, create conditions that will make up for our inferiority in arms and other things, and create the prerequisites for overcoming every difficulty in war (p. 228)

This theory of "people's war" subsequently developed into a naval format as the CCP reached the coastline. Whilst some critics argued that the sea, due to its lack of cover and people, made it ill-suited for the concept of "people's war", Mao Zedong disagreed pointing out that the ocean was populated by fishermen:

> The Navy has its own characteristics, but we cannot emphasise the navy's specialness. We must carry forward the army's good traditions. We cannot toss them aside. The Navy must also rely on the people; it must rely on fishermen. It must plant roots among the fishermen.

This theory of "people's war" at sea was the means by which the CCP aimed at defeating the technologically superior KMT. One important instance in which fishing boats were used was the battle for Hainan Island in 1950 (now a major maritime militia base), when the PLA refitted sailboats with weapons and used numerical superiority and greater manoeuvrability to defeat the larger, slower KMT vessels. This, in turn, led to the development of the idea of a "people's war at sea" and the "thousand-ship march", which relied on the use of a numerically superior force to overwhelm a technologically superior one. Perhaps the epitome of this form of warfare at sea was the 1974 dispute over the Paracel Islands. This clash between the PRC and South Vietnamese forces saw the deployment of maritime militias as an independent force using fishing trawlers to infiltrate the island (Yoshihara, 2016). Rather than the previous use of fishing vessels due to necessity and technological inferiority, what we see is the combined use of maritime militia and PLAN forces to achieve both strategic and operational objectives through tactics reminiscent of what can be seen in the South and East China Seas today.

Another important aspect of militias is their enduring presence in the Chinese military structure. The origin of militias in Chinese forces can be traced back to Mao Zedong and their use against the KMT. The militias formed one of the three strands needed to support his strategy, alongside regional forces and the PLA (Godwin, 2003). As such, an armed militia is at the heart of Chinese military history and theory. The maritime militia itself, however, did not come about until after the formation of the PRC. Rather, the militia was a solution to two problems facing the PRC: first, the ever-present threat of nationalist forces along the coastline and, second, the need to control the previously itinerant fishing communities that had caused trouble for previous regimes. An initial maritime militia was created, focusing on coastal defence and mainly made up of land dwellers (Rielage and Strange, 2019).

Simultaneously, the PRC moved to create new bonds tying the marine economy to the new state. This revolved initially around modernising the fleet and increasing the catch but, due

to an exodus of ships to Hong Kong, the first five-year plan (1952–1957) redoubled the efforts of political organisation in regard to the fishing fleet. As part of this, vessels were required to register in a collective and received political education. Strict organisational control was enforced by a requirement that on every crew there had to be a party or Communist Youth League representative to enforce planned routes. Furthermore, multiple family members of the fishermen were required to set up residence ashore to ensure their loyalty (Rielage and Strange, 2019; Erickson and Kennedy, 2019). As communist control of the fishing population increased, so did efforts to integrate them into national defence planning. For instance, a PRC fishing licence acquired by US naval intelligence in 1951 included the requirement to assist in preventing 'raids and infiltration' (Swanson, 1982). PRC fishermen began to play an accented role in supporting the PLAN, such as the 1965 capture of a Taiwanese spy plane crew or more assertive 'maritime rights protection' (Rielage and Strange, 2019).

**What does this mean in terms of the modern-day maritime militia?**
What we can extrapolate from the above is that today's maritime militia is influenced not only from a strong tradition but also from a supporting theoretical framework. When analysed, the concept of "people's war", though challenged to an extent by technological advancements particularly within the PLA, is nevertheless a strong one. Maritime militia units are proud of the role they have played in the past, and this sense of continuity in a proud military tradition cannot be set aside and ignored. Rather, in examining why China has successfully set up a maritime militia that is able to conduct operations in close concert with its Navy, it is possible to infer that China's history and its unique circumstances are responsible for creating an environment conducive to the presence of an effective militia. By building on this tradition and developing the maritime militias further via improved technology, training and even specially built ships, the PRC has been able to take advantage of its own history. It is also clear, however, that whilst China has a maritime militia predominantly due to its unique history, its maintenance is due to the factors listed below.

**Organisation**
Organisation lies at the heart of how the PAFMM is maintained and is closely linked to the ideology of the PRC. It not only provides the leadership through which it is deployed but also the party oversight to make sure that the militia remains loyal to the party above all.

China's People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia Organization

Conor Kennedy & Andrew Erickson (CMSI *China Maritime Report* 1, 2017): http://bit.ly/PAFMM-PLA
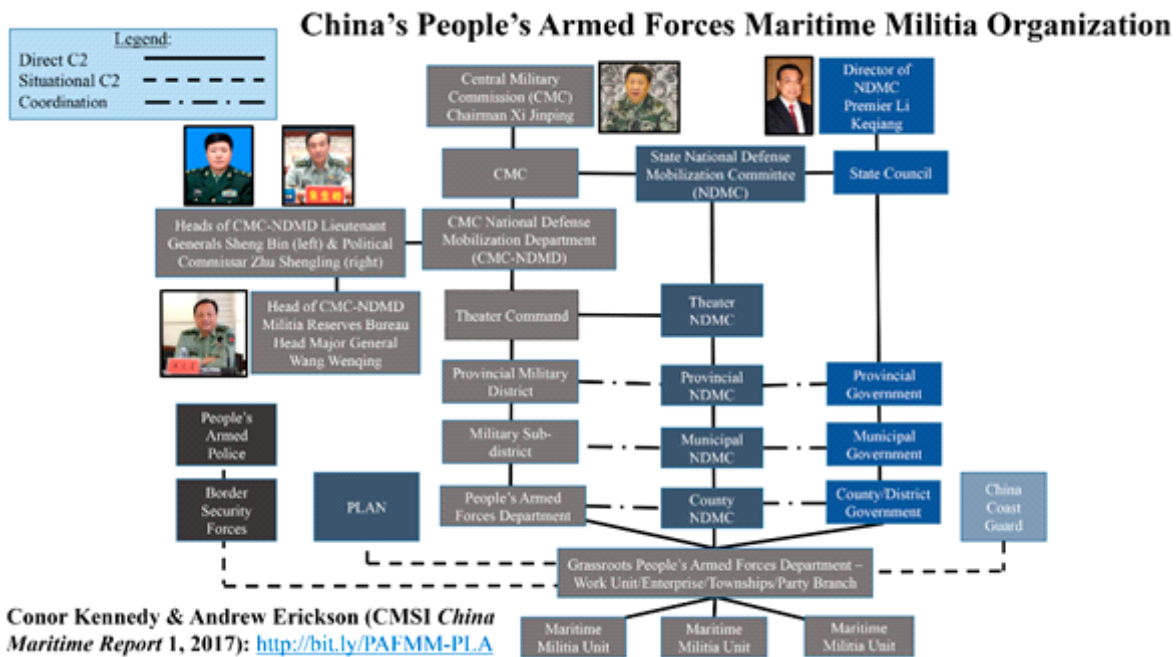
Figure 1

In terms of the structure of the PAFMM, Erickson has created a diagram (see *Figure 1*), which provides a detailed overview of the command and control of the PAFMM. As with all of his work, this is based on open-source documents that he has located and translated, providing key insights into the PAFMM's make-up. As seen, the lowest level is the individual maritime militia unit. These can be more professional units filled with PLAN veterans but, for the most part, they are based around existing fishing communities. The largest communities form battalion-sized units with the majority of localities creating company-sized units, which are further divided into platoons with an individual ship being considered a squad (Erickson and Kennedy, 2015). At the highest level, management of the militia begins at the CMC National Defence Mobilisation Department, which sets out the regulations for the militia as a whole. According to Erickson, however, real command of the militia begins at the Provincial Military District level and trickles below, with individual departments overseeing the thousands of county and grassroots People's Armed Forces Departments (Erickson and Kennedy, 2015).

What is most significant is the dual leadership system of the command in which responsibility is shared between the military and their government/party counterparts. This is set out in the Militia Regulations (1991):

> The local people's governments at all levels must strengthen their leadership over the work of the militia, coordinate the work of the militia, and organise and supervise the task of the militia. The relevant departments of local people's governments at various levels shall assist the military organs in carrying out the work of the militia and solve relevant problems. (Article 7)

This results in the militia being overseen simultaneously by the local military commander and the government leader. Dual leadership is further reinforced by the fact that the local government is also responsible for the funding of the militia. Since command falls on two different structures, the National Defence Mobilisation Committee (NDMC) plays a crucial role in binding the military and political leaders into one decision-making body. The NDMC brings together these leaders to organise, coordinate and direct nationwide defence mobilisation. Whilst operational command of the militia falls to the Provincial Military District, or the PLAN depending on the operation, the civilian command elements provide the political oversight, making sure that the militia remains loyal to the party. This structure allows decisions to be made quickly in relation to the maritime militia, as both the military and the government/party are working towards a common goal through the relevant NDMC.

Education is the responsibility of each ship captain, who is also the militia commander. This is due to the fact that, although the crews of fishing vessels may change, the captain of a vessel usually remains the same from season to season. As such, they are trained as the backbone of the militia cadre and are responsible for the education of the crew. This system allows for greater cohesion and the ability to organise training more efficiently, ensuring 'the smooth flow of military orders' (MOD of the PRC, 2014 – source no longer accessible). Captains are responsible for ensuring that the men are educated whilst at sea by delivering both ideological and practical education, i.e. how to operate effectively as a member of the militia.

Focus on ideology is stressed in the Militia Work Regulations (1990) that emphasise that the members of the militia must be of 'good political ideology' over any other quality, such as military knowledge or good health. This education is reinforced through the structure of the militia, as party branches are also formed within battalion and company ranks to ensure party control at all levels. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the squad commanders, who are in most cases the fishing boat captains, to make sure that their crew continues to be of 'good ideology'. The extent of this emphasis is exemplified in the implementation of long-distance learning and the creation of a 'maritime mobile classroom' (MOD of the PRC, 2014). The lessons are designed by the Ministries of Human Resources and the Armed Forces, and learning is supervised by the Maritime Control and Command Centre. Members are tested upon return to port on the content of the videos they have watched, as well as having their assignments marked. This shows the importance placed on ideology by the Chinese government. As mentioned previously, ideology plays a large part in the success of the maritime militia. It was the predominant reason it was created, and the reason why the militia exists and is able to continue to pursue "people's war" in the twenty-first century.

The role of organisation in maintaining the militia is clearly extensive. It is also clear that its structure is unique to a communist/Leninist state. The system of dual leadership is one that originated in "people's war", where military commanders were simultaneously party leaders.

What we can extrapolate is that the current system allows for the continuation of this political command, whereby the militia units are not solely accountable to the military hierarchy. At all levels, the military and party/government work together, ensuring party command of the militia, as well as the ideological purity of its members. This guarantees that the militia feels that they are serving something greater than themselves and that it is their duty to serve the party and their country. This analysis points to a uniquely communist/Leninist system designed to ensure party control of assets and imbue its members with ideological fervour. It is this ideological education, alongside the financial incentives, that plays a key role in convincing members to join and stay in the militia.

**Economic support**

China is able to utilise economic incentives to individual fishermen, as well as ship owners and captains, to incentivise them to join the PAFMM. Furthermore, they may also use the ability to fine or even withdraw fishing licences from those who refuse to fulfil their obligations to the militia. This is one of the major differences between a communist/Leninist state and a free market economy, as the former can dictate what methods of production their citizens engage in, using the power of the state. The Chinese system allows for large parts of the country's fishing fleet to be deployed in a way which is unproductive economically. For instance, reports indicate hundreds of Chinese fishing boats and support ships staying off Thitu Island. They do not fish but rather spend their days at anchor around the island (Mangosing, 2019). The economic support these fishermen and the owners of the fishing boats receive must be competitive enough for them not to fish and, instead, use their vessels as a means of exerting pressure on the Filipino forces in the area through their sheer number.

For instance, in 2006, the Ningbo Military division of Zhejiang Province found that of the 140 listed militia boats in the region, 40 had been sold off by their respective owners (Deng, Zhao and Chen, 2006). In response to this, the government initiated a number of actions including that the pre-made fishing boats must be resold to the Ministry of Human Resources. Further to this, the military division warned against the further sale of fishing boats by their owners. These represent a number of economic actions that would not be possible in a free state. The local government can purchase these vessels, which it can then operate, while also threatening any other owners against selling their vessels, an action that would be completely unacceptable and unenforceable in a non-communist/Leninist nation. In this regard, it is the power that the state has over the economy and its ability to punish those who do not join the militia that are most powerful.

Further to this, the state also uses financial incentives and punishments to convince fishermen to fulfil their PAFMM duties. This mainly comes in the form of financial compensation, the level of which can vary regionally. Financial incentives are a powerful motivator not only for existing fishermen to continue to trade as such but also for them to remain in the PAFMM. With fish stocks being depleted in the region and increased competition from other Asian

states, the money earned from PAFMM duties has become more valuable as a reliable source of income. For instance, a survey conducted by the Sansha Garrison Political Department in 2015 found that 42% of Sansha's maritime militia attached greater importance to 'material benefits' than 'glory' in their service (Kennedy and Erickson, 2019).

These incentives help to persuade fishermen, especially in poorer regions, to join the PAFMM in order to subsidise their revenues. They are able to claim a variety of allowances. For instance, Article 27 of The Regulations on the Mobilisation and Requisition of Maritime Civil Vessels in Guangdong Province (2002), provides compensation in the event of participating in training, preparing for combat readiness, handling emergencies and emergency support, as well as for assisting in technological transformation projects and any other matters for which militiamen may be mobilised. Article 28 further stipulates that they can claim for fuel costs, lost income and basic living expenses. The fuel subsidies are quite extensive, representing a large outlay for regional governments. For instance, the city of Taishan in Guangdong province has paid fuel subsidies worth 194 million yuan in 2013 to some 2,650 vessels, paying out on average of 3,850.30 yuan per ton (Erickson and Kennedy, 2019). This is a significant amount of money and indicates that the government provides meaningful economic support to its fishing fleet for its service as maritime militia.

Whilst this is not an activity limited to communist countries, it is used alongside other measures so that the Chinese fishing fleet and the PAFMM continue to be present in the disputed areas of the South China Sea. The Chinese Government are also able to use their overall control to influence the cheap building of vessels not only for the PAFMM but also for the PLAN and CCG, with China's massive commercial shipbuilding industry subsidising the overhead costs of ship production for all three (Erickson, 2018).

Economic incentives, however, have been shown not to be enough for a number of reasons. First, the compensation of 10,000 RMB per day is half of the 20,000 RMB a day the vessels would be expected to make during peak fishing season (Jin, 2016). Thus, depending on the area the vessel comes from, economic incentives can be seen as insufficient compared to the money made on the open market, and has resulted in incidents such as that taking place in Zhejiang province in 2006 (Deng, Zhao and Chen, 2006). In these cases, the Chinese government relies on its control of other aspects of government, such as the courts, to enforce the obligation of militia service in the PAFMM by drawing on relevant laws (Jin, 2016).

For instance, in 2015, executives of the Sanya Fugang Fisheries Company, home to the maritime militia unit that harassed the USNS Impeccable in 2009, were indicted on numerous counts of bribery. The Haikou Intermediate People's Court, however, granted them leniency citing the extensive service of the maritime militia company in protecting China's rights and interests (Kennedy and Erickson, 2017). This incentive would not be available in a non-communist country. It is clear that government support, both economically and through other

means, is one of the reasons why China has been able to maintain its maritime militia and, more importantly, deploy it in the South China Sea.

## The Socialist Republic of Vietnam

**History**

Unlike China, Vietnam does not have a long maritime militia tradition with its own being created in 2009 as part of Law No. 43/2009/QH12. This set out the laws and regulations around a maritime militia, as well as its purpose. Vietnam, however, does have a tradition of militias and civilians fighting. In fact, as with the PRC, one of the key tenets of its military strategy is that of "people's war". Vietnam's military traditions also originate in its own revolutionary experiences. Vietnam, rather than fighting a nationalist government, found itself in combat with foreign imperialist forces in the form of the Japanese, the French and the Americans. This shaped its military theory creating a doctrine of "people's war". Much of the communist theory of "people's war", however, was drawn from the experience of the CCP. Starting in the 1920s, Vietnamese communist leaders gathered direct knowledge of Chinese communist theories and practices of organising "people's war" (Harrison, 1989). This included Ho Chi Minh himself who went to Mao Zedong's Northern Chinese base in 1938. Other notable Vietnamese party members serving alongside the Chinese included Ly Buin and Nguyen Son, both of whom participated in the long march, and Nguyen Chi Thanh who served in Mao Zedong's army into the 1940s. Thus, there is a distinctly Chinese influence on the Vietnamese theory of "people's war". This, however, was increasingly influenced by their own experiences, as much as those of the Soviet Union and the PRC.

The main Vietnamese thinker here was General Vo Nguyen Giáp. His writings are based on the Chinese experience combined with Vietnam's own, and these do differ to an extent. For instance, there is a greater focus on guerrilla warfare than in Mao Zedong's writings. This is predominantly due to the extreme imbalance in terms of arms and technology available, even more so than in China, leading them to adopt:

> The strategy and tactics of a people's war in an economically backward, colonial country, standing up against a powerfully equipped and well-trained army of aggression. Is the enemy strong? One avoids him. Is he weak? One attacks him. To his modern armament one opposes a boundless heroism to vanquish either by harassing or by combining military operations with political and economic action [and] initiative, flexibility, rapidity, surprise, suddenness in attack and retreat (1970, p. 103)

In this strategy and accompanying tactics, greater focus is placed on the use of irregular warfare. Whilst Mao Zedong's idea of "people's warfare" concentrated on the idea of drawing

the enemy deeper into friendly territory so as to be able to fight on favourable ground far from the enemy's supply points, Vo Nguyen Giáp focused more on guerrilla warfare. Furthermore, parallel to the study of Chinese sources, there was also an increased focus on the country's own history of popular resistance. Giáp points out that Vietnam's history provides a perfect example for the understanding of the principle of the 'armament of the revolutionary masses and the building of the revolutionary army' (Harrison, 1989).

Vo Nguyen Giáp (1975) also mentions militias, stating that '[t]he invincible strength of the people's armed forces proceeded from the direction of the party [which] armed the entire people [and organised] three categories of regular [and] regional troops and popular militias' (p. 27). Whilst Vietnam may not have had a maritime militia until 2009, it does have a strong tradition of service very similar to China. The tradition and organisation already in place are an important part of why Vietnam was able to create successfully a maritime militia. Throughout recent Vietnamese history, the militia and self-defence forces have been at the forefront of responses not only to civil but also military threats.

For instance, in the 1979 Sino-Vietnamese War, Vietnamese militias played a crucial role in engaging the Chinese regular forces and inflicting significant casualties. Using rudimentary, improvised weapons, they resisted against French, American and Chinese forces. They have also successfully used more advanced weaponry, notably in the form of anti-air detachments during the Vietnam War, whose tally accounted for ten percent of US pilots shot down over North Vietnam (*GlobalSecurity.org*, no date). Fighting under the mottos, "one hand on the plow, the other on the gun" and "one hand on the hammer, one hand on the gun", the militia highlighted the close relationship between production and fighting. Lieutenant General Do Ba Ty (2015), the Chief of the General Staff and the VPA Deputy Minister of National Defence, states how after these wars the Militia and Self-Defence Force:

> continued to bring into play its role in the new condition, being an important part of the Vietnam's three types of Armed Forces, the core in carrying out military and defence tasks, maintaining political security, localities' social order and safety, making contribution, in cooperation the whole military and people, to thwarting the hostile forces' strategy of "Peaceful Evolution", firmly safeguarding national independence and sovereignty, and socialist regime. Also, the Militia and Self-Defence Force promoted its motive role in production, natural disasters and diseases prevention and alleviation, search and rescue, actively contributing to economic and social development, the country's industrialization and modernization.

Importantly, Do Ba Ty also argues that the heightened circumstances faced by Vietnam in the present require the 'bringing into play the Militia and Self-Defence Force's glorious traditions

and valuable experiences of the past years'. Vietnam, thus, recognises the importance of its tradition of militia service and its past success for the realisation of its current iteration. Whilst Vietnam may not have had a maritime militia in the past, the tradition of militia service is one that runs through the country, to the extent that the image used by Do Ba Ty in his celebration of the 80 years of the Militia and Self-Defence Force is that of the decade-old maritime militia.

**Organisation**

The organisation of the VPAFMM is similar to that of the PAFMM. Both are subject to a dual leadership system with joint control by the military and the government/party. This is most noticeable at the highest level, where the National Defence and Security Council is headed by the president of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, who is also commander-in-chief of the armed forces. As with the PRC, the military is directly subordinate to the Party, in this case the Central Military Party Committee (CPMC). This provides party control of the military at all levels (Thayer, 2016). The VPAFMM is answerable to the Militia Self-Defence Bureau, which is under the General Staff Department of the VPA. Vietnam is divided into nine military regions, each of which is responsible for the militia operating in its region. These areas are further subdivided into military districts and commune-level command units (*GlobalSecurity.org*, no date). The commune-level is the equivalent of the county level command in the PRC and, as such, has perhaps the biggest impact on the VPAFMM. At the lowest level one finds the militia itself; much like the PAFMM, this is divided into various ranks with the lowest being a group, followed by a squad and then a platoon. A company is called a flotilla and a battalion a fleet, though this information has been gleaned from a single website, which is one of the few with details on the VPAFMM (*GlobalSecurity.org*, no date).

Unfortunately, sources on the structure of the VPAFMM are limited. Beyond Thayer, the main Western author on the Vietnamese military, very little research has been conducted on the VPAFMM. The majority of information is gleaned from websites and articles written by the Vietnamese military and published through the *National Defence Journal*. From an academic standpoint this is far from ideal; however, due to the nature of the VPAFMM, this is to be expected. Compared to the PRC, Vietnam is a minor regional power on the world stage. Unlike the PRC, it is not regarded as a direct competitor to the United States and, as such, its militia has not been afforded the attention of PAFMM. Despite this, through the reading of Vietnamese Defence white papers, articles from the *National Defence Journal* and the work of Thayer, it is possible to begin piecing together a picture of the VPAFMM from predominantly primary sources.

It is clear that all levels have a direct impact on the militia and that is why the Vietnamese have been able to create a maritime militia successfully in such a short period of time. The role of the party and its desire to implement the laws passed is also clear. For instance, Military Region 9's Party Committee and Command endeavoured to comply with the 2009

law on the militia to the extent that, by 2020, the local militia and self-defence forces would make up 1.4% of the region's population. Furthermore, in order to make sure that the said units are ideologically loyal, it also committed to establishing military party cells in all wards, communes and towns across the district (Nguyen, 2018). The organisation of the regions is important in allowing this shift towards a maritime militia. The dual system allows for the close cooperation of the military and the party, with the latter having control over all aspects of government. This allows for decisions to be implemented quickly when required, as demonstrated by the increase in support for the maritime militias. It also allows for the effective recruitment of candidates for the militia. For instance, it is the responsibility of the chairpersons of the commune-level People's committees to organise the first-time registration of eligible members for the militia, who then work closely with the commune-level military command to select appropriate candidates. As with the PAFMM, funding is also designated to the local level and it is the responsibility of each commune and each region to report and organise the budget for military activities in their district. There is no equivalent, however, to the PRC's National Defence Mobilisation Committees, requiring the military and party to work together directly.

As with the PAFMM, the overall organisation of the VPAFMM is used to maintain and increase ideological awareness. For instance, in Military Region 9, the Party Committee and Command are committed to ensuring military party cells are established in all wards, communes and towns across the region in order to maintain ideological purity. What does this contribute, however, towards the creation and maintenance of an effective maritime militia? At the lowest level, it is the role of the party to encourage the idea of 'whole-people national defence', as set out in the 2009 law, which established the maritime militia. Indeed, the 2018 defence law stipulates that:

1. Protecting the Fatherland is a sacred duty and noble right of citizens.
2. Citizens have a duty of loyalty to the Fatherland; [they] must perform military service [and are] obliged to join the militia and self-defense and build a national defense; abide by measures of the State and competent persons in performing defense tasks according to the provisions of this Law and other relevant law provisions.

This law is important in reiterating the duty of all citizens to participate in national defence-building in the long tradition of "people's war". Alongside this, the law reiterates that it is the duty of all serving in the armed forces to be 'absolutely loyal to the Fatherland, The People, the Party, and the State'. This applies to the militia alongside the army and, as in the PAFMM, it is ensured by the education of the militiamen. Whilst we do not have any detailed information on any type of long-distance learning taking place, such as that utilised by the PAFMM, this is likely because the VPAFMM are mainly based close to their own shores. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the militiamen and their vessels adhere to the above and

are ideologically loyal to the party, they rely on a core of party members, union members and demobilised soldiers. These form a 'reliable political force of grassroots committees and administrations in maintaining security, social order, and safety in the sea border areas and participating in the struggle to protect the sovereignty of the sea and island homeland' (Nguyen, 2018).

What can be extrapolated from this, is that the whole state apparatus focus on the fact that it is the duty of everyone to serve the state. This makes it significantly easier to recruit members to the militia due to the expectation that all citizens must participate in national defence. Thus, combining this with the greater organisation and economic support enabled by the system of government, the maritime militia was created fairly easily due to the desire of the population to serve.

### Economic support

One of the most significant events in the history of the, then five-year-old, VPAFMM was the clash with the PRC over the Haiyang Shiyou 981 (HYSY 981) oil rig in 2014. As the Vietnamese fishing boats were significantly smaller than their PRC counterparts, they were rammed and sometimes sunk (Green, Hicks, Cooper, Schaus and Douglas, 2017). Subsequently, Vietnam began a process of upgrading its fishing fleet, passing Decree No. 67/2014/ND-CP on 7 July 2014. This law is important for a number of reasons, firstly because it indicates the Vietnamese government's desire to upgrade the size and power of its fishing fleet. Secondly, it provides an insight into the government's relationship with the economy, the commercial and state banks, and how it may use its economic control to further its strategic goals. It also reveals the economic incentives provided to Vietnamese fishermen who, although not strictly part of the militia, are obliged to participate when required. Most importantly, it is the only publicly available document from which we can assess the funding of the VPAFMM. Therefore, it provides a unique insight into the state's relationship with both the maritime militia and the wider economy, attracting attention to the importance of high levels of centralised command, such as those present in a communist/Leninist state, for the success of similar endeavours.

The principal observation here is the sheer disparity in economic power between the two countries. Whilst China is able to use its organisational power and the world's largest shipbuilding industry to produce vessels, Vietnam is solely reliant on loans and incentives (Erickson, 2019). The comparison, however, allows us to infer the role of high-level party control and organisation as common to both.

Article one of Decree No. 67/2014/ND-CP states that it was written with the purpose of prescribing 'investment, credit and insurance policies; tax incentives and a number of other policies for fisheries development'. Article two then goes on to state that the decree applies to Vietnamese organisations and individuals conducting fishing activities, and those wishing

to build new ships or upgrade existing ones, as well as implementing investment projects on fishing-related infrastructure. Significantly, it indicates the nationalist aims of the policy in helping to improve the Vietnamese fishing fleet, with loans specifically unavailable to any foreign corporations that may be operating in Vietnam. Article three of the decree deals mainly with the investment policy in regard to ports, buoys and other features, the funding of which comes from the budget of the central government. Article four provides us with an insight into both the government's plans for the maritime militia and how it uses its control of the economy to do so. For instance, the decree states that in the case of an owner wishing to build a steel-hulled ship:

> Shipowners may borrow loans from commercial banks not exceeding 95% of the total investment in the shipbuilding, with the interest rate of 7%/year, of which shipowners shall pay 1%/year and the state budget shall subsidise 6%/year.

 Comparatively, in the case of wooden ships:

> Shipowners may borrow loans from commercial banks not exceeding 70% of the total investment in the shipbuilding, with the interest rate of 7%/year, of which shipowners shall pay 3%/year and the state budget shall subsidise 4%/year.

This shows that the government is willing to pay more interest on steel-hulled ships and also allows for larger loans, in this case, up to 95% of the cost of the ship. In doing so, it is clear that the Vietnamese government is encouraging the production of steel-hulled ships in the hope that they will become part of the VPAFMM and will be used in support of its operations in the region. This is even clearer in the following case:

> building new steel or new-material ships with a total main engine capacity of 800 HP or over: shipowners may borrow loans from commercial banks not exceeding 95% of the total investment in the shipbuilding, with the interest rate of 7%/year, of which shipowners shall pay 1%/year and the state budget shall subsidise 6%/year.

The most favourable loan is offered to the most powerful steel-hulled ships and is indicative of how Vietnam uses its economic control to reinforce the VPAFMM. This offer has been taken up nationwide, with the Thuan Nam district having used the loans to build ten ships to the above specifications (Nguyen, 2018). Moreover, in 2016, 35 shipowners in Quang Ngai and 28 in Khanh Hoa received government loans, while a further 35 in Binh Dinh signed contracts to build new ships (Zhang, 2016). Economic control is showcased in how the state can dictate to banks who they are to give loans to and also the interest rate to be paid. For

each class of loan, the government has decreed the interest rate by law. This, however, is not to the detriment of the banks as the government pays the majority of the interest on the boats. Theoretically, this allows the fishermen to pay off the loan more quickly, thus adding the boat to the nation's fishing fleet permanently. Further support is provided for insurance fees under Article five, including 100% support for the premiums of all crew members aboard and payment of 90% of the premium for ships with engine capacity of 400 HP or over.

Furthermore, under Article six, the Vietnamese government exempts fishermen from paying royalties on natural marine resources that they fish, as well as registration fees among other tax benefits. Perhaps the most interesting is Article seven, in which the state pledges to cover 100% of the costs of training crew members, and to subsidise vessels over 400 HP for up to ten voyages a year. This is significant due to the drop in fish stocks in the South China Sea, with total stocks depleted by 70–95 percent since the 1950s and catch rates having declined by 66–75 percent over the last 20 years (Poling, 2019).

As seen above, the law stipulates the rate of interest banks would charge on certain loans. Furthermore, it also sets out a number of conditions according to which the bank would have to apply to the government to reclaim its loan were the boats to be sunk or damaged beyond repair. Government stipulations on interest and loan amounts, and the fact that the banks must provide these loans irrespective of credit on terms set by the government shows the Vietnamese government's power over commercial institutions. Whilst the maritime militia does not benefit from the state-controlled commercial operations that are a significant part of the Vietnamese economy, the government's influence on the economy as a whole and its relative control compared to that of, for instance, the Filipino government over banks are important factors. Most notably, they enable the Vietnamese government to provide support through nominally private institutions benefitting the state, whilst limiting its outright expenditure predominantly related to interest payments.

Furthermore, the decree sets out the criteria of eligibility for upgrades and support. In terms of the VPAFMM, the most significant aspect is that 'offshore fishing logistics ships are members of fishing teams, cooperatives or enterprises' (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2014). Moreover, these vessels must have their activities certified by 'the army unit stationed on an island near the fishing ground or certification of the position of operation of the fishing service ship via the global positioning system (GPS) by a functional agency'. This provides a way for the government not only to track its investment but also to organise the ships into maritime militias. Although the decree does not explicitly state that this is its purpose, its temporal proximity to the Haiyang Shiyou incident and the focus on tougher, more powerful ships makes this a plausible assertion.

## Analysis

A comparison of the maritime militias of China and Vietnam reveals numerous similarities. Most importantly, both have a history of "people's war" and this doctrine continues to guide their present-day military doctrine. "People's war" includes two core concepts. These are the focus on irregular warfare and the involvement of the whole of society in the fight. They form the guiding principles that underpin the formation of maritime militias in both countries. It is the responsibility of all citizens to fight for the state and the party, an idea that lies at the core of the 2018 Vietnamese Defence law.

Whether or not it would be possible to create a force without such a revolutionary background is an interesting conundrum. It is clear that the history of "people's war" and the tradition it created, reinforced by the apparatus of the state, is crucial for the creation of maritime militias and their continued existence. Thus, it can be said that this is perhaps the main reason why both China and Vietnam have been able to maintain maritime militias, and is a factor that can be directly linked to their system of government and how each eventually came into power.

The concept of "people's war" is unique to communist/Leninist societies. Guerrilla warfare, however, is not. The tactics associated with the former came about out of necessity and were merged with ideology to create a doctrine which worked for both countries. It is clear that this process played a significant role in the creation of their respective maritime militias. This tradition, combined with the threat of a technologically superior force, meant that these countries, by necessity, resorted to using what was available to them to counter threats. In both cases, however, maritime militias were formed in the heat of war. Would it be possible to create a maritime militia capable of conducting what is known as grey warfare without this tradition of "people's war"? I think not. For this sort of warfare, a highly centralised system such as that encountered in Leninist societies is necessary in order to bring all aspects of the state together, both civilian and military. Filipino fishermen saw it as the duty of their government to respond to Chinese territorial aggression, not their own, something that was vastly different to the worldview of Vietnamese fishermen in 2014 (Macatuno, 2016).

The Chinese and Vietnamese have addressed this issue in two ways: firstly, through the education of their citizens to believe that it is their duty to serve in defence of country and party. Whether by deploying party members alongside the fishermen to make sure they remain loyal or by threatening punishment upon return if they do not fulfil their duty, the system and its ideology are designed to ensure citizens will serve when required. It is hard to believe a democracy could organise a militia whose members were willing to do the same, or deploy the same effective means of compliance as a communist party. This can be seen clearly in the interviews of Filipino fishermen who insisted that 'it is not our job' to defend territorial waters (Macatuno, 2016).

Secondly, it took the apparatus of a strong state to create these forces. In the case of the PAFMM, entire families were taken hostage ashore to ensure the fishermen's loyalty. More recently, subsidies, payments and even preferential legal treatment were deployed in order to entice the continued participation of fishermen in the militia. The state has been shown to have the power to create a system where it is almost impossible to refuse anything, albeit with the threat of punishment and the withdrawal of privileges. This is symptomatic of a Leninist government where the government/party has significant power over all aspects of life. Finally, the ideology which created the doctrine of "people's war" has been fed to the citizens ever since and, combined with the above-described apparatus, has resulted in strong feelings of duty to serve the country among the citizenry.

It is also clear that China and Vietnam entertain different reasons for maintaining the militias. China's use of the PAFMM as a "grey" force to expand its territorial claims in the region elicited varying responses from different countries. To the contrary, Vietnam installed a militia not to rival the PAFMM directly but to be able to compete with it even if on a smaller scale where needed. It has provided it with a means of responding to territorial aggression in kind, through the use of fishing boats rather than warships. It is in the use of a maritime militia for "grey zone" warfare, however, that the two countries have a distinct advantage. The highly centralised government system, as seen in both the PRC and SRV, allows for the effective wielding of the non-military aspects of the state towards a common goal. This is most obvious in the control of the economy and the judiciary in support of the national strategy. The troubles of the Filipinos in setting up their National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea is due, in part, to the fact that their government is not as centralised as in communist/Leninist systems. It is telling that their task force was made up of representatives from 16 different agencies (Government of the Philippines, 2016). One of their mandates was to create an Action Task Force, which to date they have yet to do, demonstrating the difficulties faced by a less centralised state.

It is, therefore, possible to conclude that two elements must be in place in order to create and maintain an effective maritime militia: first, a tradition of all citizens serving in the military or militia, and second a highly centralised state – either one with authoritarian-personal control or one with authoritarian mass control (Janowitz, 1964). In regard to the former, it is clear that both the PRC and SRV share this tradition. This arose from their unique history, which is inextricably linked to their ideology. As can be seen by the reluctance of the Filipino fishermen to sacrifice their own economic prosperity to execute tasks, like defence, which they consider as the duty of the government, it would be almost impossible to create an effective force constituted from civilians who do not have such a tradition.

Regarding the second point, a highly centralised state is important for two reasons. First, it is crucial for the close collaboration between the government and the military, which plays a significant role in the maintenance of the maritime militia. In particular, if the militia is to

be deployed in hybrid warfare, a centralised state is especially important as it can go beyond mere self-defence. Rather, incentives, payments and support have to be handed out in order to enable the fishermen and ship owners to continue to be paid whilst engaging in activities that keep them away from their own means of production. What we see is that an effective maritime militia requires a highly centralised state such as a communist/Leninist one. The Government of the Philippines' failure shows that without this singular driving force and unifier it is decidedly more difficult to bring together all the government apparatuses for a task of this kind.

It, thus, becomes obvious that countries with a communist/Leninist system have a clear advantage in creating maritime militias. My research does not show that it is impossible to create a maritime militia in a non-communist/Leninist state. In order to do so successfully, however, one requires many of the hallmarks of such states, primarily a highly centralised government and a tradition of enforced mass service.

## Conclusion

Vietnam and China created their maritime militias at different points in time and for different reasons. Consequently, it is clear that they have done so due to the system of government in place and how this was brought about. In each case, their experience in fighting numerically and technologically superior forces, led them to utilise the assets they had available. Although the time and circumstances under which these militias were created differ, the reasons why both countries were able to deploy them are similar. Both used the idea of "people's war", their highly centralised form of government and, also, successfully mobilised public sentiment, as well as state organisation. In this regard, a tradition of "people's war" is the key factor why both were able to create a maritime militia, something that can be observed in both states' military doctrine.

In terms of the maintenance of maritime militias, it is clear that the tradition of "people's war" and a highly centralised state are the two most crucial factors. Both states share similar systems of government and processes by which the ruling parties came to power. In both states, the centralised nature of the Leninist government and the overarching control of the party have enabled the close collaboration of the military, local governments and businesses in order to sustain the militia through favourable loans, payments and even laws. They have also been able to make use of the militia as a hybrid warfare actor. Combined with their respective traditions of "people's war", China and Vietnam were able to create a doctrine and a force that are still of use in the twenty-first century. Were it not for this tradition of universal service, a hallmark of their shared systems, it is doubtful that either would be able to maintain a maritime militia.

With the South China Sea being one of the world's most disputed areas, the maritime militias of each country will only rise in importance. The significance of the South China Sea to

both states bordering the region and to policy-makers and business leaders globally, hinges on the fact that a third of global trade transits through it. In the coming years, this rather fringe topic will increasingly come to the forefront, including in Europe where it has until recently been largely ignored. This project aimed to shed light on these two important but little understood organisations with the aim of forming a hypothesis about maritime militias that is relevant to the region and other states globally. It has successfully done this by adding a direct comparison of the two countries in the literature. Mentions to the VPAFMM are usually cursory rather than forming an in-depth examination of the organisation itself. As such, this study has successfully added to the literature on the topic by not only giving equal treatment to both PAFMM and VPAFMM, but by using this to form a hypothesis that can be applied to maritime militias in general, whilst also providing some pointers to policy-makers, who may be considering the creation of a maritime militia of their own.

This project was limited by various factors, principally language and the availability of sources. As more sources are translated, this area will become increasingly more accessible to researchers globally, beyond those with the necessary language skills. At this point, it is important to give credit to Professor Andrew S. Erickson and Conor M. Kennedy for the important work they do in bringing the role of maritime militias to the world's attention through their valuable open-source research. Without their efforts, this project would have been impossible.

This research aimed to provide a direct comparison of the maritime militias of China and Vietnam and discuss the reasons behind their creation and effective maintenance. It was shown that it is unlikely that the Philippines will be able to create a successful maritime militia in the manner of Vietnam, let alone China. For the time being, maritime militias will continue to be the sole reserve of China and Vietnam due to their system of government and unique histories.

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