"Today we use the term 'the world' with what amounts to brash familiarity. Too often in speaking of such things as the world food problem, the world health problem, world trade, world peace, and world government, we disregard the fact that 'the world' is a totality which in the domain of human problems constitutes the ultimate in degree of magnitude and degree of complexity. That is a fact, yes; but another fact is that almost every large problem today is, in truth, a world problem. Those two facts taken together provide thoughtful men with what might realistically be entitled 'an introduction to humility' in curing the world's ills."

— President Emeritus John Sloan Dickey,
1947 Convocation Address

World Outlook

An Undergraduate Journal
of International Affairs
at Dartmouth College

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Editors' Note

As the world grapples with the reverberating effects of conflicts from Ukraine to Gaza, this Fall 2024 issue of World Outlook arrives at a pivotal moment in international affairs. Opening with an interview with former U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda Erica Barks Ruggles, this edition dives into Sweden's shift from military neutrality, U.S. strategic decisions during the Iran-Iraq War, the impact of cultural hierarchies in the Eurozone crisis, and the interplay between environmental policies and narratives of independence. From geopolitical tensions to economic inequality, our contributors provide thought-provoking insights that challenge conventional wisdom.

This issue begins with an interview with Erica Barks Ruggles, former Ambassador to Rwanda, Consul General in Cape Town, Head of the U.S. Mission to UNESCO, and Senior Representative to the International Telecommunication Union. Ambassador Barks Ruggles shares interesting insights from her 32 years serving as a U.S. diplomat, including re-establishing the U.S. Mission to UNESCO, navigating post-conflict peacebuilding in Rwanda, holding countries responsible for human rights abuses in the UNHCR, and addressing climate change in the Arctic.

This issue proceeds to highlight how geopolitical challenges force leaders to recalibrate neutral foreign policies to reconcile their strategic and security interests. In "The End of Swedish Neutrality: Social Identity Theory in International Politics," Anika Mukker provides a psychological perspective on how Russia's invasion of Ukraine prompted Sweden to pivot from military neutrality towards joining NATO in March 2024. Mukker contends that the illiberal threat of Russia heightened the salience of Swedish liberal democratic identity and ultimately reshaped Sweden's perception of its national security alignment. Evan Jaffe's "Picking Sides After Playing: Why Reagan's Gradual Iran-Iraq War Tilt Was Rational" examines Reagan's strategic shift toward supporting Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War, arguing that this approach successfully prioritized U.S. interests including preventing the spread of Soviet influence and protecting oil shipping amidst complex regional threats.

This issue also explores how public narratives shape political and economic realities. In "When 'PIIGS' Cannot Fly: A Study of Cultural Hierarchies in the Eurozone Crisis," Neel Sadda examines the gap in recovery between Southern and Northern European economies following the Eurozone debt crisis. Sadda argues that cultural hierarchies played a significant role in the gap by enabling harsher measures on the South. Skye MacLeod Lockhart's "Unveiling the Rhetoric: The Use and Implications of Discursive Frame-Bridging within the SNP's Environmental Policy Discourse" examines the relationship between environmental policies and Scottish independence in the Scottish National Party's (SNP) rhetoric. Lockhart argues that SNP leaders have used the environmental policy discourse to further their primary goal of independence.

We are proud to present this collection of works, each deepening our understanding of international relations. It was a great joy to review, curate, and edit the Fall 2024 edition of World Outlook. We hope that these articles spark dialogue, challenge assumptions, and inspire further inquiry into the pressing issues shaping our world today.

Sincerely,
Madeleine Shaw '25 and Julia Schwed '25
Editors-in-Chief

Interview with Ambassador (Rtd.) Erica Barks Ruggles, Diplomat and Former United States Ambassador to Rwanda

The John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding hosted Ambassador Erica Barks Ruggles at Dartmouth College on October 23, 2024. World Outlook Editors Madeleine Shaw '25, Victor Lago '26, Amen Salha '26, Pranav Akella '27, Josephine Kramer '28, Taanvi Gowdar '28, and Daniel Park '28 conducted an interview with her. The interview was edited for clarity and content. The views expressed in this interview are solely those of the guest and do not reflect the opinions of Dartmouth College.

Victor Lago: Today, we're excited and honored to be joined by retired Ambassador Erica Barks Ruggles.

Ambassador Barks Ruggles served for 32 years in senior leadership and diplomatic positions; most recently leading the successful U.S. effort to rejoin UNESCO, setting up the U.S. Mission from scratch and re-establishing U.S. leadership in the UN's lead institution on AI and emerging technology ethics, education standards, and cultural preservation. She served as the Senior Representative and Head of Delegation to four major International Telecommunication Union conferences in 2022 and oversaw all U.S. policies and relationships with the United Nations while leading the Bureau of International Organization Affairs (IO). Prior to that, she was Senior Diplomatic Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center and Acting Chancellor of the College of International Strategic Affairs (CISA) at the National Defense University. From 2015 to 2018, Barks Ruggles served as the Ambassador of the United States to the Republic of Rwanda. Earlier in her career as a diplomat, she served as the Deputy to the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations serving on the Deputies Committee of the National Security Council, and as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor overseeing international human rights, and democracy programming in the Middle East and South and Central Asia.

Amen Salha: To start us off, we hoped you might be able to share with our listeners a bit about your personal journey from your undergraduate education into the world of international affairs. How did you become interested in the field, and how have your interests developed throughout your career?

Ambassador Barks Ruggles: Great, it's nice to be with you and thank you for having me. First of all, let me start by saying that it is okay not to know what you are doing when you graduate. I did not. I was a marine biologist by training; my degree is in marine biology. My second course of study was French and my minor was English literature. None of these (except for French) have anything to do with what I ended up doing.

Through a series of unfortunate incidents and a bit of bad planning on my part, my dream job disappeared from underneath me during my senior year. I had to find a job

to pay for my student loans after college. I went to work as a paralegal in a law firm in Washington, D.C., thinking I might end up being an environmental lawyer as career choice number three. I loved the people I worked with and loved what we were doing in environmental law, [and yet] I absolutely hated the tedium of the day-to-day legal preparation. Clearly, it wasn't for me.

As one does, I went to visit friends and took the Foreign Service exam because a friend of mine was taking it. I had nothing better to do and took it cold. I then slapped a backpack on my back and backpacked around Africa for seven months. When I came back, I had no money in the bank and didn't want to move into my mother's basement, so I called the State Department and said, "Hey, about that exam that I passed and all those forms I filled out—[do you have] any jobs?" They said, "we've been looking for you—can you start in two weeks?"

I am one of the luckier people around who fell into a career that has allowed me to move around the world, meet amazing people, and work on behalf of the American people and government. It always meets my three criteria [for a job], which are contributing and doing something that makes the world a better place, learning something new, and having fun.

Josephine Kramer: What were some of the key challenges you faced in re-establishing the U.S. mission to UNESCO, and how do you see the organization shaping global norms around emerging technologies?

Ambassador Barks Ruggles: UNESCO was a multilayered challenge. First of all, we had to get our U.S. Congress on board with rejoining UNESCO because there are several legal prohibitions in place. It was the only multilateral institution in which the Palestinians are a full member. We had to get a waiver from Congress, which we did. We also had to get money from Congress, which they appropriated for us. That took about two years. We also had to get the support of the member states because they had to agree to let us back in, which took about another year. So, three years later, we were very happy to rejoin UNESCO.

I started [this] process when I was the Acting Assistant Secretary for [the Bureau of International Organization Affairs]. On the ground, I had to hire and recruit all the staff, except for one original person who was there when I arrived. I had to find office space, get furniture, and [do] all the mundane things about setting up an office. [I had to] reestablish our presence and network of friends, allies, and countries that we could work with and find compromises with on the whole range of issues that UNESCO covers.

[This includes] artificial intelligence and neurotechnology—[UNESCO is] the body

that sets the ethical standards. They have a structure in place, which we support quite thoroughly. It is not 100% in line with our executive orders on AI, but we drew a lot from UNESCO's work to look at how you ethically implement AI and how you safeguard against some of our concerns. We supported them in setting up a process on neurotechnology, including computer-brain interface and biosynthetic technologies.

Madeleine Shaw: From your perspective as a former U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda, what are some of the challenges that Rwanda is facing today? Is there still potential for future instability in Rwanda?

Ambassador Barks Ruggles: Rwanda is an amazing and complicated place. Their history informs their decision-making and how they think about their place in the world. That's true with any society that's been through the kind of trauma that Rwanda [experienced] with the genocide in 1994. About 60% of the population was born after the genocide. They don't have personal memories but they certainly know their families' histories and the stories of their village and neighborhood during the genocide. That's something that they have to deal with constantly, but they have to not let it overwhelm them at the same time. Navigating that is a constant challenge and will remain a challenge for them for a long time.

[Rwandans] also have immediate challenges like facing climate change. They sit right on the equator but at an elevation, so their entire agricultural system is rain-fed. When rains are not predictable, it's very problematic for their ability to feed their population. They also have literacy and malnutrition challenges that they're working on. They've made enormous progress on things like health. Under-five child mortality has plummeted and they made huge progress in malaria prevention. They've attracted a lot of investment, including in [information technology] and education, especially higher education.

Very importantly, they need to continue strengthening democratic institutions. Everything was gone at the end of the genocide and they've had to rebuild from scratch. [Still], there's a lot of work that needs to be done on strengthening the institutional structure rather than the people that are there. They have a very strong set of leaders, but they need more institutional strength.

It's a variegated landscape and a complicated place. They've got opportunities and challenges ahead of them, but we remain strong partners with them. We also don't hold back on our criticism. We think that as friends, we need to help them think about how to overcome some of these challenges.

Taanvi Gowdar: In your experience, what are the main opportunities and challenges for the U.S. in deepening its partnerships with African nations, particularly as China and other powers increase their influence on the continent?

Ambassador Barks Ruggles: A lot of folks frame this as an 'either-or'; I like to frame it as a 'both-and'. China and other emerging donors such as the UAE and Turkey are investing heavily in Africa. Africa needs investment from all of us, [including] the EU and more traditional partner states, because they have a lot of infrastructure and investment needs. Africa is also the continent with the largest youth population. By 2050, Africa will contain the fastest-growing population in the world—growing faster than India and China.

We need to be thinking about how we can invest in youth and the huge opportunities [in Africa] to give them the economic boost that we've seen in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Latin America. I don't think it's 'either-or'; it is more that we have to continue what we're doing [instead of] cutting aid, which some folks want to do. We need to also remove the mystery and fear that some of our corporations have in investing [in Africa] just because they're not used to it. This is a place of enormous opportunity and huge wealth in natural resources and brain power.

Importantly, there are a lot of areas that need and could use U.S. technology and 'know-how' in water, agriculture, health, [information technology], electrical infrastructure, buildings, engineering, technology, bridges, etc. There are opportunities out there and we should be absolutely diving in, not just as a 'help' but as a partner. I like to use the phrase 'what can we do with Africa to help them get the future and the opportunities that they want?' It's not a donor thing, it's a partnership thing.

Daniel Park: Given the increasing focus on the Arctic region, how should Arctic nations, including the U.S., approach cooperation and competition in this strategically important area?

Ambassador Barks Ruggles: This is a big issue for climate change. As the polar caps warm faster than the rest of the planet and ice is melting in the Arctic, we are seeing the opening of a northern sea route. [This] is hugely problematic, hugely challenging, and hugely opportunistic all at the same time. You could cut down the amount of time by two-thirds to get goods from Asia to Europe or the east coast of the U.S., which are two extremely large markets, if a northern sea route over the top of Canada appears.

That obviously presents pollution and environmental challenges. Frankly, we aren't working hard enough to think about how we meet those challenges. The Arctic Council is a place where we have been investing a lot of time, energy, and diplomatic effort to increase cooperation around the Arctic Circle with member states on environmen-

tal issues, deep sea mining issues, sovereignty issues, fisheries, scientific endeavors, and the Greenland ice sheet. [We are] making sure that we understand what is going on, and what we can do to slow it down.

We just named a new Special Envoy for Arctic Affairs at the State Department. He was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in September [2024] but he's already very active. We need to be doing more faster on this. When I say 'we', it's not just the United States, it's our partners in Canada and the rest of the Arctic Council as well.

Amen Salha: What is your opinion on countries with poor human rights records like China, Cuba, or Qatar being involved with the leadership of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)?

Ambassador Barks Ruggles: A third of [UNHRC] member states come up for election every year and serve for three-year terms. When the UNHRC replace[d] the Human Rights Commission in the early 2000s, this was a big point of contention in the negotiations. How do you prevent human rights abusers from becoming members of the Council, and should there be a litmus test? The United States and many other countries thought so, but all 196 member states got to vote on this in the UN General Assembly to create the new Human Rights Council, and we did not prevail. It has always been a difficult challenge to get those who have a strong human rights record and who work hard to support human rights, especially human rights NGOs and activists, to take the time and energy to run for the Council, especially when they're in regions where there are fewer [human rights defenders] and there are a lot of seats.

We also try to hold those who are not respecting human rights to account through the Universal Periodic Review process. It's a necessary but not sufficient process. It does help and does get input from activists and NGOs around the world, and it's a place where we can actually question countries and they have to answer those questions. However, there are a lot of countries that don't allow in special rapporteurs and special mechanisms. Iran [hasn't] allowed a special rapporteur or special mechanism to do an investigation for years.

We also need to hold up our end and allow those mechanisms in[to the United States], and we do as do a huge number of other partners. [Investigators and NGOs] do come in and they're very critical, but that criticism helps us improve. We view these mechanisms as important for our own improvement and for others' improvement. We have to insist that others allow them in to support their institutions. You have to push to use all the tools in the toolbox to try and improve human rights. It's a very slow process. It is oftentimes very unsatisfactory, but we have to keep working at it.

Pranav Akella: For prospective diplomats, how important is learning multiple languages? Have foreign language skills aided in your career at all?

Ambassador Barks Ruggles: Learning foreign languages is one of the joys of the career, in my opinion. When you can finally understand somebody else talking in another language, it's like, 'I got it!'; that 'eureka' moment.

It really helps [you] understand the culture. When I learned Norwegian, there are 26 different words that are commonly used for different kinds of snow, because snow is so important in their culture. My favorite one is 'silkefeur', which sounds exactly like that 'shoosh' on cross-country skis. Likewise, in Kinyarwanda there are more than 45 different words for cattle, because cattle are very important in their culture. If you know the right word for a [certain kind of] cow and you can tell a farmer, 'you have a beautiful cow', they'll know that you understand. Learning foreign languages is really important for increasing cultural understanding, not just comprehension.

That said, I've gone to a lot of places where I haven't spoken the language as well. I don't speak Arabic, and I've spent a lot of time bouncing around in the Middle East. I don't speak Hindi, and I've lived in India for two years. I tried to learn Tamil—it was honestly the hardest language I've ever confronted. You can't beat yourself up about it; some people just have a better gift.

But the earlier you start learning a language, the easier it is. The later I got in my career, the harder it was to pick up another language. Your brain just [changes]. Anyone your age, if you don't already speak another language, learn one now. It's going to be much easier than ten years from now. Invest the time, go live there, and immerse yourself [without] speaking your native language. It's worth it. Once you've learned one, the second one is easier, and the third one is easier after that.

Victor Lago: What advice would you offer undergraduate students interested in pursuing a career in foreign policy? If there was one lesson you took away from your career, what would it be?

Ambassador Barks Ruggles: My piece of advice would be that there are many different ways that you can involve yourself in foreign policy. The State Department was my chosen career path but is only one path. The UN has a huge number of professional diplomats who move around the world. All the UN agencies—UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, IOM—have staff who live overseas.

Those are the multilateral institutions, but then there's the whole NGO world. If you want to work in the environmental [field], there are thousands of NGOs that work both domestically and overseas. There are NGOs that work on teaching kids engi-

neering all over the world or work on engineering programs with professional firms. Then there's the private sector, which is much more mobile than it used to be. When I joined the State Department, there were about six international law firms. Now, there are thousands. There are now many more choices than there used to be because the economy is so much more linked. The Internet has changed everything and AI is going to change everything again.

Mobility, flexibility, and learning how to learn are the most important things you can do. You're going to end up changing your careers faster than my generation did because there is so much more opportunity and the jobs will change underneath you faster as well. Figuring out how to go with the flow as your job changes is going to be important.

The most important lesson I took away from my career is to never underestimate the power of an individual to make a difference. One person doing the right thing and having the right skills in the right place can make an enormous difference in thousands of people's lives. Sometimes, you don't even know you're doing it.

There was a project I worked on early in my career when I worked at the White House, where we set aside a small pot of money to fund scholarships for girls to go to school. We gave U.S. Ambassadors the ability to give small grants to female entrepreneurs in Africa in 26 countries, which soon spread to all of sub-Saharan Africa. When I went twenty years later as Ambassador to Rwanda, the program was still going. I got to give away grants, but I also got to meet women who had built huge businesses because they'd [received] a grant ten years ago. They had built schools and their kids had graduated from university, became medical doctors, and came back to build their own clinics.

You just never know where all those little ripples go. Investing in human beings and helping them realize their potential is always worthwhile. Because you will always make a difference somewhere, and making a difference is one of the most rewarding things you can do with your life.

Victor Lago: Thank you for your time.

Ambassador Barks Ruggles: Thank you!

When 'PIIGS' Cannot Fly: A Study of Cultural Hierarchies in the Eurozone Crisis

Neel Sadda

Introduction

Economic crises are an inevitable part of any state's story. Consequently, every state must also handle the delicate task of economic recovery. Troublingly, recovery is not a simple process; it is, rather, the composite of a number of specific, causal variables. While classical economics sensibly play a significant role in the process of recovery, they do not always explain the full story. In fact, the socio-cultural factors at play are arguably equally important.

With that in mind, this paper seeks to study these often-forgotten elements in the context of the EU's most destructive financial event: the Eurozone debt crisis. Given that the projected recoveries of Southern economies in the EU diverged greatly from reality, there is much to be explained. Thus, this paper asks the question: how do cultural hierarchies between Northern and Southern Europe explain the varying economic outcomes of the Eurozone crisis and the modern-day conditions of Southern economies?

This paper will argue that cultural hierarchies are the missing puzzle piece that explains the gap between real and expected outcomes after the debt crisis. Specifically, these invisible hierarchies played key roles in the legitimization and implementation of harsh austerity in the South and continue to haunt Southern economies. To accomplish this goal, the paper begins by identifying the dependent variable of unexplained economic recovery, discussing the background of the Eurozone crisis, and exploring why standard economic consensus falls short of explaining the South's current state. Next, it will introduce a model that integrates existing consensus with cultural theories to explain how cultural hierarchies led the North to blame the South for the crisis. Then, this paper will suggest that cultural hierarchies led to the dismissal of alternatives to austerity and instead were instrumental in legitimizing deadly austerity in the South. Finally, it will draw on the implications of the model in a modern context. I will conclude that a closer examination of cultural hierarchies going forward may offer insight into questions of future collective European crises and more broadly explain economic recoveries that diverge from expectations.

The Puzzle of the Eurozone Crisis: Dependent Variable

This paper views the economic recoveries following the Eurozone crisis as a story of

Neel Sadda is a junior at Georgetown University majoring in Economics and Government. From interning at Fidelity Investments to Adam Schiff's office, Neel has always been interested in the intersection between markets and politics. Academically, he explores this topic specifically in the context of market failures and economic crises, studying the motivations behind sovereign actors' responses. Outside of his classes at Georgetown, Neel is the vice president of DCivitas Consulting, a client services associate at the Hilltop Microfinance Initiative, and an analyst in the Georgetown University Student Investment Fund. Back home in Pasadena, California, he enjoys rock climbing, making dosa, and playing classical guitar.

what should have been versus what was. During crises, economists tend to project the expected path of recovery for a state. There were many of these projections amidst the Eurozone crisis. For the larger Northern economies like Germany, France, and Britain, recovery followed a path that was very closely related to the expectations of leading economic reports (European Commission 2009). However, surprisingly, the recovery path of Southern economies diverged heavily from leading projections.

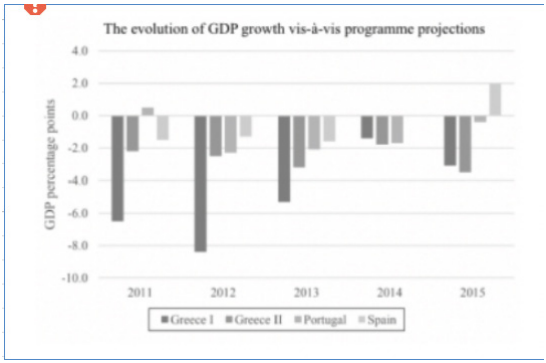

Figure 1: The difference between projections for GDP growth for Southern economies and the actual figures (Source: Ramalho)

Figure 1 depicts the unusual difference between projections of GDP growth and the actual result. Across the board, growth rates and targets for Southern countries were significantly lower than expected (Ramalho n.d., 150-153). Even institutions like the European Commission were off by multiple percentage points when projecting what Southern GDP would look like in just one or two years (European Commission 2010). Thus, there seems to be a missing piece. This paper takes the disparity between projection and reality as its dependent variable and seeks to answer how this result may have come to be.

Background of the Eurozone Crisis

There is much debate about what specifically caused the Eurozone crisis. However, for the purposes of this paper, I follow a relatively simple explanation. Southern European countries like Greece, Italy, and Spain were overjoyed to join the Euro between 1999-2001, given that they were developing states who now had access to a currency shared by economic behemoths like Germany (Hopkin 2020). Specifically, Euro membership significantly reduced borrowing costs for Southern economies as they were legitimized by the international market, leading to lower rates (Hopkin 2020).Specifically, Euro membership significantly reduced borrowing costs for Southern economies as they were legitimized by the international market, leading to lower rates (Hopkin 2020).

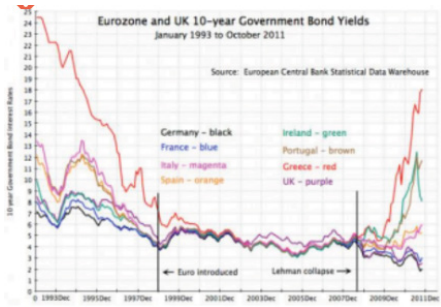

Figure 2: A graph depicting the Eurozone and UK 10-year Government Bond Yields from 1993 to October 2011 (Source: Klein 2015).

Figure 2 shows this fall in interest rates among Euro-countries. As a result, Southern economies saw incredible amounts of economic growth. They now had the capacity to expand social programs, offer more jobs, and invest in domestic infrastructure. Given that these economies now had access to cheap financing, they borrowed heavily (Papadakis 2014). However, the EU was relatively indifferent about massive debt burdens in the face of attractive economic growth (Hopkin 2020).

However, in 2008, the U.S. banking system collapsed, spilling over internationally (Kenton 2021). With international credit suddenly coming to a halt, European banks—particularly in Iceland—started to fail as well (Kenton 2021). Suddenly, excessive borrowing was no longer accepted. Instead, it was expensive and in short supply. Southern economies found themselves owing incredible amounts of money to lenders. While most countries would devalue their currency to cope, a single currency like the Euro made this impossible. Since the South shared the Euro with the rest of the EU, they had limited fiscal and monetary autonomy (Hopkin 2020). Thus, quantitative easing was out of the question. The South was scrambling to find a solution to maintain their excessive spending in the face of limited borrowing. At the same time, Greece's budget deficit—which was hidden by tailored accounting—was exposed to the world (Papadakis 2014). The market reacted immediately, and interest rates shot through the roof (as seen in Figure 1) as Greece approached default and was downgraded to junk status (Papadakis 2014). Threatening to bring the entire Eurozone down with a failure to pay back its lenders, the Eurozone crisis emerged.

Prevailing Explanation for Crisis Recovery

Standard Economic Explanations

How do economists explain the disparity between Northern and Southern recovery? Orthodox market dynamics believe that it is largely attributed to the dominance of Northern economies and the vulnerabilities of Southern ones. On one hand, the North was far more economically sound than the South. It enjoyed the benefits of prioritizing export-led growth strategies which were massively successful in a monetary union (Hall 2013). The North developed a system with low labor costs, a highly

skilled workforce, and strong industrial production which allowed it to innovate and compete on a global scale (Hall 2013). It intuitively follows that these economies would recover faster and more predictably. On the other hand, the South did not develop a strategy that took advantage of the monetary union. Instead, they were dependent on demand-led growth, meaning that the government had to spend money to spur domestic consumption, and goods were not competitive on an international scale (Mylonas 2012, 653). Rampant corruption, heavy deficits, inefficient tax collection, a small landmass, and underdeveloped credit markets did not help the Southern cause either (Mylonas 2012, 653). As such, Southern economies were structurally vulnerable in the lead-up to the crisis. Thus, economists argue that this discrepancy between Northern and Southern economies explains the discrepancies between their respective recoveries.

Shortfalls of Economic Consensus

While this paper does not deny the economic explanation, it argues that the differences between Northern and Southern economies are not large enough to explain the dependent variable. For instance, social spending levels in the South are lower than in the North (Capucha 2014). The idea that the South was the only region running large deficits was patently false. Despite earning significantly less annual salary than Northern workers, Southern laborers were, on average, more productive by 3.1 hours per week (Capucha 2014). Countries like Portugal were significantly more productive than Germany and Sweden, and consistently increased their productivity for more than three decades before the crisis (Capucha 2014). Moreover, Southern economies had some of the fastest GDP growth rates across Europe (World Bank). Their collective, fast-paced growth proved that the South was quickly adapting to the export-heavy strategies that were successful in the Eurozone. Thus, while differences between Northern and Southern economies existed, they were not nearly significant enough to justify the observed recoveries of the South.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Cultural Hierarchies

If economics does not explain the full story, what does? This paper argues that cultural hierarchies are the missing piece. Theoretically speaking, this paper views cultural hierarchies as invisible systems of power that implicitly consider certain nations, peoples, or societies as superior to others based on cultural perceptions, stereotypes, and identities. These structures are formed by attributing negative traits to certain people as a way to justify their subordination (Capucha 2014). Based on the content of these beliefs, hierarchies can associate esteem and competence to some groups while demeaning others (Swindle 2019). Troublingly, whether these attributed traits are accurate or not, they affect real-world behavior (Swindle 2019). For instance, perceptions of countries based on these hierarchies influence which states are selected for loans from the IMF or World Bank (Swindle 2019). Given that cultural hierarchies

empirically have real-world impacts, they are key in explaining economic recovery.

Cultural Hierarchies in the Eurozone

How do cultural hierarchies apply in the context of the Eurozone? While the EU is ostensibly seen as a homogenous group, hierarchies between nations are apparent. The European public assigns certain attributes to different regions based on perceived cultural differences. These conceptions of cultural hierarchy between nations are so apparent that they are "firmly and centrally embedded in the mental maps of most Europeans" (Swindle 2019). The origin of these hierarchies in Europe was based on the fact that Southern Europeans were more dark-skinned and less Protestant than the North—traits considered less desirable (Chernus 2012). Such differences became increasingly apparent as more Southern countries joined the European Union. Over time, the traits within the hierarchy moved towards economic status. Specifically, the European public ranks Northern countries as having higher developmental attributes (Swindle 2019). As a result, the economically developed countries of the Eurozone were viewed as strong and heroic, while developing countries were considered weak and helpless (Capucha 2014). Thus, even before the onset of the crisis, cultural hierarchies in the Eurozone were formalized.

North-South Divide

The cultural hierarchies mentioned above align closely with the North-South divide in the EU. Namely, Northern countries had stronger, developed economies while Southern states were smaller and more economically dependent. While the roots of the North-South divide trace back to anti-Mediterranean roots from the Ottoman Empire, such regional divides became apparent as the crisis began (Van Vossole 2016). Particularly, the economic drivers of these hierarchies became pronounced as southern countries struggled in the face of economic headwinds. Particularly, political rhetoric soon became a story of the 'frugal north' contrasted with the 'imprudent, reckless south' as a cultural explanation for the crisis (Guillén 2020). The media played a large role in attributing certain traits to specific groups to reinforce such hierarchies. For instance, the New York Times published an image of a donkey in an article about Portugal's dire situation while the Daily Telegraph released cartoons of the Spanish sleeping during their siesta as a metaphor for their laziness (Capucha 2014). The largest daily newspaper in Europe published multiple reports of lazy Greeks compared to hard-working Germans (Bickes 2014). Figure 3 shows an example of such publications. As the media received widespread attention during the crisis, cultural stereotypes became more entrenched. A particularly famous example of the hierarchies between the North and South was the creation of the moniker 'PIIGS'. This stood for Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, and Spain—the states at the bottom of the invisible hierarchy (Ganti 2022). The Anglo-Saxon press of the North deemed these states as the root of the crisis and used this derogatory acronym to reinforce traits of laziness, dirtiness, and profligacy (Capucha 2014). Despite each of these states having

differing socio-economic characteristics, the term grouped them together to create a moral narrative for the debt crisis that was factually incorrect (Capucha 2014). The North was successful in reinforcing divisions with the South as terms like 'PIIGS' or 'GIPSI' propagated ideas of 'Northern Saints' and 'Southern Sinners' (Matthijs & Merler 2020). As Northern-Southern dynamics became more pronounced during the crisis, so did the cultural hierarchy in Europe.



Figure 3: A Dutch newspaper cover depicting Northern people as hard-working and productive while contrasting them with carefree, lazy Southerners. Images like these were not uncommon amidst the crisis. (Source: Bialasiewicz 2020)

Cultural Hierarchies as an Independent Variable

Explanation of Model

Recognizing the importance of both economics and culture, this paper puts forth a complementary model that integrates cultural perspectives with market economics. This model suggests that neither cultural hierarchies nor economics alone can explain the gap observed between the expectation and reality of Southern economic recovery. Rather, cultural hierarchies amplify economic conditions by integrating stereotypes into the equation. For instance, monikers like 'PIIGS' perpetuate the association of negative traits to Southern economies. As explained previously, perceptions of countries actively influence their economic conditions (Swindle 2019). Thus, it logically follows that Southern states that already experience negative economic trends will see their economies worsen as their reputation deteriorates in the face of intensified cultural hierarchies.

Unfortunately, an externality of this model is that it creates a vicious circle for states at the bottom of these hierarchies. For instance, cultural hierarchies propagate stereotypes that Southerners are lazy and inept (Bickes 2014). As a result, employers are significantly less likely to hire workers from the South for fear that they will not work hard (Polavieja 2022). Since thousands of Southern workers are dis-

criminated against in the hiring process, unemployment rates in Southern countries skyrocket, necessitating aggressive social spending to support the domestic population (Christou 2016). To afford such expenditures, Southern states must borrow heavily from the North and run massive deficits, stunting economic growth (Hopkin 2020). Their perceived dependency on the North and lack of domestic output then amplifies stereotypes about laziness and unproductivity (Bickes 2014). This cycle creates a self-reinforcing equilibrium that keeps Southern states at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Disclaimers of the Model

As mentioned, the model put forth in this paper is importantly not positioned against the economic consensus that emerged following the crisis. Rather, it is complementary and offers an insight that is based in culture yet in agreement with the market. I do not argue that this theory is completely explanatory but rather that it serves to fill some of the gap. Lastly, this model does not seek to perpetuate cultural hierarchies in the reverse direction by painting the North during the crisis as a villain and the South completely as a victim. Instead, it is meant to translate how the dynamics between the North and South at the time affected the dependent variable.

Why Cultural Hierarchies Rationalize the Gap

The Blame Game

The aforementioned cultural hierarchy between the North and South allowed the crisis to be squarely blamed on Southerners notwithstanding the objective facts. Despite being a Eurozone crisis, the situation was not seen as a shared problem but rather a conflict between Northern lenders and Southern debtors (Hopkin 2020). Instead of acknowledging the role of private creditors and structural deficiencies in the crisis, economic considerations of the South's situation were completely ignored (Bickes 2014). Northerners put forward a one-sided narrative that ignored the institutional deficiencies of the Euro and accused Southerners of laziness, corruption, and carelessness (Guillén 2020). Beliefs originating from cultural hierarchies spread across Europe, even to those in power. Northern political elites focused solely on the ineptness of Southern governments and people (Mylonas 2012, 646). For instance, the Dutch finance minister proclaimed that the crisis was a result of Southerners spending all their money on wine and women (Hopkin 2020). This perspective blamed lower productivity on worker laziness, rising debt on overgenerous government, and gaps in economic output as differences in competency (Capucha 2014). As a result, countries like Greece became the epicenter of the crisis (Mylonas 2012, 646). This narrative reduced a complex economic issue to the fault of certain groups.

Alternatives to Austerity

The dire conditions of the South warranted an intervention from the European Union that would alleviate debt burdens and allow economies to begin recovery. While this paper will later discuss how austerity was depicted as an inevitable, necessary measure,

this was not the case. Rather, austerity was the product of choice (Ramalho n.d., 22). With that given, it is important to discuss the alternatives the Union had at its disposal to prove that it was not the only available option. The most plausible alternative to austerity was the development of Eurobonds, a common debt instrument for the EU (Matthijs & McNamara 2015). During the crisis, a variety of policy proposals put forth the Eurobond as a solution to strengthen European economies while increasing competitiveness and reducing deficits (Matthijs & McNamara 2015). The Eurobond is a form of sovereign debt pooling that works as described:

> *"A Eurozone bond would guarantee that investors could swap one set of 'national' Greek obligations for another set of Greek 'Eurobonds'—underwritten by the Eurozone as a whole—thereby keeping capital in Greece and avoiding a liquidity crisis and slow moving bank run in the struggling member state." (Matthijs & McNamara 2015)*

Many considered Eurobonds a functional solution to the Eurozone crisis. However, despite making it to the tables of the European Commission and European Council, Northern countries like Germany rejected them (Matthijs & McNamara 2015). The rejection of a plausible solution thus begs the question: why was austerity the chosen policy instead?

Why Austerity Was Chosen

The model in this paper articulates that the North was both influenced by European cultural hierarchies and had a vested interest in preserving them. As such, this paper identifies three reasons why Northern Europe picked austerity as a 'solution' for the South.

Maintaining Economic Dominance: As described, the cultural hierarchies in the Eurozone were partly driven by differences in economic might. As such, Northern countries sitting at the top of the ladder had an incentive to maintain the existing system. Austerity was a measure to guarantee that this was the case. For one, it would ensure that Greece's economy would suffer a prolonged depression so that competition with the North was limited. In fact, it was well known that the degree of austerity implemented in the South would definitively lead to a deep recession (Hopkin 2020). Though austerity was ostensibly paraded as a debt-cutting solution, the North was well aware that by shrinking the South's GDP, debt would rise to a level that would be impossible to pay off (Hopkin 2020). Even the majority of IMF officials knew austerity would not work in Greece (Wroughton 2015). Economically speaking, this could only lead to two outcomes. One was that Southern countries like Greece might be forced out of the Eurozone (Hopkin 2020). The second was that Northern countries would 'selflessly' save the day by providing billions in private capital to help the needy South (Capucha 2014). In fact, much of the media discussion around bailout packages was drenched in moralistic overtones of the North generously coming to the rescue of the South (Polavieja 2022). In the mind of Northerners, either of these out-

comes validated the notion that the South was economically weaker than the North, reaffirming cultural hierarchies.

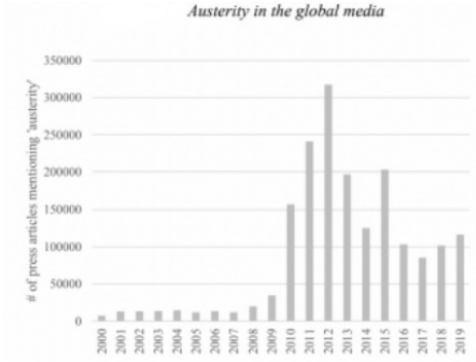

Figure 4: A graph measuring how many press articles mentioned 'austerity' between 2000-2019 (Source: Ramalho)

Appeasing the Public: The hierarchies between the North and South flowed down to an individual level. The public media campaign against the South enraged Northern citizens, who felt that they were suffering and working unnecessarily hard because of the South's missteps and laziness (Bickes 2014). Figure 4 depicts how media coverage around the idea of austerity spiked significantly in the aftermath of the crisis. As a result, nationalism in Northern countries surged as the public was convinced that they would be brought down by the inept South (Mylonas 2012, 667). Anti-Greek sentiment spread across the North, and collective solutions became unpopular (Bickes 2014). Public frustration was quickly manipulated by politicians who championed anti-labor and anti-welfare politics (Mylonas 2012, 651). Soon, there was popular support for inflicting necessary pain on the South for their mistakes (Matthijs & McNamara 2015). At the same time, bureaucratic officials sent clear signals to politicians to keep significant pressure on Greece to prevent impunity (Hopkin 2020). With cultural hierarchies creating support for a vindictive policy in the South from both government officials and the masses, politicians eager for political victories stepped in (Wroughton 2015). They had full responsibility for dictating the initial bailout terms with the IMF and "shaped economic forecasts to fit political ends" (Wroughton 2015). Thus, economic calculi were ignored in favor of political popularity, resulting in devastating austerity.

Perpetuating Colonial Relationships with the South: Another aspect of cultural hierarchies is the resulting subordination of 'inferior' groups. While the North had much indirect control over the South before the Eurozone crisis, increasing globalization was allowing the South to become more autonomous (World Bank). However, the crisis offered a golden opportunity for Northern states to regain power over the

South. Southern democracies were losing legitimacy in the face of crisis externalities like inequality, unrest, and weak public institutions (Zamora-Kapoor 2014). Thus, the North—which led crisis policy—had an opportunity to take control (Capucha 2014). As the South became weaker, policy changed from fiscal contraction to a complete reconfiguration of Southern economies (Ramalho n.d., 142). The North strategically chose austerity as a means to strip the South of political autonomy and national sovereignty. For instance, in Spain, there were "hundreds of detailed and specific measures of fiscal, regulatory, and administrative policy required of the recipients, alongside detailed provision for surveillance and monitoring of progress" (Hopkin 2020). In Greece, strict budget targets removed the government's ability to decide how to raise and spend revenue (Hopkin 2020). By using stringent austerity to deprive Southern states of their statehood, the North sought a return to the colonial dynamics underpinning the European hierarchy (Ganti 2022). The result is an even stronger North and an even weaker South.

Legitimizing Austerity

Even though the North had incentives to implement austerity in the South, they needed to create a narrative to make it seem like a legitimate intervention (despite that not being the case). The first part of the story was the idea that austerity was the only possible solution (Capucha 2014). Both the media and the EU declared austerity as the only way to 'salvation' for indebted countries (Mylonas 2012, 669). This so-called 'inevitability thesis' allowed the North to escape accountability for the consequences of their Draconian policies (Ramalho n.d., 10). Even then, the North justified the social impact in the South as "imperative in the effort of reducing public indebtedness" (Ramalho n.d., 142). By describing the condition in the South as a particularly exceptional crisis, the North successfully legitimized policies that disrespected human and social rights in Southern states (Mylonas 2012, 653). However, the story of necessity was incomplete without a cultural component. Northern politicians capitalized on cultural narrative framing—like the PIIGS label—to paint austerity as a solution to fix the inept South (Capucha 2014). The continued spread of characteristics like laziness, corruption, and dishonesty further legitimized austerity as a way to show the South that bailouts were not free (Hopkin 2020). In policy discussions, Northern fiscal stability and prudence were contrasted with Southern wastefulness (Matthijs & McNamara 2015). The inflow of cultural stereotypes into politics made it possible to legitimize the austerity that was implemented (Van Vossole 2016). By taking advantage of their power in policy decisions and carefully integrating culture into the equation, Northern countries were able to justify austerity without much question.

Outcomes of Austerity

Given that cultural hierarchies contributed to the implementation and legitimation of austerity in the South, studying its effects on Southern economies can explain the gap in expected and actual recovery. This paper identifies three key traits of austerity

in the South.

Table 1: Annual GDP growth rates at 2005 prices

	Greece	Spain	Italy	Portugal	Germany	Eurozone	USA
2009	–3.3	–3.7	–5.5	–2.9	–5.1	–4.3	–3.5
2010	–3.5	–0.1	1.8	1.4	3.7	1.9	3.0
2011	–6.9	0.7	0.4	–1.6	3.0	1.5	1.7
2012	–4.7	–1.8	–1.4	–3.3	0.7	–0.3	2.0

Source: European Commission: Statistical Annex of European Economy, Spring 2012, Table: 10 and 11, Brussels.

Figure 5: Annual GDP growth rates across Europe

Disproportionate Impacts: The most glaring trait of austerity after the crisis was its disproportionate impact on the South. While a number of Eurozone countries struggled with debt, Southern states like Greece received the harshest austerity programs implemented since the creation of the EU (Christou 2016). The budget targets and policy regulations in the South were significantly higher than anywhere else in Europe (Ramalho n.d., 16). Consequently, austerity was not experienced equally across the Eurozone. Rather, the South bore much of the burden. They saw economic contractions that were much sharper than the rest of the Eurozone in the years after the crisis (Figure 5). In Greece, for instance, public spending was reduced by 25 percent, which was "an order of magnitude more than in the other countries" (Mody 2016). In Spain, unemployment levels as a result of austerity reached the highest levels in the EU (Busch 2013, 9). Much of this was due to a lack of concern over the impact of austerity in the South. Not a single document for Southern programs included the words 'equality' or 'equity' (Papadakis 2014). As such, they received a dose of austerity more potent than anywhere else on the continent.

Unemployment Rate (%):
Greece, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Eurozone (2008-2014)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Greece	7.8	9.6	12.7	17.9	24.5	27.5	26.5
Portugal	8.8	10.7	12.0	12.9	15.8	16.4	14.1
Spain	11.3	17.9	19.9	21.4	24.8	26.1	24.5
Italy	6.7	7.7	8.4	8.4	10.7	12.1	12.7
Eurozone	7.6	9.6	10.2	10.2	11.4	12.0	11.6

Figure 6: A table of the unemployment rates in Southern states compared to the Eurozone average from 2008-2014 (Source: Serapioni 2019)

The Economic Toll: Austerity decimated the economies of the South. With stringent regulations and aggressive targets, FDI dried up, GDP plunged, and opportunities for workers disappeared. Greece's economy shrunk by 23%, Spain's and Portugal's

by 7%, and Italy's by 9% (Matsaganis n.d.). The progress the South was making towards globalization prior to the crisis was completely erased as they became detached from the global market and were struggling to kickstart their domestic economy. As the economy slowed, the burden of austerity was placed on citizens. Job cuts in the public sector and contracted demand massively reduced the amount of available jobs (Serapioni 2019). Thus, unemployment skyrocketed in the South during and after austerity (Figure 6). As a result, household income fell by 14% in Greece, 7% in Portugal, 5% in Spain, and 3% in Italy (Zamora-Kapoor 2014). As consumers made less, they also spent less, which further slowed Southern economies. The economic impact in the South was felt for years and permanently disrupted their development.

Evolution of Public Health Expenditure (2009-2017) as % of Total Spending in the SEC

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Differences
Greece	68.5	69.1	66.0	66.5	62.1	58.2	58.3	61.3	61.2	-7.3%
Portugal	69.9	69.8	67.7	65.6	66.9	66.1	66.2	66.4	66.6	-3.3%
Spain	75.4	74.8	73.8	72.2	71.0	70.4	71.3	71.2	70.8	-4.6%
Italy	78.3	78.5	77.0	76.1	76.1	75.6	74.6	74.5	74.0	-4.3%

Source: OECD – Health Statistics, 2018.

Figure 6: Table of public health expenditures in the South from 2009-2017 (Source: Serapioni 2019)

The Human Toll: The economic effects of austerity directly translated into human ones. Unemployment had a massive toll on Southern families. Social safety nets for older generations were cut. Children were deprived of quality education. Poverty grew by 25 points in Greece, 6.3 points in Portugal, 4.5 points in Spain, and 3.0 points in Italy (Matsaganis n.d.). Addictions, poor diets, and abuse increased in response (Coppola 2018). However, austerity made it so that Southern states were not even capable of caring for their sick populations. Healthcare expenditures in the South were slashed to dangerously low levels (Figure 7). Just 5 years after the crisis, Greece had 50% less public hospital funding (Coppola 2018). Healthy adults began to suffer from treatable illnesses (Coppola 2018). For instance, HIV/AIDS doubled in just two years in Greece and tuberculosis increased among all adults (Coppola 2018). Since 2000, the death rate per 100,000 people in Greece rose by 23%, with much of the increase post-austerity (Coppola 2018). In just three years, the suicide rate in Greece doubled (Hall 2023). Beyond the simple figures reported to the EU, at an interpersonal level, the Southern experience became one of sorrow and desperation.

Beyond the Crisis: Implications of Model

While cultural hierarchies reemerged during the Eurozone crisis, they continue to have significant effects in Europe today. The negative traits associated with the South

were not forgotten and directly explain the continued suffering and subordination of Southern countries.

Cultural Hierarchies as a Cause for Hiring Discrimination

As the Eurozone crisis began to resolve, the flow of Southern migrants to Northern countries received more attention (Polavieja 2022). Suddenly, the character and work ethic of these migrants was called into question (Polavieja 2022). Consequently, Southern workers experienced high levels of targeted discrimination in the North (Polavieja 2022). Even today, applicants of Greek and Spanish descent are less likely to be hired in Northern countries, perpetuating cycles of unemployment for Southerners.

The Reemergence of Stereotypes During COVID-19

Cultural hierarchies continue to play a role in collective European crises. Rather than treating the pandemic as a shared problem, North-South stereotypes were reactivated during the spread of COVID-19. Southerners were described as being immature and too undisciplined to follow quarantine regulations (Guillén 2020). 'Smart Sweden' was contrasted with the childish South (Guillén 2020). Furthermore, ideas of Southern dependency on Northern funds created a push to not give any more money to the South for COVID recovery (Polavieja 2022). Ergo, similar dynamics from the Eurozone crisis continue to villainize the South and threaten the condition of their people today.

What Does This Mean?

Modern hiring discrimination and the COVID-19 pandemic prove that the model put forth in this paper has implications beyond just the Eurozone crisis. The self-reinforcing cultural hierarchies articulated in this paper are fundamentally sticky. Stereotypes become more solidified with every additional crisis and hierarchies are further embedded.

Conclusion

While the Eurozone is a unique currency union, its idiosyncrasies are not nearly sufficient to explain the puzzling variances in the economic recovery between the North and South following the debt crisis. This paper has asked the question: how do cultural hierarchies between Northern and Southern Europe explain the varying economic outcomes of the Eurozone crisis and the modern-day conditions of Southern economies? It has answered that cultural hierarchies were critical in blaming the South for the entirety of the crisis and, consequently, legitimizing the imposition of harsh austerity in 'PIIGS' states. As a result of such policies, the South was permanently disrupted from its natural path of economic recovery and plunged into a devastating recession. It is for this reason the South deviated so heavily from economic projections in the years following the crisis. While the model in this paper does not claim to be fully explanatory for the dependent variable, I believe it is key to understanding more

broadly why countries recover from economic crises in the way they do. Furthermore, it emphasizes how socio-cultural dynamics can directly influence the market, which is often thought of as an objective and infallible quantitative machine. As the EU will inevitably undergo collective crises in the future, whether economic, military, or political, it is more important than ever to understand the role of cultural dynamics. types become more solidified with every additional crisis and hierarchies are further embedded.

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The End of Swedish Neutrality: Social Identity Theory in International Politics

Anika Mukker

Introduction

On March 11th, 2024, Sweden's flag joined those of thirty-one countries flying outside of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) headquarters in Brussels, cementing the nation's membership in the multilateral security alliance. Celebrated as a "historic moment" and triumph for Euro-Atlantic security and international democracy (Edwards et al. 2024), Sweden's ascension has not only bolstered NATO's military capabilities but also ushered in an era of Swedish foreign policy divergent from two hundred years committed to neutrality.

Scholars and decision-makers affirm that Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 catalyzed Sweden's decision to seek NATO membership. However, one fundamental question remains unanswered: what about the invasion prompted Sweden to break from its foreign policy tradition of nonalignment? I argue that security concerns arising from Sweden's geographic proximity to and tenuous history with Russia, although important, do not provide a comprehensive account of Sweden's application to NATO. I propose that Russia's invasion of Ukraine increased the salience of the shared liberal democratic identity tied to NATO membership, enhancing the outgroup status of autocratic illiberal states and therefore compelling Swedish civilians and decision-makers to shed their long-standing stance of nonalignment in favor of NATO membership.

The Political Project of NATO's Identity

The "North Atlantic" did not exist as a geopolitical entity before North American and Western European efforts to provide collective security against the Soviet Union, setting a shared liberal identity in opposition to communism during the Cold War. By definition, collective security requires an ingroup to receive and facilitate protection. Geographically disparate and historically distinct, NATO's founding members united states on the basis of shared priorities of individual freedoms, rule of law, and democracy in addition to comparable economic and political structures (Gheciu 2019). As former Secretary of State Dean Acheson claimed, "the threat to which NATO responded" was a threat not only to the United States but also "to [Western] civilization" (Hemmer and Katzenstein 2002). Exemplified by Acheson's assertion, the U.S. and other inaugural members of the alliance adopted the broader cause of

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liberal Western democracy as their own national imperatives. Notably, Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which outlines obligations of NATO membership, requires that member states "agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all" (NATO 1949). In signing onto this convention, member states cede complete autonomy over their personal foreign policy decisions; they place faith in others' willingness to treat another state's security as their own.

NATO's cohesion and the salience of the alliance's liberal democratic identity underwent great turbulence after the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union cost NATO its most relevant outgroup for comparison. The organization maintained its role as an anchor of global liberal democratic values but shifted priorities toward enlargement efforts to expand the limits of this ingroup. However, the extension of these bounds and a broadened security agenda encapsulating threats ranging from terrorism to environmental degradation contributed to cohesion issues. Without the Soviet Union and communism as acute and tangible enemies, NATO struggled to create the same level of ingroup solidarity it boasted through the twentieth century. In 2019, Emmanuel Macron expressed that NATO was experiencing "brain death" (Erlanger 2019) after former U.S. President Donald Trump pulled troops out of Syria and tensions surrounding democratic backsliding in member states of Turkey and Hungary escalated. Although many leaders criticized Macron's words, his statement encapsulated festering concerns about the alliance's longevity. The lack of a clear outgroup materialized in diminishing salience of the shared NATO identity and deteriorating cohesion between countries, as member states moved towards defending their personal "strategic autonomy" (Ibid.). NATO persisted as an emblem of liberal democracy, albeit one that some thought was destined to die out unless confronted by the right conditions for revitalization.

Sweden's History and Identity of Nonalignment

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Sweden developed a principled stance of political and military neutrality central to the country's burgeoning national identity. Following a brutal defeat by Russia in 1812, Sweden lost its status as a prospective great power. In response, Karl Johan, Sweden's king at the time, declared foreign policy neutrality to symbolize a new Sweden that prioritized internal state development over expansionism (Aguis 2012). This principle became intertwined with the Swedish political ideal of folkhemmet, the "people's home," which conceptualized the state as "a home that protects the nation's people as much as a family's home protects each of its members" (Ibid.). Social Democrats embraced this principle to advocate for and build a welfare state grounded in values of universalism, democracy, and solidarity. By placing domestic interests and national values over prospective international gains, Swedish neutrality in foreign policy was seen as a critical means to the end of protecting the Swedish people and the Swedish home above all else (Teschner 2015). This stance of neutrality conferred a sense of moral exceptionalism to Swedes relative to the

conservatism, Catholicism, and colonialism of continental Europe (Elisasson 2004), a perceived moral asymmetry expected in the formation of a national ingroup. A fundamental element of Swedish nation-building, foreign policy neutrality became integral to the Swedish conception of history, national identity, and shared civic virtues.

Throughout the global conflicts of the twentieth century, Sweden fashioned foreign policy passivity into a unique brand of military nonalignment that positioned the state as a leader in moral foreign policy and human rights promotion. Just as Sweden declared itself neutral in both World Wars, the state did not take a formal side during the Cold War. Even as its close Nordic collaborators Norway and Denmark joined NATO, Swedish decision-makers considered joining any multilateral security alliance as incompatible both with neutrality and Sweden's priorities of a strong domestic social system (Elisasson 2004). Sweden crafted a "third way" (Bjereld and Möller 2016) of security policy, navigating global order by seizing an intermediary position of an ideological but informal alignment with the West. Throughout the late 1900s, Sweden became a leading moral voice in international politics, criticizing colonialism and great powers' breaches of international law while increasing humanitarian aid to the Global South and leveraging trust on both sides to mediate interstate disputes (Brommesson 2022). On the international stage, neutrality became a critical element of the state's self-conception as an "activist" or moral superpower (Ibid). Domestically, the Swedish public adopted the idea that to be a good Swede was to be neutral (Teschner 2015).

Even with a formal security policy and national identity based on neutrality, Sweden's liberal and democratic priorities facilitated cooperation with Western powers on the basis of these shared values. During the Cold War, Sweden did not break its public display of military nonalignment but collaborated with the United States, primarily by providing secret intelligence to Western powers (Forsberg and Moyer 2022). Sweden's neutrality served the strategic purpose of mitigating potential Soviet aggression against the Scandinavian nation, but this value diminished after the collapse of the U.S.S.R. at the end of the Cold War. Sweden shed political neutrality by joining the European Union in 1995 to promote official collaboration between like-minded powers. Later, Sweden joined NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) Program and began participating in NATO military training exercises and prioritizing bilateral negotiations with other liberal democratic nations. Nevertheless, Sweden rejected all invitations to join formal multilateral security alliances.

Debates around Sweden's NATO membership became more prevalent with mounting Russian aggression throughout the 2010s, but Sweden did not waver in its neutrality. Despite Russia's invasion of Crimea in 2014, incursions into Swedish waters and airspace, and mock attacks on Swedish military training procedures, Sweden's prospects of joining NATO were deemed "unfathomable" as late as 2020 (Binnendijk 2020). For many Swedes, criticism of the country's militarily nonaligned posture was seen as an attack on Swedish identity itself (Brommesson 2022). Although values of liberal democracy were integral to the Swedish self-concept, Sweden's distinct national

identity and interests prevailed over the other shared identities with Western nations. Sweden's resounding rejection of the Euro, even with a weakening Swedish krona, reaffirmed the dominance of Swedish national identity in comparison to other affiliations (Volz and Reade 2009). In other words, Swedes maintained a stronger attachment to a national ingroup relative to the broader liberal democratic community. tions 2023; Espinosa 2020).

Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: The Turning Point

Russia's invasion of Ukraine was the indisputable catalyst for Sweden's bid for NATO membership. Swedish public support for NATO membership reached unforeseeable highs following Russia's belligerent violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. On March 24th, 2022, a month after Russian troops stormed Kyiv, a public opinion poll registered majority support for NATO membership for the first time in Sweden's history (Jacobsen and Ahlander 2022). Support for NATO membership and positive views of the alliance continued to rise in the following months (Wike 2022). Given that legitimacy expressed vis-a-vis public opinion was viewed as "a decisive factor for successful NATO accession," these metrics marked a changing tide in Swedish opinion (Forsberg and Moyer 2022). Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs Tobias Billström reiterated the consequentiality of Russia's actions in an official statement following Sweden's accession: "Sweden's membership of NATO is a direct result of [Russia's] illegal, unprovoked and indefensible war of aggression" (Billström 2024).

Although security concerns played a considerable role in Sweden's decision to depart from 200 years of military nonalignment, realist explanations fail to capture the mechanisms that compelled Swedes to shed their national commitment to neutrality. Swedes paid greater attention to Ukraine than most other European publics; three-fourths of Swedes felt the war posed a great deal or fair amount of risk to their country, a proportion second to only that of Polish civilians (IPSOS 2022). High threat perceptions reflected geographic proximity to Russia, historical tensions, and recent Russian aggression in Swedish waters and airspace. Faced with this intense sense of threat and, in Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson's words, concerns of Russia attempting a similar action "in Sweden's immediate vicinity" (Collinson 2022), security imperatives influenced Sweden's bid for NATO membership. However, Sweden had faced credible threats from Russia in the past and responded without seeing much escalation in public support for non-neutrality. For instance, after Russian aggression in Georgia and Crimea, Sweden heavily invested in its military capabilities, sought support from NATO member states, and even reinstated mandatory conscription (Strand 2023), but NATO membership remained off the table. Moreover, data gathered by the Eurobarometer before and after the onset of the Ukraine war revealed that Swedes, at levels higher than the average European, believed their lives would not be changed by the conflict—not the response expected if a population was overwhelmed with concerns of invasion. Finally, Swedes, even without salient threats to their sovereignty and security, have always displayed high levels of defense willingness

to protect their state relative to other European countries (Persson and Widmalm 2023). Given that security concerns have historically not been enough to break Sweden's non-alignment, another mechanism must have mediated the significant policy change in 2022.

What distinguished Ukraine's invasion from past cases of Russian aggression was the indelible mark the war left on perspectives of international democracy and thereby the identities that states held within the global order. For the first time since the Cold War, NATO had a clear external threat against which to compare itself: Russia and, broadly, illiberalism. In line with social identity theory predictions that invasive outgroup threats enhance intergroup differences, augmenting perceptions of outgroup hostility and ingroup solidarity (Tajfel 1982) the attack on Ukraine elicited unanimous condemnation of Russia by liberal democracies across the globe. Nonetheless, most anocratic and autocratic states have responded differently. Examining surveys conducted across 137 countries, University of Cambridge researchers uncovered an emerging global divide in perceptions of Russia based on regime type. Western actors reported "greater allegiance to both the U.S. and NATO" (Foa et al, 2022). Meanwhile, public positivity toward Russia in countries such as Greece, Italy, and even Hungary, the European states most sympathetic to the Eurasian superpower, also plummeted in the invasion's aftermath. However, "a zone of illiberal and undemocratic societies" exhibited "the exact opposite trend: populations that have steadily increased support for China, Russia, or both" (Foa et al, 2022). As Dr. Xavier Romero-Vidal noted, this association was not prevalent a decade ago (Foa et al, 2022), suggesting the growing salience of ingroups and outgroups determined by liberal democratic status – or the lack thereof. NATO rhetoric surrounding the crisis in Ukraine has emphasized this divide by expressing the moral inferiority and degeneracy of Russia's actions, in line with social identity theory arguments about ingroups nurturing positive self-concept in contrast to the relevant "other."

Swedish responses to the war and perspectives on NATO membership reflected a revitalization of liberal democratic identity. When asked about what European countries and institutions should prioritize in the wake of Russia's invasion, Swedes overwhelmingly prioritized democracy and the rule of law over defense and security of external borders. Additionally, Thomas Persson and Sten Widmaln leveraged the unexpectedness of Russia's invasion to create a natural experiment examining the relation of Swedish defense willingness to threat perceptions, democratic values and trust, among other variables. On the aggregate, Swedish defense willingness only marginally increased after Russia invaded Ukraine, and perceived threats from foreign powers and terrorism did not have a statistically significant impact on the increase that was observed. Instead, the only statistically significant predictors of an increase in defense willingness fell into the category of democratic values, civic engagement, and trust, suggesting that the prioritization of these ideals proved more important than material concerns of war in influencing Swedes' willingness to take up arms (Persson and Widmalm, 2023).

Political rhetoric has further suggested that Swedish motivations for joining NATO extended beyond security concerns and rested on belonging to an ingroup with increased identity-based salience. A sentiment analysis of Sweden's four largest newspapers reveals the relationship between foreign policy orientation, NATO membership, and Swedish identity. Swedish media, across the political spectrum, constructed a sense of "self" including the West, NATO, the EU, and the Nordic region, associated with terms like 'democracy,' 'freedom,' 'human rights,' and 'rule of law' while framing Russia as an 'unpredictable,' 'hostile,' and 'revanchist' "other" (Hagström, 2020). Those who publicly advocated for NATO membership rallied around the narrative that joining NATO would allow Sweden to come into its "identity premised on solidarity and collaboration with like-minded states" and positioned those who stood against the alliance as traitors to the liberal order and consequently Swedish liberal democratic identity (Hagström, 2020). The global resurgence of liberal democratic values by virtue of the threat posed to these ideals provided an opening for neutrality, once seen as a bastion of moral foreign policy, to become a scapegoat for Russian appeasement. Such values emerged in Swedish decision-makers' ultimate rationalization of their decision to join NATO. When formalizing Sweden's accession to NATO, Foreign Affairs Minister Billström evoked the importance of standing united against the threats that have been posed to international democracy and rules of law, stating "how far Russia may go in its actions…depends to a large extent on whether those of us who share fundamental democratic values stand firm, strong, and united" (Billström 2024). As predicted by social identity theory and showcased in this rhetoric, in applying to NATO, Sweden's self-interest as a nation was recast as the group interest of liberal democracies.

Conclusion

For centuries, Sweden preserved a principled stance of military nonalignment. However, Sweden broke from this historical precedent soon after Russia invaded Ukraine. Sweden's decision to join NATO crucially reflected the increased salience of global liberal democratic identity. Greater attachment to this ingroup compelled both the Swedish public and decision-makers to adopt a more favorable view of NATO and transition out of the neutral foreign policy orientation intertwined with long-standing Swedish conceptions of national identity.

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Picking Sides After Playing: Why Reagan's Gradual Iran-Iraq War Tilt Was Rational

Evan Jaffe

Introduction

On July 3, 1988, the United States Navy warship USS Vincennes shot down Iran Air Flight 655, killing 290 civilians (Rochlin 1991, 101). In addition to raising considerable criticism of the U.S., the tragedy prompted the end to a grueling eight-year war between Iran and Iraq, which had caused a million casualties and a trillion dollar cost to the two countries (Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 3; Marvin 2020, 84). "As one of the longest and bloodiest conflicts since World War II and… one of the grimmest wars of attrition in modern times," the Iran-Iraq War is a fascinating story of human wave attacks, chemical weapons, minority mobilization, assaults on oil infrastructure, and fierce diplomacy (Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 2). Motivated by boundary clashes, ideological disputes, and hegemonic hopes, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and Iranian Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini prolonged their fighting from 1980 to 1988. While the U.S. initially approached the conflict from a neutral stance, President Reagan slowly began supporting Iraq, notably by supplying Hussein vital intelligence and policing the Persian Gulf.

This paper asks whether President Reagan's Iran-Iraq War policy was rational. I will regard 'rational' policy as policy that is consistent with national interests given available information. Existing scholarship on the topic, both descriptive and prescriptive, follows three schools of thought: one, that Reagan's eventual tilt towards Iraq was largely rational; two, that Reagan should have tipped more decisively towards Iraq; and three, that Reagan should have shifted towards Iran, or at least less decisively towards Iraq. Utilizing wartime government correspondence, historical accounts of American relationships with both countries, and distinguished reviews of Reagan's foreign policy, including from those within his administration, I argue that Reagan largely acted as a rational decision-maker. If proven, this argument suggests that when intervening in foreign wars that involve a range of competing U.S. interests, American leaders must prioritize and decisively pursue those most integral to the nation.

Literature Review

The first argument in the debate follows that Reagan evaluated diplomatic and military considerations rationally in his gradual support of Iraq (Johnson 2011;

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Cordesman and Wagner 1990; Ehrman and Flamm 2009; Pollack 2004; Marvin 2020). Proponents of this camp, such as military strategy researcher Rob Johnson, acknowledge the risks of either Iran or Iraq winning the war and rising to regional hegemony and then propose that it was in Reagan's best interest to prolong the conflict as an unwinnable war of attrition for as long as possible (Johnson 2011, 100, 150; Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 237, 334; Ehrman and Flamm 2009, 130). As such, national security experts Cordesman and Wagner explain U.S. intervention in the conflict, especially the Tanker War, as a "measured response" in which Reagan's basis of neutrality and thus flexibility empowered him to tilt towards Iraq once Iran neared victory (Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 567-573; Pollack 2004, 206-207, 223-227; Marvin 2020, 89, 95-99; Sick 1989, 239).

Supporters of Reagan's gradual tilt towards Iraq make two key assumptions. First, they recognize that either a victorious Iraq or Iran would prove harmful to U.S. interests, such as Cold War politics and oil security, and that Reagan perceived both regimes as threats of this manner in some capacity. Second, they assume that Reagan correctly timed and calibrated his aid to compensate for Iraqi weaknesses. Without sustaining both of these assumptions, it is not plausible to argue that Reagan rationally tilted towards Iraq.

The second camp argues that Reagan should have supported Iraq even further, either exiting the neutral stance earlier or assisting Hussein with greater intensity (Coll 2024; Byrne 2014; Takeyh 2006, 95-103; Albert 1986; Bunch 2015). Critics of Reagan for not supporting Iraq more strongly claim that he withheld aid because he underestimated the threat that an adversarial Iran posed to U.S. national interests. They consistently cite the Iranian hostage crisis and Iran-Contra affair, Soviet influence, threats towards the Strait of Hormuz, and the Iranian revolution (Albert 1986, 1-2, 18, 31; Takeyh 2006, 95-103). In addition to arguing that Reagan underestimated the Iranian threat, renowned American journalist Steve Coll claims that Reagan overestimated the strategic risks of backing Saddam Hussein (Coll 2024, 39, 78-79). He points out Hussein's acceptances of ceasefires and willingness to communicate with Western leaders as proof of his trustworthiness as a temporary ally.

The second camp's assessment of Reagan's policy is reasonable given three main assumptions. In order to criticize Reagan's support of Iraq as inadequate, proponents assume that Iran was either the greater threat to the U.S. prior to the war, given the Islamic Revolution and hostage crisis, or that it was independently threatening U.S. national interests early in the war, such as by soliciting Soviet support and endangering international shipping. Second, they must adhere to the belief that Hussein was genuinely willing to cooperate with the United Nations. In order to propose that the U.S. should have increased its support of Hussein, one must hold that either Iran was a greater threat than believed or that Iraq was a lesser threat than believed. Additionally, while still entertaining the stalemate strategy, those that argue Reagan should have supported Iraq earlier must assume that the nation was at great risk of falling to Iran earlier in the war.

On the other hand, scholars have also argued that Reagan should have tipped more decisively towards Iran (Inboden 2022; Parsi 2008; Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 506-518; Takeyh 2006; Kelley 2007). First, proponents of this camp assert that the President underestimated the risks of backing Iraq. For example, Trita Parsi, an expert on U.S.–Iran relations, argues that Reagan mistakenly turned a blind eye to Hussein's usage of chemical weapons and tacitly permitted a humanitarian crisis (Parsi 2008, 101; Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 506-518; Takeyh 2006, 172; Murray 2010, 45; Arquilla 2006, 95-96). Second, in addition to pointing out how Reagan misread supporting Iraq, followers of this camp emphasize that Reagan exaggerated the Iranian threat. For example, U.S. and Iran Foreign Policy expert Ray Takeyh and U.S. Foreign Policy author Donnette Murray argue that Iran would have served U.S. interests better than Iraq given its, often misconstrued, opposition to Soviet influence (Takeyh 2006, 76-79, 84, 93-94; Murray 2010, 45; Sterner 1984, 136). Further, proponents, such as U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Stephen Andrew Kelley, contend that by supporting Iraq in land warfare and engaging in the Tanker War, Reagan instigated Iranian escalation and heightened Iranian threats to American interests, especially revolving around the oil industry (Kelley 2007, 28-30; Inboden 2022, 461-462; Gamlen and Rogers 1993, 145; Takeyh 2006, 169).

This camp rests on three assumptions. The first is either that Reagan was unaware of Hussein's widespread usage of chemical weapons, or that if he did know, he had a responsibility to prioritize ending the humanitarian crisis and advocating for nonproliferation at the expense of other national interests. Second, adherents must assume that Iran was not facing immediate or gradual Soviet expansion. Third, proponents can only blame Reagan and Hussein for escalating the Iran-Iraq War if Khomeini proportionally responded to Iraqi and American threats. Combined, if multiple U.S. interests in the Iran-Iraq War, such as regional stability, oil security, superpower influence, and nonproliferation, were indeed at risk by supporting Iraq over Iran, then Reagan should have remained neutral or supported Khomeini.

In the remainder of this paper, I show how wartime government correspondence, historical narratives of U.S.–Iran and U.S.–Iraq diplomacy, and scholarship on the Reagan Administration support Reagan's gradual support of Iraq. I will build this argument in four sections. First, I explain why Reagan was correct to pursue a stalemate strategy at the onset of the war. In the following two sections, I evaluate limitations of Reagan's critics to further support a careful American tilt by providing specific rebuttals to noteworthy evaluations of Iranian and Iraqi threats. Fourth, I follow the timeline of the war to explain why Reagan's gradual tilt towards Iraq was appropriately calibrated to Iranian growth. While Reagan's engagement during the Iran-Iraq War had its flaws, his eventual tilt towards Iraq proves to be rational.

Evidence

A. The Need for a Stalemate

In this section, I explain why Reagan's at-first neutral policy best protected

U.S. national interests in the Middle East and beyond. As many reviews acknowledge, a decisive victory for either Iran or Iraq, both led by hegemonic dictators, would threaten regional stability, oil security, and the favorable American position in the Gulf (Cordesman 1987, 6-7; Sick 1989, 239; Albert 1986, 45-46, 49). First, I explain why the U.S. President rationally feared that both dictators, Saddam Hussein and Ruhollah Khomeini, would aggravate Middle Eastern stability early in the conflict. Second, I detail how instability would have harmed U.S. interests by both threatening oil security and, more importantly, instigating Soviet influence. While this analysis does not assess whether Iran or Iraq was more likely to threaten each American interest, the issue is not yet which country needed more support to uphold a standstill; instead, this first argument is that it was in Reagan's best interest to pursue a flexible stalemate strategy in order to prevent either side from losing decisively.

First, Hussein and Khomeini both posed significant threats to the stability of the Gulf region during the outset of the Iran-Iraq War. Their concurrent rise in 1979 led to increased border tensions as "both states were [then] led by dogmatic politicians who were prone to accept great risks in pursuit of their objectives" (Takeyh 2006, 166-167). Both leaders actively sought to create unrest across their shared border, with Khomeini encouraging the Iranian Shiite majority to overthrow Hussein and Hussein inciting Arab dissidents against Khomeini's new regime (Albert 1986, 9). While the U.S. had long enjoyed a diplomatic friendship with the Shah, the Iranian Revolution in the late 1970s brought both a wave of anti-American sentiment and a new leader with hegemonic hopes from the beginning (Johnson 2011, 39-40). A reformist Iranian politician expressed similar sentiments: "Imagine if you could topple Saddam and establish an Islamic Republic over there… That would change the balance of everything, you could dominate the region, you could dominate the entire Middle East" (Parsi 2008, 87-88). Khomeini then rallied his fragmented nation to hopefully overthrow the Baath regime in Baghdad by utilizing religious promises and denunciations of the Iraqi invasion—sentiment strong enough to prompt thousands of young boys to accept death clearing mines (Alfoneh 2013, 89; Johnson 2011, 73). As for Iraq, after Egypt was evicted from the Arab League in March of 1979 as a result of its participation in the Camp David Accords, Hussein hoped to fill the regional power vacuum as the new dominant Middle Eastern power (Parsi 2008, 97-98). Concerned by the new president repressing opposition, Reagan's Arabists perceived Hussein as a strong, but brutal, national leader (Coll 2024, 39-40, 57-58). Even Reagan referred to Hussein as a "no good nut" in his diary (Inboden 2022, 94).

With a steadily growing list of Middle Eastern security threats, Reagan rightfully desired Gulf stability. While Reagan hoped to enter office and project strength, the Middle East proved to be a major obstacle (Bunch 2015, 455-456). He inherited many foreign policy issues in the region, including the Iranian hostage crisis, the Lebanese Civil War, terrorism in Palestine and Libya, and the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan (Bunch 2015, 453-454).[1] To the Reagan administration, no one issue could be considered on its own; instead, the new president would approach the many

events with an intent to establish stability, both in 1981 and for his entire presidency (Reagan and Lindsney 1990, 489, 704; Inboden 2022, 5, 7; Johnson 2011, 91).

Second, preventing the spread of Soviet influence during the Cold War was central to Middle Eastern stability as a U.S. national interest. Entering office in January 1981 soon after the Soviet Union's September 1980 invasion of Afghanistan, the Reagan administration was greatly focused on preventing Soviet expansion into the Persian Gulf (Kelley 2007, 30; Khadduri 1988, 142). With the Cold War as Reagan's foreign policy focus throughout his presidency, he consistently viewed the Iran-Iraq War as a superpower competition for influence (Inboden 2022, 5, 278; Murray 2010, 40; Busch 2001, 191). Secretary of State Shultz agreed that "the idea of the Soviets playing a key maritime role in the Gulf had no appeal to us" (Shultz 1993, 926).[2] Indeed, Reagan had reason to worry. The Central Intelligence Agency repeatedly assessed Soviet intention in the region: "The USSR's primary aim in the Persian Gulf region since 1979 has been to capitalize on the windfall it received from the elimination of US influence in Iran without jeopardizing its shaky, though important, relationship with Iraq" (Director of Soviet Intelligence, 1). A greatly weakened and isolated Iran or Iraq would likely align with the Soviet Union for support (Cordesman 1987, 12).

Another unfavorable implication of Gulf instability was the disturbance of oil shipping. In his testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Armacost listed the flow of oil as the first U.S. interest in the region (Armacost 1987, 11).[3] Looking back at his decisions during the war, Secretary of Defense Weinberger highlighted that it was essential for the U.S. to protect shipping lanes given the interconnectedness of the oil industry and its potential impact on the American economy, even if the U.S. did not consume oil from the Gulf: "There is one market for oil: a global market" (Weinberger 1990, 391).[4] Once again, Reagan had ample reason to worry about a threat to a primary national interest. Not only could escalations in fighting lead to major interruptions of oil flow from the Gulf, either country leaving the conflict as a decisive winner could begin to control the market by bullying threatened Gulf countries to "restrict production and raise prices" (Cordesman 1987, 16).

B. An Initially Moderate Iranian Threat

Having accepted that a stalemate to ensure that neither country emerged dominant best fit U.S. interests, in this section, I will explain why Reagan properly evaluated Iran as a moderate threat towards the beginning of the war. First, I will prove why the Iranian hostage crisis was not a tremendous threat to the U.S. once the war began. Second, I will explain how even though the Islamic Revolution and Iranian threats on free navigation presented considerable challenges to Reagan's involvement in the war, the U.S. was well equipped to tackle both. Third, I will discuss Soviet-Iranian relations in order to explain that while Khomeini opposed Soviet influence at times, as Takeyh and Murray emphasize, the Reagan administration was rational to fear Soviet influence in Iran. Individually, these cases do not definitively prove Iran

to be a stronger or weaker threat than Reagan painted; indeed, Reagan appropriately compiled these components to understand Iran as a complex threat.

First, while the Iranian hostage crisis loomed as both a threat and incentive for U.S. intervention during the escalations towards the Iran-Iraq War, its threat quickly faded. After Iranian revolutionaries took over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, and more than fifty American hostages with it, in 1979, the U.S. was largely deemed a "crippled giant" under "Carter's hapless responses" (Inboden 2022, 38). Though Khomeini utilized the hostage crisis to consolidate domestic power, he also incited American and international backlash, both ideological and practical (Takeyh 2006, 101-102).[5] Notably, U.S. sanctions had lasting impacts on the Iranian war effort. Carter's embargo disrupted Iran's prior reliance on American arms and spare parts, forcing the country at times to purchase U.S. arms and ammunition for two and a half times the world market price, thus furthering Iraq's existing military technology advantage (Cordesman 1987, 26, 79). Moreover, once Khomeini deemed that he had reaped all of the benefits from holding the hostages, he released them the very moment Reagan was inaugurated in order to humiliate Carter (Pollack 2004, 170-171). Thus, as president, Reagan never actually had to deal with the hostage crisis, the threat was seemingly gone.[6]

Second, while the Islamic Revolution reconditioned Iran into an anti-American disrupter, the United States was prepared to counter its threats on diplomacy and free navigation. The West was greatly surprised on February 11, 1979 when rebel troops overthrew the Pahlavi dynasty (Parsi 2008, 79). However, the Iranian Revolution did not occur in a vacuum. The U.S.-instigated coup against elected Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadeq in 1953 dismantled public Iranian trust in America as a benevolent power and delineated the Shah as an actor of imperialism (Takeyh 2006, 84, 93-93). Khomeini projected these views, and his anti-Americanism then greatly influenced his decision making as a leader (Pollack 2004, 156-157). Any national leader with considerable anti-American sentiment posed a significant threat to U.S. national interests. Prior to the revolution of 1979, the U.S. relied on Saudi Arabia and Iran to deter the Soviet Union (Inboden 2022, 127). Without the Shah, America had to be more wary of Soviet influence creeping into the Middle East. However, besides its Cold War dangers and the hostage crisis, the Islamic Revolution brought few consequences to the U.S. While Khomeini utilized Islamic ideology, not realpolitik like the Shah, his hope for regional leadership did not exceed that of his predecessor (Parsi 2008, 87-88). While many feared Khomeini altering the regional order by threatening the Gulf, Khomeini recognized that threatening shipping would only incite Western intervention into the war and ensured the U.S. that he would not tamper with the Strait of Hormuz (Johnson 2011, 94).[7]

Third, following unsteady Soviet-Iranian relations, the Reagan administration was rationally cautious with, but not excessively paranoid of, Soviet influence in Iran. As mentioned, the U.S. had relied on Iran to fend off a Soviet presence in the region, and the question of Soviet intervention was the most important national interest con-

sideration (Johnson 2011, 23; Inboden 2022, 127). Prior to the war, Soviet-Iranian relations seemed generally positive: in January 1980, the Soviet Union voted against a UN resolution calling for economic sanctions against Iran for holding American hostages and then granted Iran transit through the Soviet Union once the boycott still passed, essentially saving Iran's economy from crisis (Tarock 1998, 38-39). Additionally, Khomeini expressed gratitude to Soviet Ambassador Vinogradov for alerting him of Soviet plans to invade Afghanistan (Tarock 1998, 38-39). However, entering the summer of 1980, relations deteriorated as Iran felt threatened by growing Soviet-Iraqi relations and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, despite Khomeini's tacit approval (Tarock 1998, 39–41; Parsi 2008, 93-94).[8] In June, fearing Soviet espionage, Iran reduced the Soviet diplomatic presence, expelling Soviet First Secretary Golovanov, and in August, Iranian Foreign Minister Qutbzadaeh wrote a letter to Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko accusing the Soviet Union for being just as "satanic" as the United States (Tarock 1998, 39-41). In a turn of events the following summer, the two nations reached a brief rapprochement, diplomatic and commercial, when a new Iranian President, Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister entered office (Directorate of Intelligence, 4). It seemed Khomeini accepted a realistic, limited relationship with the Soviet Union given their geographical proximity and the nature of the bipolar system (Takeyh 2006, 77). However, in 1982, both sides became fed up with the other: the Soviet Union with Iran's public criticism of the invasion of Afghanistan, aid to Afghani insurgents, and repression of the Communist Tudeh party and Iran with increasing Soviet support of Iraq (Takeyh 2006, 5; Parsi 2008, 98).[9] While the Soviet Union ultimately did not have great influence in Iran, there were signs that the neighbors could revive their relations.

C. A Moderate Iraqi Threat

To further support Reagan's initial neutral approach, in this section, I explain how his evaluation of Iraq as a moderate threat, like Iran, was rational. I will do so by analyzing the opposing camps' predominant points within their criticism of Reagan: Iraqi cooperation with international war termination efforts and widespread Iraqi usage of chemical weapons. First, I explain why Hussein's willingness to partake in United Nations negotiations does not signify that Reagan should have viewed Iraq as a lesser threat. On the other hand, I explain how the United States was aware of Hussein's chemical warfare and how, albeit tragically, the Reagan administration had to prioritize other interests over the crisis. Having already established Hussein as a general threat, this section serves to closely dismantle counterarguments that Reagan should have approached Iraq as a greater or lesser threat.

First, Hussein complied with international negotiations because the UN enabled the protection and extension of his territory, not because he sought a peaceful solution. Once Iraq had invaded Iran and gained significant advantages, Hussein was greatly willing to negotiate from a position of strength (Johnson 2011, 52). UN Security Council Resolution 479 of September 28, 1980 urged the two nations to end

fighting through mediated negotiations (United Nations Security Council 1988, 208-209). While Hussein agreed to follow the resolution, he only used the negotiations to pursue his own interests: in any deal, Iran would have to recognize Iraqi control over the Shatt al-Arab and other newly acquired territories and promise not to mess with domestic Iraqi affairs (Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 105; Johnson 2011, 52).[10] Iran then rejected the resolution (Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 105; Johnson 2011, 52).[11] On the other hand, once Iran had embarked on a successful run of counter-offensives and had established a military advantage in the spring of 1982, Hussein was once again willing to negotiate, this time from a position of weakness (Johnson 2011, 77). Given that the UN often followed U.S. intelligence and Reagan aligned his tilt towards Iraq when Iran gained a convincing military advantage in early 1982, on October 4, 1982, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 522—once again calling for a ceasefire and, unlike in 1980, urging a withdrawal of Iranian forces to internationally recognized borders (United States Security Council 1988, 212-213; Johnson 2011, 181-182).[12] Iraq accepted the resolution while Iran rejected it (Johnson, 2011, 77).[13] In this way, whether Iran or Iraq was in a military advantage, the United Nations seemed to better serve Iraqi interests at this time (Johnson 2011, 77; Wright 1980, 295-296).[14] His cooperation did not reveal Iraq as a lesser threat; instead, it is only representative of a general international tilt towards Iraq, especially once Iran had a significant advantage.

Second, Reagan was aware of, and concerned by, Hussein's extensive chemical weapon usage. With mass usage during World War I, chemical weapons were outlawed during the Geneva Convention of 1925 (Arquilla 2006, 104). However, after producing the weapons in the 1970s, Iraq began utilizing various agents during the Iran-Iraq War, especially once on the defensive in 1982 to divert Iranian human wave attacks, assail Iranian soldier morale, and even, later in the war, depopulate its own Kurdish areas (Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 506-512, 517-518). Chemical weapons are considered responsible for around 45,000 Iranian and at least 50,000 Kurdish casualties during the entire war (Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 517; Coll 2024, 130). As shown in a CIA situation report dated July 29, 1982, the Reagan administration was aware of the weapon usage at the onset of the Iranian counteroffensive (Central Intelligence Agency 1982; Harris and Aid 2013). In a public speech on February 21, 1984, Iraqi Major General Rashid declared, "the invaders should know that for every harmful insect there is an insecticide capable of annihilating it, whatever their number, and Iraq possesses this annihilation insecticide," and a day later, the Iraqis stopped an Iranian human wave attack and inflicted 2,500 casualties with mustard gas (Coll 2024, 71-74). The defense was also the first documented Iraqi usage of nerve agents: they used tabun in addition to the mustard gas (Coll 2024, 71-74).[15] Ironically, two days later, National Intelligence Officer at Large David B. Low notified CIA leadership that Hussein likely had access to nerve agents and would soon begin using them (Low 1984, 1-2). With international humanitarian concerns, the Reagan administration felt compelled to respond and began a pattern of publishing sternly-worded

public criticisms (Inboden 2022, 276-279; Coll 2024, 72-74).[16]

While the administration denounced Iraq's chemical warfare, Reagan rationally prioritized other U.S. interests in the war. First, nonproliferation was a large goal of Reagan's while entering office (Anderson and Anderson 2009, 59-62; Low 1984). While he focused on nuclear weapons, the other weapons of mass destruction were also an important component of his arms control policy (Arquilla 2006, 95-96). Second, the CIA recognized that the U.S. had little power in preventing Iraq's transgressions: "Even a strong international condemnation of Iraq for using mustard agent is unlikely to cause Iraq to cease employing it" (Central Intelligence Agency 1983, 1). Third, generally speaking, in contrast to the Carter administration, the Reagan administration was more focused on Cold War politics than human rights (Pollack 2004, 206). All of this considered, Reagan's decision to prioritize the prevention of an Iraqi defeat—and thus a hegemonic Iran with potential oil bullying and Soviet expansion—over humanitarian concerns and nonproliferation is largely rational (Tarock 1998, 161).

D. Tilting on Time

Given that the previous sections strongly enforce Reagan's initial neutrality and ongoing pursuit of a stalemate as rational, it is clear that his administration would rationally support the country in danger of collapse. As mentioned, this was Iraq. In this final section, I will explain why the American tilt towards Iraq was timed rationally. First, I highlight how Reagan shifted from remaining neutral to supporting Iraq right as Iran first gained a significant military advantage in 1982. Second, I explain how the U.S. entered the Tanker War, a significant escalation, when Iran showed signs of nearing victory on land and water. While neither of these claims address whether Reagan instigated Iranian escalation by supporting Hussein more drastically, that is not the issue: my argument is that given the U.S. had to tilt towards Iraq to protect its own national interests, Reagan further supported Iraq at fitting times.

First, Reagan only tilted towards Iraq when Iran gained a significant advantage in the fighting. While Hussein's limited warfare invasion overpowered Iranian defenses in late September 1980, Khomeini quickly prevented Iraq from taking major cities by October 1980 (Johnson 2011, 52-54). After a quiet winter and spring on the battlefield, in the summer of 1981, Khomeini also averted Iraq from taking Abadan, an important Iranian island that would have granted Iraq full access to the Shatt al-Arab, a significant strategic advantage (Johnson 2011, 61-65). Starting with small-scale attacks to push Iraq back from its most forward outposts between November 1981 and February 1982, the Iranian counteroffensive swept the majority of the southern front of Iraqi forces, retook the Iranian port city of Khorramshahr, and prepared to launch their own invasion of Iraqi territory by the summer of 1982 (Johnson 2011, 61-65). When the counteroffensive proved itself to be strong by February, the United States knew that Iraq faced a credible threat (Inboden 2022, 277; Sterner 1984, 128-129). A State Department official reported that "the days of the comfortable equilibrium in

the Iraq-Iran war may be over" (Tousi 1997, 51). Thus, in February, Reagan removed Iraq from the terrorism-supporting state list in order to feed Hussein intelligence to help Iraq fix fortifications protecting al-Basrah, an essential Iraqi city surrounded by the conflict (Pollack 2004, 207). The intelligence proved to be the most crucial help to Iraq in protecting its sovereignty and prolonging the stalemate (Pollack 2004, 208; Takeyh 2006, 171-172).

Second, after four constructive years of American support for Iraq, Iran launched two significant land assaults, indicating an approaching victory. In February 1986, Iran took over the Faw peninsula, or al-Faw (Johnson 2011, 113).[17] After holding down the territory from ongoing Iraqi counter-offensives for nearly a year, Iran hoped to capture al-Basrah at last (Pollack 2004, 223). Recognizing that Hussein obsessed over al-Faw, Khomeini sent in a diversion just north of the peninsula in late December 1986; Iraqi soldiers swarmed the forces but were then greatly outmatched on January 5, 1987 as 200,000 Iranian soldiers broke through the first two lines of Iraqi defense at al-Basrah (Pollack 2004, 223). By February, the Iranians broke through five of the total six fortifications and were only a few kilometers from the city, but Iraqi reinforcements and chemical weapons halted the offensive (Pollack 2004, 223). Figure 1 depicts the al-Fah and al-Basrah offensives below. The entire episode considered, Iran's near takeover of a major Iraqi city sent a drastic message: for the first time since 1982, "Iraq appeared to be facing the possibility of total collapse" (Gamlen and Rogers 1993, 131).

In addition to Iranian advances on southern territories, Iranian naval escalations prompted increased U.S. military involvement. From 1986 to 1987, at the same time as, and following, its assaults on al-Faw and al-Basrah, Iran was greatly increasing its naval presence in the Gulf with a new naval branch of the Revolutionary Guards and the deployment of Chinese Silkworm missiles with a half-ton warhead and an ability to sink vessels (Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 278; Pollack 2004, 224; Johnson 2011, 147-148). Indeed, in late February 1987, US intelligence detected Silkworm missile testing in the Strait of Hormuz (Armacost 1987, 12; Johnson 2011, 147-148). After losing eight vessels to Iranian attacks, Kuwait asked both the United States and the Soviet Union to reflag its ships in January 1987 (Kelley 2007, 28; Johnson 2011, 147-148). The Reagan administration offered to fully reflag the Kuwaiti fleet on March 7 in order to protect oil security, restore U.S. credibility in the Gulf following the Iran-Contra affair, discourage Iranian aggression, limit Soviet influence, and uphold Iraq (Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 279; Inboden 2022, 437; Gamlen and Rogers 1993, 129). The reflagging mission, thereafter called Operation Earnest Will, commenced in July.[18]

Conclusion

In summary, Reagan was a rational decision maker throughout the Iran-Iraq War. His administration fully grasped and closely scrutinized the dynamic threats posed by both Hussein and Khomeini to craft a proactive, yet patient, approach to the

war from 1980 to 1988. The president carefully approached the war from a neutral position and urged a stalemate because he recognized that there would be staggering consequences to Cold War politics and oil security should either dictator throw off regional stability. He did not overreact to the already settled Iranian hostage crisis nor the anti-American Iranian Revolution and was appropriately wary of Soviet-Iranian relations. Similarly, he was hesitant to accept Iraqi cooperation as good faith, and while from a humanitarian perspective and hopeful nonproliferation policy, he rejected Hussein's use of chemical weapons, he rationally prioritized realpolitik. Finally, when Iran emerged as a likely victor, during both its initial counter-offensives of 1982 and then during the Tanker War in 1986 and 1987, Reagan suitably escalated American intervention with intelligence and reflagging respectively.

As Reagan's Iran-Iraq War policy was rational, American policymakers should follow his approach towards complex offshore conflicts. Leaders must accept that the world is a messy place. Disputes, clashes, and wars—no matter where they are fought, who fights in them, or why they are fought—have confusing intricacies. Thus, future U.S. Presidents must follow Reagan's example in approaching foreign wars cautiously. Then, from a careful position, relying on credible intelligence, they must establish how the intricacies at hand threaten, or uphold, their own national interests. While their foreign policy should be flexible for when circumstances and interests inevitably change along the way, their administrations must unwaveringly pursue their greatest priorities. Reflecting on Operation Earnest Will, Weinberger emphasized the importance of critically identifying and then steadfastly maintaining U.S. national interests:

> "We learned a most valuable lesson from all this. If after careful consideration, it is determined that a particular course of action must be followed to safe guard our present and future security, then it is vital that we follow that course of action coolly and resolutely, and not be deterred or swayed by criticism, no matter how intense or how fevered, nor by setbacks, no matter how severe they may appear (Weinberger 1990, 427)."

As in Reagan's case in the Iran-Iraq War, American leaders will likely face competing interests in any given foreign conflict. Following his example, they must evaluate national interests and pursue the indispensable.

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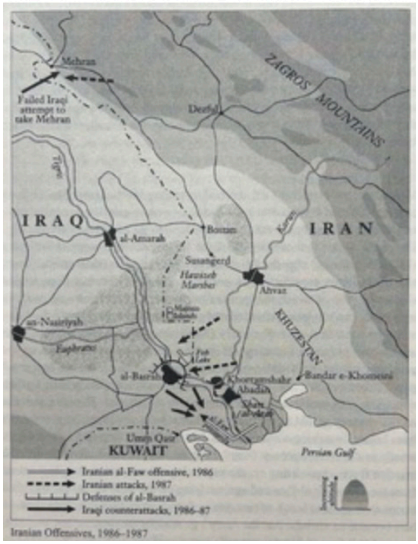
Figure 1
Iranian Offensives, 1986–1987 (Pollack 2004, 222).



Endnotes

1 This list only consists of the Middle Eastern security threats at Reagan's inauguration. Other events, such as the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi Osirak reactor (1981), the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat (1981), the Hezbollah bombing of the U.S. Marine Corps in Beirut (1983), and the Iranian hijacking of TWA Flight 847 (1985), greatly influenced Iranian, Iraqi, and American decision makers throughout the war.

2 There is a long history of Soviet-Iranian and Soviet-Iraqi diplomacy that is greatly important to any discussion on superpower involvement in the Iran-Iraq War. This subsection focuses on how instability, in the event of a theoretical one-sided outcome, would lead to Soviet expansion; thus, it does not detail a fuller story of Soviet relationships with Iran and Iraq. More information on Soviet-Iranian relations can also be found in the following section.

3 The point reads, "The unimpeded flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz is a vital interest and critical to the economic health of the Western world; another very important interest is freedom of navigation for nonbelligerent shipping in and through the gulf, in line with our worldwide policy of keeping sealanes open."

4 While the U.S. did not, multiple American allies relied on Gulf oil. This was another important consideration for Reagan (Inboden 2022, 276–277).

5 The Reagan administration was still officially neutral at this time. However, the hostage crisis compelled many key voices in the administration, such as Weinberger, to disdain Iran: "Our official policy was to remain neutral in the conflict; but the Iranian outrages against our people, beginning in 1979, made it difficult for me to remain neutral in any conflict to which Iran was a party" (Weinberger 1990, 358).

6 Later in the war, Iran acquired more American hostages through Hezbollah kidnappings in Lebanon in 1983 and the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 in 1985. Infamously, this led to Reagan's Iran-Contra scandal in which he sold arms to Iran in hopes of retrieving the hostages. When the sales failed to bring Americans home and the affair was leaked, Reagan received sharp domestic disapproval and international distrust. The downfall of the encounter seemed to rest less in Iran as a threat and more in American decision-making miscalculations: Weinberger deemed the episode as "the one serious mistake the Administration made during the seven years I served as Secretary of Defense." As Reagan had already tilted towards Iraq before the kidnappings and the affair, this section does not include an analysis of its proceedings. (Parsi 2008, 111–112, 116; Inboden 2022, 423–424, 435–436; Weinberger 1990, 353.; Byrne 2014, 28).

7 It was not until later in the war, in 1983, after intentional Iraqi escalation on Iranian oil infrastructure to increase international intervention, that Khomeini threatened to close the Strait. Only then did Reagan warn Iran against threatening free navigation and oil shipping. Similar to hostage crises, Iran's threat to oil was substantially later in the war, but not at the onset. (Johnson, 2011, 101, 139, 145; Reagan and Lindsey 1990, 462–463).

8 Iran was even suspicious that the Soviet Union knew of the Iraqi invasion plans yet did not warn them (Tarock 1998, 41–42).

9 As a symbol of their fractured relations, "the Khomeini regime… allowed Afghan refugees to march on the Soviet Embassy in Tehran on the 27 December 1982 anniversary of the Soviet invasion [of Afghanistan]. They tore down and burned the Soviet flag flying over the Embassy's front gate. Moscow filed an official protest, but the Iranian Foreign Ministry publicly condoned the attack on the Embassy by suggesting it was justified by the USSR's occupation of Muslim Afghanistan" (Directorate of Intelligence, n.d., 7).

10 The Shatt al-Arab, or 'River of the Arabs,' forms the border between southern Iran and Iraq. The new Khomeini regime escalated border clashes over ownership of the river, sporadically fought since the 16th Century between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. On September 17, 1980, just five days before launching his invasion into Iran, Hussein claimed ownership over the river, abrogating the most recent boundary-defining treaty, the Algiers Agreement of 1975. (Albert 1986, 6–9; Parsi 2008, 98).

11 On March 5, 1981, when the Organisation of Islamic Conference, which aims to unite Islamic countries, proposed a peace plan that included a ceasefire and an Iraqi withdrawal, Hussein quickly rejected the plan and escalated fighting. Indeed, Hussein was only willing to cooperate with the UN at this time as Resolution 479 did not rule out Iraq's new territorial claims (Johnson 2011, 60).

12 UNSC Resolution 522 even acknowledged Iraqi cooperation: "Welcomes the fact that one of the parties has already expressed its readiness to co-operate in the implementation of Resolution 514 (1982) and calls upon the other to do likewise."

13 At an Arab League summit in September 1981, Iraq accepted, and Iran rejected, a Saudi peace-plan proposal which included a ceasefire and an Iranian withdrawal. It is clear Hussein was only willing to cooperate with the UN on Resolutions 479 and 522 as they did not rule out Iraq's new territorial claims and promoted its acquisition of territory lost to Iran respectively (Johnson 2011, 76–77).

14 Many discussions on the UN Resolutions of the Iran-Iraq War understably focus on Resolution 598 of July 20, 1987 and hone in on its call to identify an aggressor. While both sides accepted the resolution, fighting continued as negotiations stalled over the importance of assessing responsibility. Given Resolution 598 was adopted in 1987, it is outside the scope of Reagan assessing Iraq as a threat. (Sick 1989, 240; UNSC 1987; Aziz and Islamic Public of Iran 1988).

15 Nerve agents are more effective than standard chemical weapons like mustard gas. Exposure can lead to immediate loss of organ function and death (Directorate of Intelligence 1984, 2).

16 When Iran planned an attack near the Kurdish town of Halabja, Iraq dropped mustard gas bombs, killing Iranian soldiers and up to 5,000 Kurdish civilians on February 26, 1988. While the U.S. recognized that its intelligence helped forge the Iraqi strategy of the attack, the Reagan administration pressed Project Druid Leader to continue providing intelligence in order to prevent the seemingly forthcoming Iranian victory (Barnaby 1988, 408; Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 517; Coll 2024, 112, 114–116, 121). Then, following the less visible Anfal campaign between February and September 1988, in which Iraqi forces cleared and gassed Kurdish villages, killing tens of thousands of civilians, the Reagan administration successfully lobbied against a genocide prevention bill; instead, the U.S. only lightly pressed Germany to tighten its export controls (Pollack 2004, 208; Coll 2024, 124–125, 130, 131).

17 The peninsula was also strategically essential to retain control over the Shatt al-Arab. Moreso, Khomeini utilized the victory to convince the Iranian public that 1986 was the "Year of Victory" and mobilized hundreds of thousands of more volunteer soldiers. Indeed, Iranian strength seemed to be growing (Johnson 2011, 129–131, 150).

18 The remaning year of the Tanker War included six direct military clashes, Iranian naval guerilla warfare, American retaliation, international minesweeping, and more. Its escalation largely brought about the end of the war, leaving both Iran and Iraq relatively stable (Cordesman and Wagner 1990, 277–394, 567–570).

Unveiling the Rhetoric: The Use and Implications of Discursive Frame-Bridging within the SNP's Environmental Policy Discourse

Skye Lockhart

Introduction

Governments across the world possess the power to enact policies that address climate change adaptation and mitigation (Galarraga et al., 2011). Citizens rely on governments to enact such policies given that environmental threats present challenges concerning public goods. These challenges cannot be adequately addressed solely through private efforts and necessitate the wider political legitimacy unique to government authority (Kraft, 2021). With increasing global recognition of the impact of climate change in recent years, mitigation and adaptation have rapidly become central issues in contemporary politics (Hau, 2021). There is increasing literature highlighting the emergence of sub-state 'climate pioneers', with ambitious efforts being made at sub-state and regional levels of governance (Conversi & Hau, 2021; McEwan & Bomberg, 2013; Nash, 2021). This research demonstrates why, despite a limited capacity for policy action, sub-state governments attempt to portray themselves as 'climate pioneers' (McEwan & Bomberg, 2013, pg. 63).

There has been insufficient attention given to the relationship between nationalism and environmental policy. This is an increasingly important issue, as nationalism and the concept of the 'nation-state' can permeate all levels of politics, shaping how governments approach environmental policies (Conversi, 2012; Hau, 2022; Malešević 2019). Given their increasing political significance, environmental policies can be and have been, utilised to further nationalist political goals (Lachapelle et al., 2016). Accordingly, the connection between climate change and nationalism requires immediate attention.

1.1 The Case of Scotland

Scotland is a sub-state nation in the United Kingdom with a separate Parliament maintaining wide-ranging devolved powers, including those associated with the environment, energy and climate change. Sub-state nationalist movements are defined as 'minority nations' (Keating 2001) or 'nations without a state' (Guibernau, 2013). The term 'sub-state' can refer to multiple levels of governance; from cities to devolved governments. This study will focus specifically on the latter. Since 2007, the government of Scotland has been led by the Scottish Nationalist Party.

Demonstrated in the introductory quote by Nicola Sturgeon that com-

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menced this dissertation, the SNP's political raison d'être is forming an independent Scottish state, and this priority 'transcends' other pertinent policy issues (Sturgeon, 2016). Given this assertion of independence as a political priority, and Scotland's desired identity as a sub-state 'climate pioneer' it's crucial to assess the relative precedence given to environmental policy. Scotland, therefore, serves as a pertinent case study to demonstrate the deployment of nationalist-promoting rhetoric in environmental policy discourse.

1.2 The Issue

There is an inherent risk associated with the use of discursive strategies in environmental policy. Further discussed in Section 4.2, when employed in environmental policy, discursive strategies can lead to incorrect framing of climate change, avoidance of accountability and amalgamation of incongruent policies. Studies have demonstrated that actors can manipulate frames or discourses in an environmental debate to exercise power (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005). A lesser-researched discursive framing technique utilised by policymakers is frame-bridging, which is the 'linking of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames' (Benford & Snow, 2000, pg. 624). A contemporary example of this in the context of environmental policy is found in Jinnah et al.'s study which coins the term 'climate change bandwagoning', demonstrating how political actors can discursively reframe issues to emphasise the climate advantage of incongruent policies (Jinnah et al., 2011).

There are wider implications associated with frame-bridging in environmental policy discourse. These include the risks associated with defining climate change, governments avoiding accountability and amalgamating of incongruent policies. These risks will be discussed in Chapter 4.2. Furthermore, in the case of nationalist appeals to environmental policy, a pertinent risk arises that concerns such as nation-building and alternative forms of realpolitik may take precedence over environmental considerations. Thus, Conversi and Hau warn that a sub-state's appeal to green nationalism may not last until statehood is achieved (2021).

Given this potential for misemployment and subsequent risk, it is crucial to analyse the discursive nature of the environmental policymaking process to reveal actual policy intentions and political priorities (Feindt & Oels, 2005). Studying discourse within environmental policymaking can minimise these risks as it permits us to observe how political actors alter interpretations of an issue. Given the lack of transparency between political actors and the public that was found in this study, in the face of a climate catastrophe these findings have a wide-reaching impact. They contribute to creating a better-informed electorate that can vote based on facts, rather than rhetoric.

1.3 Defining 'Environmental Policy'

Environmental policy accounts for the measures taken by governments to influence environmental quality or the exploitation of natural resources (Kraft, 2021). It

represents the collective choice of society to pursue specific environmental goals, and the strategies used to attain them. Furthermore, environmental policy encompasses not only the actions taken by governments to safeguard natural resources but also their decisions to abstain from action (ibid). For the sake of clarity in this dissertation, I employ the term 'environmental policy' to encompass the SNP's policies surrounding oil, RE and climate change.

1.4 Paper Overview

Considering these concepts, I utilise a critical discourse analysis (CDA) methodology, supplemented with frame-bridging analysis, to understand the uses and implications of discursive frame-bridging within the SNP's environmental policy discourse. The timeframe examined is from 2004 to 2024. I find that the SNP use policy frame-bridging, linking and promoting Scottish economic and social policies alongside environmental policies. The crux of the frame-bridging technique is the outcome of economic, social or environmental benefits being conditional on Scottish independence. Utilising these findings from my analysis in Chapter 4.1, I argue that the SNP consistently uphold a discursive connection between their environmental policies and independence. In Chapter 4.2, I conclude by discussing the implications of frame-bridging.

Literature Review

To introduce the concepts and methodology central to this study, this paper critically assesses past literature thematically. The first section reviews literature that assesses the discourse analysis methodology, focusing on its efficacy in critically evaluating environmental policy discourse. It follows with an assessment of scholarship analysing the discursive tendencies of nationalism. The review concludes by reviewing recent literature that observes an integration of nationalist sentiment within environmental policy discourse.

2.1 Discourse Analyses of Environmental Policy

There are numerous approaches to discourse analyses (DA). For clarity, I posit that the primary role of carrying out a DA is to reveal and understand how social power manipulation is substantiated through language (Van Dijk, 2004). The literature discussing the use of DA to study environmental policy can be broadly defined into two camps. Firstly, there is noteworthy scholarship assessing the DA methodology itself, assessing its effectiveness in analysing environmental policy (Feindt and Oels, 2005; Hajer and Versteeg, 2005; Leipold et al., 2019; Sharp and Richardson, 2001). Secondly, numerous studies employ DA as a methodology to investigate political strategies within environmental policymaking (Carvalho and Burgess, 2005; Colombo & Porcu, 2014; Cotton et al., 2014; Garrison & Massam, 2001).

Turning to the former camp of literature, some studies present the efficacy of DA by presenting policymaking through a social constructivist lens. Using DA, these

studies fundamentally question how much the act of environmental policymaking is made regarding nature, rather than as political leverage (Feindt & Oels, 2005; Hajer and Versteeg, 2005; Leipold et al., 2019; Sharp and Richardson, 2001). The foundations for assessing DA as a methodology can be credited to Sharp and Richardson (2001). Their seminal qualitative study is rooted in its comprehensive deconstruction of the act of environmental policymaking using a Foucauldian DA (ibid). Presenting policymaking as competing power struggles, they conclude that utilising DA provides an insight into the difference between the policy rhetoric and the reality of policy enactment (ibid). For cohesive future research, the paper provides a didactic framework outlining how to employ a Foucauldian DA methodology. This is strengthened with an awareness of researcher reflexivity, guiding researchers through different decisions (ibid).

Hajer and Versteeg's influential study maintains a social constructivist stance (Hajer and Versteeg, 2005. They argue that researchers must move past the 'claimed logic' of nature, instead investigating the constructed rhetoric of nature (ibid, pg. 178). The studies of Hajer and Versteeg (2005) and Sharp and Richardson (2001) diverge in views on purely text-based analyses. The latter asserts that a successful DA must communicate with those 'engaged in or affected by policy-making' (Sharp and Richardson, 2001, pg. 200). However, by assessing DA approaches other than Foucaldian, Hajer and Versteeg successfully establish the inherent value of a purely text-based DA (2005).

I turn to review studies utilising CDA as a methodology to investigate political discourse surrounding environmental policy globally (Carvalho and Burgess, 2005; Colombo & Porcu, 2014; Cotton et al., 2014; Essa & Harvey, 2022). This presents the value of a CDA when applied to different mediums of discourse.

Numerous studies utilise CDA to analyse public information on media channels; revealing ulterior political rhetoric within environmental policy discourse (Carvalho and Burgess, 2005; Cotton et al., 2014; Griffin & Dunwoody, 1997; Ungar, 1998). Carvalho and Burgess (2005) utilise CDA to assess framings of climate change risk across British newspapers. Their findings demonstrate the importance of 'communicative processes' regarding climate change action and mitigation (ibid, pg. 1467). They demonstrate that climate change coverage is closely tied to political motives. Their study demonstrates that the understanding of climate change in the media is 'politically defined and ideologically constrained' (ibid). Cotton et al. (2014) employ a similar methodology, examining the discourse surrounding shale gas policy in the UK. Their methodology is strengthened by analysing both interviews and broadsheets in their DA. Their results show how the UK's government policy rhetoric prioritises economic benefits experienced by local communities, whilst there is minimal discourse surrounding the environmental impact of shale gas. Thus, the rapid shale gas policy changes demonstrate that the UK Government prioritise the economic potential of shale gas over potentially adverse environmental impacts (ibid).

Similarly, a CDA of White Papers by Colombo and Porcu (2014) examines

the relationship between neoliberalism and environmentalism in Italy. Despite the exploitation of nature not being a novel occurrence, they argue that it is currently defined by rhetorical disguises. They examine the rhetorical tools used to advance economic interests. Through analysing legislation from three administration levels of the Italian state, they illustrate how the discourse surrounding environmentalism in Italy prioritises using environmental resources to achieve economic objectives. This is evidenced through their CDA, showing how the 'Sardinian Landscape Plan' discursively presents natural protection to be a bureaucratic impediment (ibid). Thereby, arguing that Italian concerns regarding economic growth have surpassed those regarding the environment.

Finally, a recent study by Essa and Harvey (2022) combines the previous methods, using a CDA on media and White Papers to understand the discourse around Saudi Arabia's 'Education for Sustainable Development' campaign. This methodology allowed them to understand how education surrounding sustainability was framed in the media and enacted in policy documents. Analysing these discourse mediums concurrently, they demonstrate that the Saudi government prioritises publicising their sustainable goals over taking real policy action (ibid).

2.2 Discursive Tendencies of Nationalism

Whilst there isn't one strict definition of nationalism in academia, the ideology of nationalism justifies its existence by emphasising shared and distinct attributes, such as ethnicity, language or culture (Low, 2000, pg. 357). Described by Freeden as 'thin' ideology, nationalism can be mobilised by various groups across the political spectrum: neo-conservative, anarcho-syndicalism or environmental and progressive movements (Freeden, 2003, pg. 32). Given that national identity also maintains a 'thin' conceptual nature, nationalist party members can easily negotiate conceptions of it, placing it within postmodern frameworks that propose revolutionary political futures (Freeden, 2003; Hau, 2019). Therefore, the discourse surrounding nationalism is seen as context-dependent, and diverse across cases and time (Dar, 2022). How nationalist political parties promote wider policy aims alongside their fundamental nationalist goals across changing political contexts is, therefore, intriguing as a subject for discursive and rhetorical analyses.

Whilst nationalist positions on the political spectrum vary, there are unifying discursive tendencies employed. The cornerstone of any discursive definition of nationalism is the concept of 'the nation' (De Cleen & Stavrakakis, 2017). According to Sutherland, in discourse theory, 'nation' provides a focal point around which nationalist discourse is organised (Sutherland, 2005, pg. 186). In relation to this idea other concepts such as democracy, resources, statehood and culture derive significance (Freeden, 2003). Crucially, nationalism must shape the collective identity of a group in a specific way; it is this collective identity that constitutes the foundation of nationalism (Hau, 2019).

Despite common discursive themes existing between movements, individ-

ual nationalisms encapsulate extremely distinct 'content' designed to delineate the broader culture and values of the 'national' people (Finlayson, 2007, pg. 99). This is interconnected with the construction and utilisation of these values within political discourse. Thus, the importance of this 'content' is overlooked when generalised theories of nationalism are applied (ibid). This demonstrates the academic necessity to examine nationalist discursive tendencies within contextual case studies.

There is notable literature examining the nationalist discourse promoted by the SNP in the case of Scotland. This research demonstrates the different rhetoric through which the SNP present themselves as capable of governing; whilst constrained by the limited autonomy associated with devolution (Arnott & Ozga, 2010). Some research discusses the multiple discourses that are associated with Scottish identity (Harvey & Lynch, 2012; Leith & Soule, 2011; Whigham, 2019). A largely researched theme is that of the past, associated with the SNP's political discourse (Kearton, 2005; Strand, 2017). Other studies have presented specific uses of policy framing by the SNP (Arnott, 2016; Brown, 2017; Elias, 2018). A particular significant discursive tactic utilised by the SNP is to appeal to a distinctive welfare and social policy system (Law & Mooney, 2012; Vampa, 2016). Demonstrated by Arnott's thesis that the SNP uses education as a discursive strategy, framing it within wider narratives of 'partnership, networks and community' (2016, pg. 48). Finally, a study by Brown utilises policy framing analysis to demonstrate the effects of frame-bridging in the SNP's policy. Through frame-bridging, stories of Scottish civil and nuclear power are bridged, to promote anti-nuclear policy, this is then connected to Scottish independence. This rhetoric creates a triangulation between environmental, pacifism and Scottish independence; attempting to reinforce collective identities (Brown, 2017). The cumulative findings of the literature analysing SNP discursive tendencies demonstrate the multiplicity and the reflexivity of the SNP's nationalist rhetoric.

2.3 'Green Nation Building': A Discursive Tool

According to Koch and Perrault (2019), nature and natural resources are a 'common feature in expressions of nationalism'. Thus, finally, I turn to examine the literature regarding the use of environmental policy discourse to promote nationalist goals; most pertinent to the research at hand. I review studies out with Scotland (Conversi & Hau, 2021; Margulies, 2021; Ridanpää, 2021) before reviewing the literature most aligned with this research: analyses of the SNP utilising environmental policy discourse to further their raison d'être of Scottish independence (McEwen & Bomberg, 2013 & Nash, 2021).

Numerous studies have investigated how the concept of climate change has been politically harnessed and articulated to promote state-centric ideology. Some examine a general connection between nationalism and environmental policies (Conversi & Hau, 2021; Margulies, 2021). Margulies traces the origins of eco-nationalism to the foundations on which nations are built, namely 'land, territory and ecology' (2021, pg. 23). This intersects with environmentalism via territory-based economic

autonomy (ibid). Conversi and Hau demonstrate the use of frame-bridging in sub-state nationalist parties, where diverse policy elements are integrated to support one another (2021, pg. 1089). In this scenario, priorities such as state-building and 'other forms of realpolitik' may overshadow environmental considerations (ibid, pg. 1089). Thus, they caution that a sub-state's appeal to green nationalism may not last until statehood is achieved (ibid).

Finally, several qualitative-based studies analyse the link between Scottish nationalism and environmental policy (Hamilton, 2002; Hinde, 2016; McEwen & Bomberg, 2013; Nash, 2021; Ross & Jones, 2016; Tutt & Heubaum, 2023). Research by Hamilton (2002) pioneered in this field, posing a connection between the doctrines of ecologism and nationalism. Utilising the SNP as a case study, Hamilton presents the malleability of Scottish nationalist policy, in response to a political context that promotes green thought (Hamilton, 2002). Tutt and Heubaum (2023) build upon Hamilton's work, tracing the nationalist discourse amalgams present in Scotland's energy transition. They present nationalist amalgams of fossil fuels that are still present in RE discourse. Demonstrating that nationalist discourse can discursively align contradictory environmental policies (ibid).

Hinde (2016) demonstrates how the SNP has produced a discursive dichotomy, presenting ambitious climate goals whilst arguing that their governance is limited because of sub-state devolved powers. Hinde refutes this, arguing that they have the devolved powers needed, yet there is no policy agenda in place in Scotland that can 'radically modernise Scotland' to protect the environment (ibid, pg. 83). To understand the significance of Scotland's sub-state nation identity, McEwen and Bomberg (2013) used a 'territorial politics' lens to reveal environmental policy motivations that originate from multi-level governments. Similarly, Nash examined Scotland's 2009 Climate Change Act against the context of multi-level governance (Nash, 2021). These papers demonstrate that Scotland's position as a 'sub-state' has led to framing of SNP environmental policy as distinguished and more ambitious than the rest of the UK. Thus, not simply for the sake of climate action (McEwen & Bomberg, 2013; Nash, 2021).

This literature presents SNP nationalist appeals to environmental policy as manifesting in two amalgams: resource nationalism and nation-building. Resource nationalism is a political discourse proposing that a state should be solely in charge of controlling natural resources and subsequent profits (Koch & Perreault, 2018). This is seen in SNP discourse, as shown in Hamilton's (2016) and Tutt and Heubaums' (2023) papers regarding the possessive language utilised in discussing Scotland's natural resources in SNP energy policy discourse. Turning to 'nation-building', which is a nationalist appeal to categorising the population of the nation as culturally distinct, creates an alterity that fosters unity and identity (Law & Mooney, 2012; Williams, 1989). This can be seen in the contemporary literature analysing Scotland's role as a 'climate pioneer', and how its environmental policy is framed as more progressive than the UK's (McEwen & Bomberg, 2013; Nash, 2021). Highlighting Scotland's diver-

gence from UK policy demonstrates the SNP's presentation of Scotland as 'distinct' in significant policy matters, such as climate change. The SNP's use of these nationalist amalgams is explored in depth in Chapter 4.

Reviewing the literature illustrates the effectiveness of CDA in contextualising language in a particular historical, social and political context. Despite traction in recent years, the employment of CDA to investigate the link between environmental policymaking and nationalist discourse has been insufficient. Particularly considering how perspicacious it is; exposing embedded political agendas (Feindt & Oels, 2005, pg. 161).

This dissertation responds to this methodological gap by employing an innovative CDA methodology supplemented with a frame-bridge analysis to study speeches regarding environmental policy made by SNP leaders. The literature addressing the relationship between Scottish nationalism and environmental policy thus far is based largely on analyses of white papers. Given the SNP's frequent use of speeches to discuss environmental policymaking, I sought to unveil the discursive strategies utilised in SNP speeches given directly to the public.

This work has practical policy implications and wider societal relevance. It reveals inner biases, claims and hidden preoccupations within SNP speeches in a structured way. Therefore, it responds to an appeal by Conversi for further research to unveil the 'contradiction between acts and facts' in environmental policy discourse (2020, pg. 631).

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

3.1 The Political Context of the SNP's Environmental Policy Discourse

Previous literature has substantiated a pattern between sub-state nations and climate change policy discourse as a means of promoting other political objectives (McEwen & Bomberg, 2013; Nash, 2021). Scotland is a pertinent example of a sub-state promoting this rhetoric, governed by a pro-independence party with devolved autonomy to implement environmental policies (Conversi & Hau, 2021). The SNP's prioritisation of environmental policy discourse as a means of promoting independence began in the 1970s, capitalising on the contemporaneous discovery of substantial oil and gas reserves in the North Sea (Levy, 1990).

Consequentially, the party emerged as an electoral force, campaigning under the slogan 'It's Scotland's Oil'. Evidence of rudimentary policy frame-bridging emerged during this campaign. The SNP declared that it would utilise oil revenues to address social issues in Scotland such as poor housing, struggling pensioners and impoverished single mothers (Levy, 1990). Posing oil as a solution to economic and social issues is seen in Figure 1 below. However, these policy outcomes were conditional on independence. This frame-bridging gave the campaign a populist and social democratic quality, consolidating the party's place on the centre-left of the political spectrum, whilst simultaneously promoting the main objective of independence (Gibbs, 2021).



Figure 1 | SNP campaign leaflet: 'it's his oil, it's her oil' Accession Number: spa. gr.46.21, Scottish Political Archive, University of Stirling.

With the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, the SNP continued to campaign for Scottish independence. This campaign maintained that North Sea oil resources would deliver a stronger Scottish economy and address a diversity of social issues if Scotland became independent (Curtice, 2021; Levy, 1990). This policy bridging established the basis of the SNP's future approach to RE, reflecting the fact that two generations of Scottish nationalists were 'economically defined by the oil experience', it established the basis of its approach to RE (Gibbs, 2021, p. 60).

Achieving an unprecedented majority in the 2011 Scottish Parliament Elections, the SNP secured an agreement to hold an Independence referendum in 2014. The crucial issue debated during the referendum campaign was whether independence would benefit or damage Scotland's economy (Curtice, 2021). SNP White Papers asserted that oil reserves would sustain Scotland's economy, with oil prices at the time predicted to increase in future years (ibid). The referendum results of 55.3% opposing independence, were largely based on economic concerns (Curtice, 2021). Following the 2014 referendum, the price of oil declined from USD$110 to USD$55, making the economic case for independence less feasibly reliant on oil (Grant, 2016). Furthermore, it is recognised that oil reserves in the North Sea are finite and diminishing, and extraction is becoming much less economically viable (Plumpton et al., 2022).

A recognition of oil's finite nature and declining value called for a radical change of direction from the SNP regarding its economic case for Independence. In 2018, the SNP Growth Commission concluded that the economic case for Independence could no longer rely on oil, arguing that RE would form the basis of the economic argument (Manley, 2019). This realignment was confirmed by Nicola Sturgeon in her Programme for Government speech when she declared that SNP's

'support for oil and gas will be conditional on the sector's actions to help ensure a sustainable energy transition' (Sturgeon, 2019a).

In recent years, the SNP have appealed to climate change policy to promote their asserted right to full political autonomy. Promoting Scotland's reputation as a 'climate pioneer', the SNP developed more ambitious policy objectives compared to what is observed at supranational levels (Hoffman; 2011, McEwan & Bomberg, 2013). There is unanimity across the literature that the SNP climate change policies are tangled up in its efforts to present Scotland, as a sub-state nation, as prominent in a global context. With this aim, Scotland's environmental policy is framed as both a response to climate change and a pertinent nationalist opportunity for Scotland to seize (Nash, 2021).

3.2 Research Design and Critical Framework

Methodology: A Critical Discourse Analysis of SNP Speeches

By conducting a critical discourse analysis, I assess the SNP's use of frame-bridging within speeches surrounding environmental policy to promote nationalist discourse. The motivation to utilise DA as a methodology was inspired by Feindt and Oels (2006). Their study emphasises the importance of scrutinising the extent to which environmental policies are designed regarding 'the environment', rather than a 'reconfiguration of power' under the guise of environmental policy (ibid, pg. 163). The choice to employ CDA as the specific DA framework of analysis reflects Locke's (2004) understanding, that CDA aims to examine the connections of causality between discursive practices, events and wider and cultural social structures. Given that its aim is to explore how discourse arises from and is ideologically shaped by struggles over power, it was deemed the ideal lens to analyse the SNP's discourse (ibid).

With these conceptual theories in mind, my methodology design was developed in accordance with best practice for conducting a CDA (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1988; Wodak et al, 1999, Wodak et al., 2009). My methodology builds upon Wodak's systematic CDA approach. This approach consists of aggregating datasets and categorising this data by themes. The discursive tools related to each theme are determined, demonstrating that the linguistic tool constructing this theme is responsible for creating a discourse regarding national identity (Wodak et al., 2009). This was carried out by using the NVivo software to first identify the language and discursive techniques that created policy frames.

Whilst conducting this CDA, I found repeated discursive links between the policy frames that the SNP had constructed. These links were highlighted, to demonstrate how the strategic connections of policies create new policy dynamics and frequently promote incongruent policies concurrently. As a result of this finding, I decided to employ the analytical technique of frame-bridging analysis in my CDA. The aims of CDA and frame-bridging analyses are aligned as both are interested in how shared meanings and collective identities are constructed (Gamson, 1992). Aligned

with the motivations of a CDA, analyses of policy framing observe the significance of speech acts, subjective perceptions of policy realities and the connection between political priorities and policy adjustment (Kitschelt, 1986). Ergo, the CDA methodology inspired by Wodak allowed insight into the thematic rhetoric of the SNP's environmental discourse. The supplementary frame-bridging lens revealed insight into the repeated links between these themes.

To analyse the SNP's use of frame-bridging, the study draws upon policy framing literature (Brown, 2017; Benford & Snow, 2000; Conversi & Hau, 2021; Johnston and Noaks; 2005, Schön & Rein, 1994). A 'frame' identifies a political issue, and the proposed solution (Johnston & Noakes, 2005). Furthermore, a frame analysis considers the political and discursive opportunities that define institutional arrangements and promote social mobilisation (Kitschelt, 1986). The function of policy frames is to structure and articulate beliefs that underpin a policy stance (Schön & Rein, 1994). The pertinent use of framing in this study is frame-bridging, which is the 'linking of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames' (Benford & Snow, 2000, pg. 624). Frame-bridging is advantageous for political parties seeking to promote or associate multiple unconnected frames, to create a new 'bridged' frame. This study analyses the link of environmental policy frames to 'structurally unconnected frames' demonstrating the use of what Jinnah et al calls 'strategic bandwagoning' in SNP speeches, an intentional alignment of interests and policy objectives aimed at influencing policy change (Benford & Snow, 2000, pg. 624; Jinnah et al, 2011).

After carrying out my CDA, I interviewed Chris Stark, the Chief Executive of the UK Climate Change Committee (CCC). The CCC is an independent body that advises the UK and devolved governments on emissions targets. With an understanding of the SNP's frame-bridging techniques, the purpose of this high-level expert interview was to discuss the wider implications of this discursive tactic in Scottish environmental policy discourse.

Strengthening the methodology in line with Reisigl and Wodak's discourse historical approach to CDA, this study applied three structured questions to the data (Reisigl & Wodak, 2017). Based on existing literature and my subsequent theoretical framework, the following questions oriented my CDA process:

1. How and for what purpose has the SNP used frame-bridging to discursively construct 'resource nationalism' within SNP environmental policy discourse?
2. How and for what purpose has the SNP used frame-bridging to discursively appeal to 'nation-building' sentiments within SNP environmental policy discourse?
3. What are the wider implications of these discursive techniques utilised by the SNP in environmental policy discourse?

3.3 Data Collection

Political speeches by the three most recent and current SNP leaders were cho-

sen to be analysed: Alex Salmond, Nicola Sturgeon and Humza Yousaf. Speeches were chosen as the primary source as they are 'carefully planned, "communication events"', serving as platforms for the SNP to strategically advance nationalist aims (Pierce, 2008, pg. 268). Given that the SNP's fundamental goal is to establish an independent Scotland, I infer that language and techniques used in speeches are utilised to advance this aim and, therefore, charged with a nationalist undertone. Therefore, speeches were not selected based on nationalist or independence-based content. Instead, I filtered obtainable speeches on whether they included environmental policy discourse in any capacity. This collection of speeches was collated from the SNP, Scottish Government and 'UKPOL' websites.

My speech dataset consisted of a selection of 26 speeches regarding discussions of environmental policy by SNP leaders between 2004 and 2024. This period was chosen as it is defined by the 'increasing success and political centrality of the SNP' (Vampa, 2016, pg. 176). Therefore, my analysis encompasses speeches made by SNP leaders in their capacity as leaders of the opposition party as well as the First Minister of Scotland.

An exhaustive list of the materials assessed in the CDA is detailed in the Appendices.

A Qualitative Speech Analysis: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis Findings

From existing literature regarding frame bridging and sub-state environmental nationalism (Brown, 2017; Conversi and Hau, 2021; Mcewen & Bomberg, 2013; Nash, 2021) and the CDA carried out on SNP speeches, I identified two principal uses of frame-bridging deployed by the SNP in its environmental policy discourse. Chapter 4.1 presents the analytical findings of how and why the SNP employ this discursive tactic in its environmental policy discourse.

In analysing 'how' the SNP employ frame-bridging in its environmental policy discourse, I argue that this discursive tactic is consistent with what Jinnah identified as 'climate change bandwagoning' (2011). As the SNP 'discursively re-frame issues in a way that foregrounds the climate benefits of the original source/issue' (ibid, pg. 3). I found that the SNP achieve this by linking two distinct policy frames to environmental policy.

The first, and most utilised frame-bridging technique was found between environmental policy and economic policy. This link is constructed by framing Scotland's natural resources as the answer to both energy and climate change challenges and the central economic foundation of an independent Scotland. This discursive frame-bridging between Scotland's environmental resources and economy, conditional upon independence, appeals to the political discourse of resource nationalism.

The second, more nuanced, frame-bridging technique found is posed between environmental policy and a diversity of social issues. In linking Scotland's environmental policies with social issues such as climate justice, fuel poverty and youth

unemployment, I argue that the SNP engage in the act of 'green nation-building'. By advocating for ambitious environmental policies based on justice and framing these policies as an answer to social problems concurrently, I found that the SNP seeks to establish and communicate uniquely 'Scottish' values.

Through the CDA process, I found that the frame-bridging technique used by the SNP is presented in a three-part narrative framework, utilised by each of the SNP leaders in diverse contexts. First, the speaker sets out an 'environmental policy proposition', characterised by either promoting Scotland's abundant resources or criticising the UK Government's environmental policy management. Second, they present a future economic or social policy opportunity that would arise from taking advantage of these resources. Third, the speaker presents a 'frame-bridged outcome', connecting the previous propositions by advocating that independence is a necessary condition to deliver opportunities. I have constructed speech excerpts below to mimic this three-part discursive framework, they are utilised in the following analysis.

The following analysis presents my findings, demonstrating in what ways and for what purpose the SNP employ frame-bridging as a discursive technique within their speeches surrounding environmental policy.

4.1.1 The Discursive Constructions of Resource Nationalism

The most prominent frame-bridge constructed by the SNP links environmental policy to economic opportunity, directly or indirectly promoting an economic case for independence. Several studies have noted the economic incentives that drive sub-state climate policy innovations. This includes the ambition to tap into growing markets and gain a competitive edge in emerging technologies and sectors (Bulkeley, 2011; Engel and Orbach, 2008; Rabe, 2009). These economic incentives were found within SNP environmental policy discourse.

These economic incentives are presented by framing Scotland's natural resources as not only the solution to energy and climate change issues, but as a viable way of supporting an independent Scotland's economy. A discursive link is thereby, created between Scotland's natural resources and economic opportunities. This connection between natural resources and economic opportunity is founded on the discourse of resource nationalism, an amalgam of nationalism. In the context of the SNP, resource nationalist discourse argues that the Scottish Government, and the people of Scotland, should solely oversee controlling natural resources and subsequent revenues (Koch & Perreault, 2018). This analysis will present the findings of resource nationalist discourse employed in SNP discourse surrounding oil, RE and climate change.

ECONOMIC BRIDGE | 'IT'S SCOTLAND'S OIL' REVENUE:

A defining characteristic of resource nationalism, and its framing of a nation's energy resources, is the use of possessive language (Tutt & Heubaum, 2023). All SNP leaders were found to employ terms such as 'own', 'our' and 'Scotland's' – discursively

asserting Scottish ownership of natural resources. These assertions were frequently supported by tactics of wealth forecasting, based on adjectives and comparisons which highlight the magnitude of these natural resources.

Frame-bridging between the SNP's environmental policy and economic policy was found to be first employed in relation to Scottish oil. Starting with the SNP's 1970s 'It's Scotland Oil' campaign, which highlighted the potential economic advantages that North Sea Oil could bring (Hau, 2022). The legacy of this discourse can be seen in contemporary speeches. In the speeches, descriptors such as 'natural lottery' and 'vast' are employed to emphasise the scale of Scotland's oil reserves. While phrases like 'economic offense' and 'chronic surplus' quantify Scotland's hypothetical oil wealth.

This use of possessive language is demonstrated in Salmond's 2005 Speech at the SNP conference:

Environmental Policy Proposition: 'Scotland's oil has disappeared down the gullet of the London Treasury... There is as much oil and gas in the waters around Scotland as has been exploited thus far.'

Economic Opportunity: 'We have a second chance to transform our economic prospects and we must seize it with both hands.'

Frame-Bridged Outcome: 'The extent of oil and gas revenues would propel the Scottish economy into chronic surplus... We're launching an economic offense'

Figure 1 | Salmond: 2005

Salmond's discussion of oil in Figure 1 demonstrates the use of frame-bridging, linking 'Scotland's oil' to Scottish economic growth. The descriptor of 'Scotland's oil' demonstrates the reinforced rhetoric by the SNP that natural resources on Scottish land and subsequent profits are rightfully owned by Scottish people. This bridge creates a conditionality of Scotland's resource management on autonomy, using national territory as the link.

A further discursive appeal to resource nationalism is the recurring theme of portraying the UK as 'stealing' Scotland's oil. As seen in Figure 2 below, Salmond referenced Westminster's administration of Scotland's oil as 'disappearing down the gullet', emphasising greed and mismanagement of the UK government. Given that oil reserves are, constitutionally the property of the UK state, Salmond evokes resource nationalist sentiment in two ways. Firstly, by continually referring to the oil reserves possessively as 'Scotland's' and secondly, by utilising words such as 'filched' and 'coined in', reinforcing the theme of the UK Government stealing.

The theme of the 'UK stealing' Scotland's resources is reiterated below:

'After 40 years of oil and gas Westminster had coined in some £300 billion from Scottish water'

'London government has filched thirty years of oil revenues'

Figure 2 | Salmond: 2011 & 2004

This is a prime representation of Guibernau's argument that sub-state nations appeal to dissatisfaction experienced by a population concerning 'their present situation' (Guibernau, 2004, pg. 1256). They discursively regard the larger state they are in as an obstacle to their nation's progress. Figures 1 and 2 above demonstrate how the SNP appeals to this rhetoric, presenting the UK as a burden that drains their natural, and subsequently economic resources without adequate returns. These sentiments are expressed to appeal to the dissatisfaction stemming from economic concerns related to the UK's relationship with Scotland (ibid). Therefore, the SNP present Scotland as well-endowed with natural resources linked to economic opportunity but concludes that experiencing these economic benefits is not possible in its devolved position within the UK.

ECONOMIC BRIDGE | RE AND CLIMATE CHANGE NATIONALISM:

As discussed in Chapter 3.1, from 2017 onwards the SNP accepted that it could no longer use oil as the foundation for its economic case for independence. Therefore, RE became the SNP's new socially accepted economic case for independence. Juxtaposing the characteristics of the SNP's oil-centric nationalism against the discourse surrounding the 'green nationalism' appeal provides valuable insight. Namely, the discursive frame-bridging applied between Scotland's oil resources and potential economic opportunity was applied almost identically to Scotland's newfound exploitable sources of RE.

Environmental Policy Proposition: 'We are home to the largest tidal power array in the world. And next week, we will celebrate a new global first. I will officially open the world's largest floating windfarm.'

Economic Opportunity: 'Scotland can be a world leader in the technologies that will drive forward the low carbon economy of the future. Building a sustainable, green economy to create jobs and place Scotland at the cutting edge of technology.'

Frame-Bridged Outcome: 'This is the time to believe in and work for that better future. To put ourselves firmly in the driving seat of our own destiny.'

Figure 3 | Sturgeon: 2017

The similarity of the resource nationalist rhetoric employed regarding both oil and RE can be seen in Sturgeon's speech above. The descriptor of RE potential as 'the largest tidal power array in the world' presents Scotland's resources as being vast. Further, the repetition of 'Scotland' emphasises the ownership of this natural resource. Both of which Salmond did with oil. Having presented Scotland's natural resources as abundant, in Figure 3 Sturgeon overtly connects RE to its potential financial benefits. In each case, the conditionality of Independence as a requirement to deliver the economic benefits of oil and RE is asserted.

Crucial to note is that the economic dynamics of RE differ from that of oil; with RE providing less instantaneous enrichment (Gibbs, 2021). In discussing the

financial benefits of oil, the SNP frequently place specific monetary value on what oil has brought or could bring economically to Scotland:

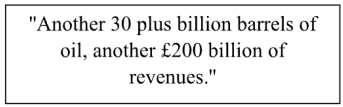

Figure 4 | Salmond: 2005

Although the same frame-bridge was found between RE and oil resources to economic opportunity, the specific economic opportunities presented differed. The discourse surrounding RE economic opportunity is less quantified in monetary terms, and emphasis is placed on the vast quantity of RE and future economic benefits. Thus, two frequently used discursive techniques used in relation to RE are the themes of job creation and extensive RE resources.

The speeches below demonstrate the clear links between RE, the 'low carbon economy' and economic opportunity through jobs and job creation:

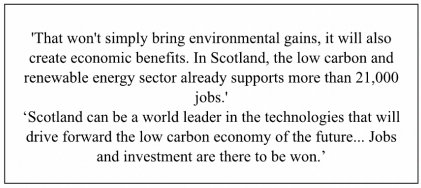

Figure 4 | Sturgeon: 2016 & 2017b

A claim by Salmond in 2012 reiterates the assertion of abundant RE resources in Scotland:

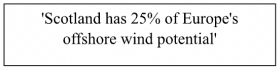

Figure 5 | Salmond: 2012

An important observation to highlight in this context is that the energy proposition claims need not be based on fact, so long as the perception is created that Scotland has abundant natural resources. The claim that 'Scotland has 25% of Europe's potential offshore wind resource' does not reflect reality and has since been retracted by both the SNP and the Scottish Government (Smith, 2023). Despite this, the assertion has been used by SNP leaders to promote Scottish resource nationalism for more than a decade.

A speech extract (Figure 6) by Yousaf in 2024 highlights the current discursive position taken by the SNP, and ultimately the continuity of the same discursive strategies employed by the SNP under Salmond and Sturgeon. The continuing appeal to resource nationalism is evident in Yousaf's assertion that 'we have the resources' and 'leading hydrogen nation'. Once again, the conditionality of Independence as a

requirement to deliver economic benefits is presented in the example below.

Environmental Policy Proposition: 'We have the resources, the people, and the ambition to realise the benefits of becoming a leading hydrogen nation.'

Economic Opportunity: 'As an EU member state, common certification and standards would facilitate the export of hydrogen to other members.'

Frame-Bridged Outcome: 'Therefore, as an independent state with greater control over its own energy system, and an EU member able to exploit the advantages of the single market, Scotland could supply hydrogen to EU nations'

Figure 6 | Yousaf: 2024

However, Yousaf's speech incorporates a new rhetoric by amalgamating two popular policies in Scotland, RE and opposition to Brexit. This technique of aligning EU membership with climate change policy reflects the SNP's broader use of Brexit as an issue to frame-bridge support for independence (Hau, 2019). Seen in Yousaf's speech above, he attempts to discursively align seemingly diverse policy issues; connecting climate change policies, exports to the EU and Scottish independence. By bridging these policies, the SNP provide a solution to both: independence.

4.1.2 The Discursive Construction of 'Green Nation Building'

A further significant finding was the SNP's frame-bridging of environmental policy to a diversity of social policies. In linking Scotland's environmental policies with social issues, I argue that the SNP engage in the act of 'nation-building'. Whilst there is little research on the connection between national resources and social policy, there is notable literature on nation-building and sub-state appeals to social policy (Law & Mooney, 2012; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). For clarity, by social policies, I refer to the devolved power Scotland maintains in health, social work and housing (Scotland Office, 2009).

Through my CDA and this literature, I found that the SNP have consistently linked their environmental policies to wider social policies, using the discourse of nation-building. Nation-building is the act of categorising those out with the nation-state as culturally different to create an otherness; contributing to efforts of forging unity and identity (Williams 1989; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). The political objective in this discursive technique is not to link the policy framing explicitly to the conditionality of Independence; instead, to nation-build by 'forging unity and identity' through creating and conveying distinctive 'Scottish values' (ibid), creating the impression of Scotland being a leading nation in RE and climate change.

SOCIAL POLICY | OIL

First found in SNP discourse surrounding Scotland's oil, Figure 7 shows how Salmond links the wider Scottish societal issues of 'fuel poverty' to Scotland's vast resources of 'energy plenty'. Whilst appealing to resource nationalism, it is a more

complex discursive construction. It is not simply based on Scotland being 'in control' of its resources but being able to exploit oil to solve Scottish social welfare issues.

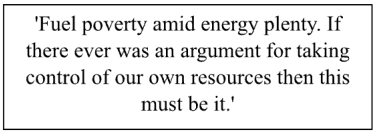

Figure 7 | Salmond: 2012

SOCIAL POLICY | A 'JUST' TRANSITION

In SNP discussions of climate change policies and those related to the transition from oil to RE, the word 'justice' is frequently used. Connecting environmental policies to the wider social issues associated with climate change, as well as the environmental issues at hand. According to Billig (1995), this aligns with nation-building discourse where insider groups within the nation construct emotional appeals, asserting that the nation collectively possesses more of certain qualities (such as egalitarianism) relative to other nations. This is often referred to as a 'social justice community' in nationalist terms (Beland & Lecourse, 2008). Conversations regarding social policy options are often interpreted as reflecting a presumed agreement on essential national values, principles and collective identity (Law & Mooney, 2012). In the SNP's case, it presents its climate policies as more ambitious both environmentally and socially compared to policies adopted by the UK government. This framing establishes an insider-outsider dynamic, where collective justice is emphasised as a defining characteristic of group inclusion (Law & Mooney, 2012).

The social policy discourse surrounding agreed 'national values, principles and collective identity' is ubiquitous throughout SNP climate change policy discourse (ibid). Policy options are often presented reflecting a presumed agreement on 'distinctive core national values, principles and collective identity' (Law & Mooney, 2012, pg. 162). This idea is present in the connection between Scotland's climate change policy and social policies in Figure 8 below. By posing the social welfare issues of 'families, communities and individuals' being affected by climate change, Salmond presents the 'Scottish Fund' as a solution to both climate change and wider social issues.

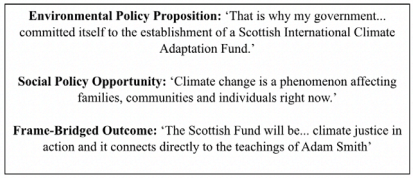

Figure 8 | Salmond: 2012

Furthermore, to convey 'distinctive core national values', a repeated discursive tactic utilised is to call upon the teachings of Adam Smith, a key figure in the Scottish Enlightenment (Law & Mooney, 2012, pg. 162). This evidences Coakley's thesis that in

mobilisations of nationalism, images of the past are references to produce 'a tendentious image of the community's own history' (Coakley, 2012, pg. 531). Appealing to 'the possession of a common tradition' is a nation-building discursive tendency (ibid).

This discursive appeal to distinctive Scottish values can also be seen in a 2023 speech by Humza Yousaf:

" It was Adam Smith who famously said:
"No society can surely be flourishing and happy of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable. "

Figure 9 | Yousaf: 2023

Miller contends that in appealing to social justice, a discursive characteristic of devolved nations is to appeal to nationalism through 'nation-centrism' (2012, pg. 104). This is evident in SNP environmental discourse. Scotland is portrayed as an imagined community or sentient entity according to which 'Scotland' acts and experiences emotions. It is, therefore, this reified 'Scotland' which is associated with social democratic principles (Law & Mooney, 2012). In Figure 10 below, the phrase 'Scotland will play its part' in the context of climate change policies demonstrates this, implying consensus surrounding Scotland's 'part' and that it will politically act cohesively.

'Scotland will play its part'

Figure 10 | Sturgeon: 2016

SOCIAL | INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES: PROJECTING A NATION-STATE

'We have placed Scotland firmly at the forefront of the global fight against climate change'

Figure 11 | Sturgeon: 2017d

Thus far the discursive techniques analysed have focused on how the SNP have constructed distinctive Scottish values and social policies connected to climate action within Scottish borders. The final technique that was found linking environmental policy with nation-building was the projection of Scotland internationally as a 'nation-state'. I argue that in linking climate change policies with international climate initiatives, the SNP promote Scotland's status as a global climate leader; attempting to nation-build beyond Scottish borders.

Environmental Policy Proposition: 'Tackling the climate catastrophe isn't just the right thing to do for the sustainability of our planet... but it is also our moral obligation too.'
Social Opportunity: 'We will show moral leadership and ensure funding for loss and damage is not just pledged - but paid, and I would urge other nations to join us.'
Frame-Bridged Outcome: 'We are an outward-looking nation, ready to put people at the heart of our international climate action'

Figure 12 | Yousaf: 2023

In Figure 12, Yousaf employs the discursive technique of nation-building by bridging climate change policies with international initiatives to deliver funding to other nations for loss and damage. This is demonstrated by his assertions that 'it is our moral obligation', 'we will show moral leadership' and 'we are an outward-looking nation'.

Law and Mooney's concept of 'national values, principles and collective identity' can be seen through repeated appeals a 'Scotland's moral duty' regarding climate change (2012). Furthermore, 'ready to put people at the heart' demonstrates the clear linkage between climate policy and social welfare policy. Finally, presenting once again climate change policies that promise to solve more than climate change.

Turning to address 'why' the SNP employ frame-bridging and appeals to the amalgams of nationalism, I echo Leith and Soule's thesis that 'those wishing to employ particular narratives for political purposes must do so within a symbolic repertoire accessible to those they wish to persuade (Leith and Soule, 2011 pg. 10). Shown in my analytical findings, the link from environmental policy discourse to both a stronger Scottish economy and the ability to address social problems are discursively presented as being conditional on independence. Given the 'thin nature' of nationalism and the global significance of environmental policy, I argue that the SNP uses frame-bridging to negotiate conceptions of nationalism, adapting it to modern frameworks that currently prioritise progressive environmental policy (Freeden, 2003). The purpose of the SNP's frame-bridging can therefore be understood as strategic decisions driven by political actors aiming to influence political outcomes by establishing connections with the 'global climate change regime' (Jinnah, 2011, pg. 4). Thus, these findings demonstrate that the SNP consistently maintain a discursive connection between its environmental policies and independence.

4.2 Discussion: The Implications of Frame-Bridging in Environmental Policy Discourse

Given that climate change and the degradation of our natural environment stand as the most significant current global challenges, investigating the communication surrounding it holds great importance (Moser, 2010). Understanding how and why the SNP utilise frame-bridging within environmental policy discourse, I turn to discuss the implications associated with this discursive tactic, specifically when employed in climate change policy discourse.

Whilst the implications of frame-bridging in the context of Scottish environmental policy discourse have not received scholarly attention yet, there is literature addressing the implications of framing discourse when employed in climate policy discourse (Gillard, 2016; Tellman, 2012). Tellman's and Gillard's studies both present how in Norway and the UK respectively, discursive frames lose influence in the transition from policy design to implementation. Subsequently, aspirations that define climate policy discourse aren't necessarily materialised into actual policy (ibid).

This discussion draws upon this literature and the analytical findings of sec-

tion 4.1 to present the wider implication that frame-bridging can pose, given its use in Scotland's environmental policy discourse. I discuss three associated implications: the dangers of defining climate change, avoiding accountability and amalgamating incongruent policies.

4.2.1 The Dangers of Defining Climate Change

The first issue associated with environmental policy frame-bridging is the inherent danger in defining climate change. The public continues to rely on a variety of sources to gather information about climate change but still finds it a challenging concept to engage with and comprehend (Guenther et al., 2022). Moreover, climate change presents unique challenges due to the complexity of the information available and the scientific uncertainties (Schäfer & O'Neill, 2017). This is accompanied by the challenge of collaborating between experts, policymakers, information sources and the public in addressing the issue (Guenther et al., 2023).

Framing, therefore, provides a potentially positive technique to 'break through communication barriers' (Nisbet, 2009, pg. 15). However, it's important to consider that the frames through which political actors present climate change influence the support for actions that audiences are either willing to take or expect the government to take (Bolsen & Shapiro, 2018; Nisbet et al., 2018). In doing so, they define certain parameters of climate change. Given that nationalism involves the construction of national boundaries and emphasis on borders, it is unlikely to be adequate to address critical issues such as climate change; which transcends borders. This perspective of nationalism inherently limits nationalism's capacity to address this global phenomenon (Conversi, 2020). Subsequently, I argue that the geographical frame through which the SNP define climate change, has potentially negative implications.

As presented in my analysis, a recurring rhetoric in the SNP's environmental policy discourse is to portray a diverging policy dynamic with the UK. To do so, it emphasises the incompetence of the UK Government in climate change policy, as seen in Sturgeon's 2019 speech 'The UK Government is paralysed... It is no longer a functioning administration... There are no policies to tackle the big issues the UK faces.' In my interview with Chris Stark, he asserted that the SNP's political agenda of detaching itself from the UK has repercussions for climate change policies. Limited cooperation with the UK Government has resulted in the absence of a proper roadmap to reach net-zero (Stark, 2024). Emphasising that whilst Scotland's goal for net-zero is 2045, and the UK's is 2050, 'they are the same target' given that Scotland needs to hit their goal for the UK to be on track (ibid). Addressing the mis-framing of climate policies for the sake of maintaining Scottish political rhetoric, in an interview for The Scotsman Stark remarks that "We should be more focused on the geological issues here because they ultimately determine everything". Referencing the SNP's lack of cooperation, he concluded that 'They have to face up to the reality that this is not a PR exercise' (Stark, 2024).

4.2.2 Amalgamating Incongruent Policies

The second implication associated with the use of frame-bridging in the SNP's climate policy is the discursive alignment of incongruent economic and climate change objectives. As previously defined, the primary purpose of policy frame-bridging is to link the implementation and promotion of two policies simultaneously. My findings in Chapter 4.1 demonstrated how the SNP frequently present an opportunity for economic benefit in both energy and climate change policy. Particular emphasis is placed on a transition to a 'low-carbon economy' in Scotland, promoting the twin objectives of economic and climate change policies. However, Bauer et al. argue that policymakers' inclination to retract or delay previous commitments amid challenging economic circumstances (2012). Consequently, many scholars have argued against the fundamental and theoretical compatibility of promoting economic growth and environmental conservation simultaneously (Biermann, 2022; Ferguson, 2014; Haller, 2017). Therefore, I argue that in the face of a climate emergency, climate change policies should not be made or framed around incompatible metrics, such as economic growth.

The risk of incongruent policies, with conflicting objectives, and subsequently confused implementation can be observed in two flagship policies announced by the SNP in recent years. First, the Scottish National Investment Bank, which was established by the SNP in 2020 with the overarching mission of "achieving a Just Transition to net zero carbon emissions by 2045… by investing in ambitious companies and low carbon infrastructure" (SNIB, 2020). However, the consensus to date is that it has failed to meet either objective largely because this "approach constitutes 'fuzzy' policymaking" (Brown, 2020).

Another example is the public procurement of two ferries required to support Scotland's under-capacity ferry network. Instead of procuring conventional ferries that would have been available quickly, at lower cost and without design risk, the SNP decided to obtain two vessels on the basis that those 'state-of-the-art ferries are more sustainable, therefore contributing to Scotland's world-leading climate change goals' (EnergyVoice, 2017). While reducing emissions in the transport sector is necessary to achieve climate change targets, the decision to purchase ferries that promote Scotland's 'world-leading' climate change goals has resulted in neither objective being achieved (Fraser, 2023).

4.2.3 Avoiding Accountability

The final implication associated with the SNP's employment of environmental policy frame-bridging is the avoidance of policy accountability, creating a dissonance between policy discourse and action. As discussed in Chapter 3, through ambitious climate policy discourse, Scotland has asserted the reputation of being a sub-state 'climate pioneer' (McEwan & Bomberg, 2013). This reputation has been discursively constructed in two ways. As shown in Chapter 4.1, the SNP present Scotland as maintaining more ambitious climate policies than the rest of the UK. Moreover, the

SNP argue that Scotland does not possess sufficient devolved power to control climate policies.

This can be seen in a speech by Yousaf in 2024:

We are at the mercy of volatile and unstable UK energy and climate change policy.'

During my interview with Chris Stark, he refuted this, outlining that Scotland could no longer blame the UK government for a lack of policymaking. He underscored that climate policy-related issues that face the Scottish Government and Parliament are within their devolved competency (Stark, 2024). Thus, in March 2024, when the CCC announced that Scotland's target greenhouse gas emission reduction for 2030 is unreachable, it was confirmed that this wasn't due to a lack of devolved powers (CCC, 2024). By using discursive strategies to blame the UK Government for Scotland's failure to meet climate change targets, the SNP create two risks. First, it damages the creditability of their own climate policy, whilst secondly, discursively avoiding accountability for their ambitious and 'unreachable' climate targets.

Conclusion

Carrying out a CDA across multiple speeches, I sought to investigate the uses and implications of frame-bridging within the SNP's environmental policy discourse. My findings demonstrate that policy discourse surrounding the environment and climate change has been utilised to further the SNP's principal political objective of Scottish independence.

My findings demonstrate two principal discursive techniques consistently employed by every SNP leader over the past 20 years. The most prominent frame-bridge links environmental policy to economic opportunity, directly or indirectly promoting the economic case for independence. The second, more nuanced, frame-bridging technique is constructed between environmental policy and a diversity of social and international issues. My CDA shows how these connections appeal to two nationalist discursive amalgams: resource nationalism and green nation-building. An exhaustive analysis of the discursive construction of these linked policies allows us to understand 'why' the SNP utilise frame-bridging tactics. The ultimate political objective is to present a narrative that potential economic and social benefits can only be actualised, and are therefore, presented as being conditional upon Scottish independence. With an understanding of how and why the SNP employ this rhetorical technique of frame-bridging, I conclude my dissertation by discussing the wider implications of this strategy.

The growing divergence between climate change targets and actual delivery will make it increasingly difficult for the SNP to continue to use the discursive strategies analysed in this study. Faced with increasing scrutiny from the CCC surrounding failures to meet targets within the powers of the Scottish Government, the SNP may have to re-assess the narrative of Scotland being a leading 'sub-state' climate pioneer. The SNP will also have to increasingly address issues of accountability and the delivery

of incongruent policy objectives.

This study provides a base for future research. I chose to examine SNP speeches, as my research was designed to investigate the environmental policy discourse directly delivered to the public. Using this dissertation, one could build upon my analysis of discursive strategies employed by the SNP. Valuable future research could provide a comprehensive comparison between policies that have been discursively promoted and the actual environmental climate change policy action. Analysing SNP environmental policy discourse findings of this dissertation against White Paper policy evidence would continue the crucial research that this dissertation has sustained in revealing the 'contradiction between acts and facts' in environmental policy discourse (Conversi, 2020, pg. 631).

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Interview:
Stark, C. (2024) 'Implications of the SNP's Discursive Tactics in Environmental Policy Discourse'. Interviewed by author on March 28th 2024.

Appendix | Speeches Analysed:
Alex Salmond (First Minister from 2004 to 2014):

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Salmond, Alex. 2011. Speech on Scotland's Future. [Online]. [Accessed 10 Dec 2023]. Available from: https://www.ukpol.co.uk/alex-salmond-2011-speech-on-scotlands-future/

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Salmond, Alex. 2013b. Speech to SNP Conference. [Online]. [Accessed 10 Dec 2023]. Available from: https://www.ukpol.co.uk/alex-salmond-2013-speech-to-snp-conference/

Nicola Sturgeon (First Minister from 2014 to 2023):

Sturgeon, Nicola. 2016. Programme for Government 2016 to 2017: First Minister's speech. [Online]. [Accessed 10 Dec 2023]. Available from: https://www.gov.scot/publications/first-minister-statement-programme-government/

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