

Revisiting Metaphors in International Relations Theory

Michael P. Marks



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For Brenda

PREFACE

This book is a sequel to my previously published work *Metaphors in International Relations Theory* (2011). More than just a continuation of the prior work, this volume represents an ongoing effort to critically interrogate the role metaphors play in the study of international relations (IR). My efforts to examine how metaphors influence the study of IR began in yet a previous book, *The Prison as Metaphor*, published in 2004. Taken as a whole, all three books constitute a trilogy on the role of metaphors in IR theory and collect together a single intellectual journey to better understand the way that IR theory is fundamentally influenced by a series of conceptual metaphors.

The present volume in particular emphasizes the way that metaphors in IR theory (and practice) tend to give priority to concepts at the expense of the lives led by literal human beings who are affected by the way scholars think about the world and the way political leaders conduct international affairs. I have come to this conclusion in part through my teaching, specifically in a course I teach at Willamette University entitled Political Metaphors. In that class, students write a semester-long research paper on a topic of their choosing, focusing on how metaphors are deployed by individuals inside and outside government to frame political issues, shape policy debates, influence public discourse, and persuade government officials and the population at large to act in specified ways. One of the important conclusions students arrive at in their writing is that the use of metaphors to influence politics can have profound effects on the lives of everyday people. The same is true for metaphors in IR theory. Conceptual metaphors in the scholarly literature often privilege large analytical

categories rather than the lived experiences of humans who are affected by world affairs. This book asks scholars to contemplate how their reliance on conceptual metaphors conceals important topics that often go unnoticed.

The book is an effort at interdisciplinary thinking, although it is understandable in an interdisciplinary work of this nature that there is an inherent tension in trying to appeal to two distinct academic fields. Linguists will be interested in the finer distinctions in metaphor analysis, while scholars of IR will want to know how metaphors shape the theory and practice of world affairs. In an effort to maintain focus, the book maintains a primary emphasis on the theory and practice of IR while doing due diligence and recognizing the fact that metaphors take a variety of forms which is important to acknowledge.

To the extent that this book takes scholarship in linguistics more seriously than the previous volume, it owes gratitude in part to the input kindly provided by my fellow participants at the workshop, “Metaphors in the Discourse of the National,” held at the University of Oslo in September 2016. I am particularly appreciative of how the workshop participants have made me more attentive to the finer points of metaphor analysis while also making me more aware of how metaphors work in various contexts and disciplines. The interdisciplinary nature of the work of metaphor analysts from a variety of fields reinforces the conclusion that IR theory can benefit from a wider scope than is presently the case. Toward that end, it is my hope that specialists throughout both academia and the policy-making world will benefit from the content and analysis presented in the pages that follow.

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The Significance of Metaphors in International Relations Theory

This book serves as a sequel to my previous work, *Metaphors in International Relations Theory* (Marks 2011). In that volume I chronicle how metaphors are integral to the study of international relations (IR). As is true in other academic disciplinary and interdisciplinary pursuits, metaphors in IR frame research and shape analysis throughout the field.¹ Far from serving only as linguistic devices to illuminate abstract ideas, conceptual metaphors constitute the main categories in the study of IR. They form the ontological bases that distinguish IR as a distinct area of academic inquiry, delineate the epistemological practices that inform debates, and support the methodological tools that are chosen by scholars who conduct research and provide analyses of their findings.

Since the publication of *Metaphors in International Relations Theory*, I have continued to investigate how metaphors guide scholarship in the study of world affairs. I have come to the conclusion that virtually every area of IR is understood with the use of metaphorical concepts.² This book expands the findings of the one that precedes it. It not only delves into additional concepts that were not examined in the first volume but also extends the analysis of how metaphors are essential elements in the study of IR. Thus, the book is not only an appendix to my previous work, but it also deepens the understanding scholars can have of how the metaphors they rely on inform every aspect of their work.

BEGINNING AGAIN WITH AN ANECDOTE

In my previous book (Marks 2011, 7) I began with an anecdote which illustrates the importance of IR metaphors in the form of a quote by former United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who likened global politics to the well-known metaphor of billiards balls on a pool table. The purpose of including that quote was to show how metaphors in IR theory make their way into mainstream discourse and thus influence how practitioners and non-practitioners alike think about world affairs. Since the publication of the earlier volume I have continued to encounter how the metaphors of IR theory frequently figure into the written and spoken words of all manner of individuals who are not actively engaged in the scholarly study of IR but who nonetheless play a part in framing and perpetuating the discourse that gives meaning to the empirical context of global interactions.

It thus seems appropriate to begin this book similarly to illustrate how metaphors in the scholarly literature of IR theory often make their way into how world affairs are understood. In this instance I take an article from *The New York Times* about the death of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. In that article reporters from the newspaper referred to North Korea metaphorically as a “failed state with nuclear weapons” (Landler and Sang-Hun 2011, A1). Just as Madeleine Albright’s observations about states as metaphorical billiard balls revealed something about her view of the world, the *Times* reporters’ reference to North Korea as a “failed state” highlights the ways in which metaphors in IR theory have a wider impact for depicting world affairs. In academic writings a metaphorical “failed state” is one that is understood to lack institutionalized political authority to the extent that the country is ungovernable using conventional political structures. North Korea, by contrast, is what most scholars would consider on the opposite end of the spectrum, that is, a *total* state where all political authority is concentrated in governing institutions that affect every aspect of civic life. For *The New York Times* reporters, the metaphor of a “failed state” had a nice ring to it because it seemingly depicts a country that does not live up to the standards established by legitimate political authority as it is recognized in most places around the world. For the authors of the article, North Korea had “failed” in the sense that it did not succeed in rising to the standard of governance that legitimate governments enjoy. However, it should be obvious that this sense of the term does not adhere to standard scholarly usage, which employs the notion of “failed” states to conceptualize the absence of centralized political authority, a condition that clearly would not apply to the North Korean state.

Why does this matter? Metaphors are integral to how IR scholars conceptualize their field. They provide the narrative structure through which facts are sorted into categories, assumptions are made, hypotheses are derived, and theories are formulated. They thus encapsulate the core ontological, epistemological, and methodological debates, which represent the main theoretical divisions within academic circles. As these metaphors make their way into other discursive contexts, for example the journalistic field, they provide insight into the ways that these metaphorical representations are not derived from an unambiguous reading of facts, but rather are indicative of the various cognitive frames of reference scholars bring with them to their work. That is to say, there is no “right” or “wrong” way to convey what is meant by a “failed” state because the concept itself is not a material category; it is instead a frame of reference that reflects one of any number of ways of thinking about political authority. Beyond their ability to guide empirical research to verify hypotheses about patterns of causation, the “utility” of IR metaphors is that they allow scholars to gain insight into those concepts that IR scholars deem worthy of study and what they are intended to mean. There are no “failed states,” only systems of government that exist in various states and which can be conceptualized metaphorically as failed states (whatever that means), or something else.

The New York Times reporters’ use of the term “failed state” in a way that is different from its standard usage among scholars also highlights the intellectual imprecision that is possible when metaphorical concepts are reified to the point that their meanings become ambiguous. As in my previous book, this volume contains chapters that analyze metaphors as they are used in a variety of theoretical approaches to the study of IR. As the “failed state” metaphor illustrates, among the problems with metaphors in IR theory is their imprecision and vagueness. A concept such as a “failed state,” even when not misconstrued as it was in *The New York Times* article, can be problematic because its imprecise nature makes it difficult to associate the concept with a specific set of empirical criteria against which it can be measured. Furthermore, hypotheses that follow from a vague metaphor such as “failed states” can lead to non-falsifiable or tautological claims because any evidence can be used to verify them. Part of the goal of this book is to further interrogate the utility of IR metaphors and subject them to additional analytical scrutiny beyond what was accomplished in my previous work on this topic.³

One of the main observations in *Metaphors in International Relations Theory* is that research in the field of cognitive linguistics has established that metaphors are an essential part of human cognition.⁴ In the conclusion to my previous book I opined that because metaphors are a fundamental element in human reasoning, IR scholarship cannot be disentangled from those metaphors that influence scholars' view of the world. In recent years, cognitive researchers have taken this line of reasoning one step further. In a highly influential article in the journal *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, Hugo Mercier and Dan Sperber contend that human reasoning has evolved not so much to acquire knowledge for knowledge's sake, but to foster the types of argumentation skills that are necessary for survival.⁵ The human brain has evolved not to recognize the *veracity* or factual accuracy of a statement, but rather, how *persuasive* it is. Mercier and Sperber caution that this does not render human cognition "irrational." Instead, their thesis "puts such well-known demonstrations of 'irrationality' in a novel perspective. Human reasoning is not a profoundly flawed general mechanism; it is a remarkably efficient specialized device adapted to a certain type of social and cognitive interaction at which it excels" (Mercier and Sperber 2011, 72). That is to say, humans have evolved successfully because they have become proficient at convincing others to think in a particular way.

Based on my findings in *Metaphors in International Relations Theory* I would argue that Mercier and Sperber's thesis extends to the role of metaphors in how academics persuade other scholars to accept particular arguments and theoretical perspectives throughout academic inquiry including in the field of IR. What qualifies as a good argument in scholarly discourse includes the metaphors that persuade others to accept certain assumptions, follow certain hypotheses, and investigate certain types of evidence leading to certain types of causal logic. Part of Mercier and Sperber's thesis is that scholars are not immune to confirmation bias; scholars accept particular findings because they fit within the theoretical arguments that to date have been persuasive. My observation about IR in specific, although one would surmise this is true in other disciplines as well, is that metaphors are part of the argumentation process that produces such analytical bias. Scholars are inclined to accept conclusions that fit within the metaphorical frames to which they have become accustomed.

FOREIGN POLICY BY METAPHOR: BARACK OBAMA'S "RED LINE"

Much like the metaphor of "failed states," foreign policy strategies such as deterrence rest on conceptual metaphors and thus provide for political leaders a way to think about foreign policy options. Such concepts, however, can constrain thinking and limit decision-makers' choices. In 2012, for example, United States President Barack Obama famously warned the government of Syria that it would cross a "red line" if it used chemical weapons against civilians or rebel forces.⁶ Obama, at a news conference at the White House, declared: "We cannot have a situation in which chemical or biological weapons are falling into the hands of the wrong people.... We have been very clear to the Assad regime but also to other players on the ground that a *red line* for us is, we start seeing a whole bunch of weapons moving around or being utilized.... That would change my calculus. That would change my equation" (*The New York Times*, August 20, 2012, A7, emphasis added).⁷ This statement was echoed later that year when Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton proclaimed: "This is a red line for the United States" (*The New York Times*, December 4, 2012, A8).

Obama's invocation of the "red line" as a metaphor for a limit that could not be crossed both stymied his administration's foreign policy and provided fodder for political commentators who reflected on the stark scenario presented by that metaphorical image.⁸ According to *The New York Times* commentator Andrew Rosenthal, Obama "didn't specify what he would do [in the case of a Syrian government chemical weapons attack], exactly, probably because 'what the president said in August was unscripted'—according to a senior official" (*The New York Times*, May 6, 2013, no page number). According to *The New York Times*, "with such an evocative phrase, the president had defined his policy in a way some advisers wish they could take back" (*The New York Times*, May 5, 2013, A1).

The issue became unavoidable for the president in August 2013 when convincing evidence surfaced that the government of Syria had in fact used chemical weapons against civilian populations. At that point, once it became clear the "red line" deterrent had failed, the Obama administration found itself in a predicament of its own making, and commentators outside the administration pounced on the failure of the metaphorical "red line" deterrent threat to bring about the desired results. In fact, even before evidence became available in August 2013, there were hints that

the “red line” threat had failed to deter the Syrian regime. Writing in *The New York Times* on May 5, 2013 (SR4), Daniel Byman observed, the “red line has come to haunt Mr. Obama. Last week, the American intelligence community assessed ‘with varying degrees of confidence’ that the Syrians had used the chemical agent sarin in their attacks on the opposition.” When evidence of the attacks was made public in August of 2013, a headline in *The New York Times* (August 29, 2013, A9) made reference to a “‘red line’ that became blurred.” A subsequent headline in *The New York Times* (September 1, 2013, SR5) asked if Obama was “tripping on his own red line?” Moreover, a year earlier, when Israeli Prime Minister “Benjamin Netanyahu...spell[ed] out a specific ‘red line’ that Iran could not cross in its nuclear program,...Mr. Obama deflected Mr. Netanyahu’s proposal to make the size of Iran’s stockpile of close-to-bomb-grade uranium the threshold for a military strike by the United States against its nuclear facilities” (*The New York Times*, September 14, 2012, A7).

Faced with the discrepancies in what his own conceptualization of what the “red line” metaphor was meant to convey, the president was in a predicament. Obama tried to extricate himself from this dilemma when he declared on September 4, 2013, that “I didn’t set a red line. The world set a red line” (*The New York Times*, September 4, 2013, no page number). By this Obama meant that the United States was merely upholding the international norm against the use of chemical weapons. Yet metaphors such as the “red line” are powerful in setting an agenda. Clearly, as the headline to an opinion piece in *The New York Times* suggested, “Obama’s red line [had come] back to haunt him” (*The New York Times*, September 2, 2013, no page number).⁹

Although many foreign policy experts warned about committing US military resources to an increasingly complex and unstable civil war, in many ways Obama had limited his own options by setting forth the metaphorical “red line” criterion for acting militarily in the Syrian conflict. Once Obama set down a metaphorical marker, he either had to enforce it or risk having his foreign policy be seen as not credible. Obama also based elements of his foreign policy on such metaphorical principles as the “pivot” to Asia, pushing the “reset button” in relations with Russia, and the use of a “light footprint” in committing military assets abroad. This is what Robert Dallek (2010) has deemed the “tyranny of metaphor” in US foreign policy, which has continually constrained American international actions even though leaders such as Obama have come to office pledging fundamental change.

Dallek's notion of the "tyranny of metaphor" played itself out in a rather obvious way in the instance of Barack Obama's "red line." Once Obama had framed the issue of Syrian chemical weapons in terms of a metaphorical line which could not be crossed, subsequent choices were limited by the options available to the president by virtue of the metaphorical nature of his deterrent threat. In this case, the situation was relatively specific to the circumstances that prevailed during a short period of time. The "tyranny of metaphor," however, can have more lasting effects when conceptual metaphors shape thinking about a large class of events. How an issue is understood metaphorically can shape policy responses in a fundamental and long-lasting way.

METAPHORS AND PUBLIC POLICY

In light of notorious examples such as Barack Obama's "red line," it is not surprising that a large body of literature has emerged which analyzes metaphors deployed in political discourse. Politicians, leaders, and a host of political officials routinely utilize metaphors for the purposes of mobilizing individuals, articulating interests, advocating positions, or generating support.¹⁰ However, before politicians and leaders use metaphorical expressions to advocate for or justify their political objectives, the very conceptualization of political issues involves processes associated with prior metaphorical thinking. Moreover, metaphors often reflect political differences that define what is at stake in a conflict of interests. As Murray Edelman (1971, 68) observes: "Commonly accepted assumptions about political reality and political cause and effect often consist of simplified or distorted perspectives embodied in metaphors; once one is alert to the hazard, each day's reports of political speeches, statements, and new events bring new and impressive examples. A politician more persuasively conveys a particular picture of reality when he simply assumes it in the terms he uses rather than asserting it explicitly."¹¹

When citizens seek to make sense of confusing or complex political issues, metaphors simplify political problems, make them more intelligible, and make proposed solutions to political problems more acceptable.¹² Edelman (*ibid.*, 71) opines: "The essence of metaphor is that a part evokes a new whole. Political metaphors can vividly, potently, and pervasively evoke a changed world in which the remedies for anxieties are clearly perceived and self-serving courses of action are sanctified." The preeminent scholar on the nature of metaphors in cognition, George Lakoff, has

argued that understanding the role of metaphors in foreign policy can help frame policy issues.¹³ Metaphors can be incorporated into what Alister Miskimmon, Ben O’Laughlin, and Laura Roselle (2013) refer to as the larger “strategic narratives” that political leaders use to advance political objectives.¹⁴ That political leaders employ metaphors in their public appeals, therefore, is not surprising in part because scholars of metaphors such as Lakoff have entered into policy debates.

Anthony Judge offers a number of examples of how metaphors frame policy problems and suggest their solutions. Some examples given by Anthony Judge (1989, 3–4) are as follows: Policy problems are frequently posed in terms of geometrical principles (e.g., “areas” of activity, “spheres” of influence, policy “levels”), positional characteristics (e.g., “stances” that can be adopted, policymakers’ “positions”), tools (e.g., “umbrella,” “shields,” “tridents”), or sports (e.g., “keeping the ball in play,” “scoring points”), to name a few. These metaphors can influence how decision-makers find solutions for the policy problems to which they respond. Hence, the “solution” to a problem previously associated with metaphorical images of aggression (e.g., finding a policy “target,” amassing “ammunition” to solve a problem) might better be visualized through metaphors associated with building support (e.g., “organizing” agenda items, creating a policy “project”) (ibid., 4–9).¹⁵ Similarly, in foreign policy discourse, government actors routinely frame international conflict using sports metaphors or see war metaphorically as a “game.”¹⁶ As James Der Derian (2003, 38) notes, the metaphor of war-as-a-game is not the same thing as military exercises commonly known as “war games,” although the two obviously are related. War thought of metaphorically as a game helps policymakers minimize what otherwise might be seen as the horrors of war. Thus, war can be presented as a spirited and genial pastime or sport (Shapiro 1989).¹⁷ Der Derian (2003, 38) notes that the “game” metaphor for war has been used for centuries, for example, when the Prussians “successively used *Kriegsspiel* (‘war play’) to defeat the Austrians at Sadowa in 1866.” Taking their cue from policymakers, scholars have then employed the “game” metaphor in their own theorizing about war.¹⁸

A large number of foreign policy metaphors draw on, inform, or resonate with the metaphors scholars use to conceptualize IR. The purposes to which individuals deploy metaphors differ. Politicians are inclined to use framing devices to garner support for their foreign policy objectives. Scholars tend more to rely on metaphors to conceptualize abstract principles in the study of world affairs. However, although policymakers and scholars draw on

metaphors for different reasons, the way they conceptualize IR often involves similar or the same metaphorical frames. Moreover, the attachment of metaphorical concepts to the roles states play in IR actually affects how states behave toward each other (Holsti 1970; Teles Fazendeiro 2016). Thus, understanding metaphors in IR can be aided by examining the connections between metaphors in the foreign policy and scholarly realms. Foreign policy metaphors provide a glimpse into how scholars conceptualize IR, and vice versa.

WHY METAPHORS MATTER

As in my previous book, my emphasis in this volume is on the metaphors that inform the study of IR. However, while the language of IR in many ways constitutes (as is true in other disciplines) a unique academic jargon, it is also the case that the metaphorical concepts that shape IR are also part of the discourse of practitioners of foreign policy.¹⁹ An example of this is provided in Susanna Hast's book *Spheres of Influence in International Relations* (2014) in which the author elaborates on how the metaphor of "spheres of influence" provides a normative basis by which states shape the foreign policies of other countries by exerting direct and indirect control. Hast provides a detailed historical review of the metaphorical bases of spheres of influence as a concept that rationalizes, normalizes, and justifies arrangements of IR such that it becomes second nature for governments in some countries to legitimize the sway they have over other states in their metaphorical "orbit."

Such metaphors make their way into the overall conceptualization of IR shared by policymakers, journalists, and the public alike. The "spheres of influence" metaphor comprises part of the overarching metaphorical conceptualization of the state as a "container," which has been amply documented in the scholarly literature.²⁰ Contained as they are within "orbits" and "spheres," relations among states are then depicted as existing among a series of circular spaces. Thus, for example, when reporting on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal, Keith Bradsher of *The New York Times* describes Chinese fears of commercial "encirclement" given the United States' desires to keep countries in the country's "orbit," while the TPP has "looped in" a range of countries in Southeast Asia (Bradsher 2015, B1). A complicated series of trade relationships is understood fundamentally by policymakers within foundational metaphors with which policymakers perceive the world, in this case as part of an international

system comprising self-contained political entities that populate a physical environment in which spherical containers include or exclude other political spaces.

With the knowledge that metaphors are essential elements in the construction of foreign policy, foreign policy analysis that focuses on conceptual metaphors is useful for understanding the discipline of IR. Indeed, William Flanik (2011) suggests that incorporating metaphors into what he calls cognitive foreign policy analysis (CFPA) can bridge some of the theoretical divisions that have existed between foreign policy analysis as a distinct approach in IR and other IR theories, in particular the Constructivist paradigm. Most notably, Flanik observes that CFPA helps resolve the agent–structure problem in IR theory by highlighting the links between individual cognition and the cultural contexts in which they exist.²¹ To the extent that IR scholars are agents located within the same cultural space that frames foreign policymaking, the metaphors scholars use to study the world are in many cases the same used by foreign policy practitioners. An analysis of policy metaphors that are also part of the discourse of IR theory is therefore particularly salient for understanding the ontological bases of the field.

Cases of metaphors solving problems in the realm of foreign policy are many. Ann Tickner (1992, 48–49) explains that metaphors which cast the periphery as possessing “feminine” qualities served as a justification for European imperialism, as European leaders appointed themselves the job of “civilizing” large regions of the world that became European colonies. Simon Dalby (1998) points out that matters of international security often are framed using ecological metaphors including notions of world politics existing as a “biosphere” that is both complex and in need of maintaining good “health.” During the Cold War the balance of power metaphor suggested policies to maintain that “balance” (Bleiker 2000, 234; Akrivoulis 2008), the US leaders used metaphorical images such as “disease,” “fire,” “darkness,” and “savagery” to advocate keeping the Soviet Union in check (Ivie 1980, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1997, 1999),²² and successive policymakers depicted the threat of communist expansion in terms of metaphorical “falling dominoes” (Shimko 1994).²³ On the other hand, the meanings of public policy metaphors are in no way unambiguous. The term “Balkanization,” for instance, conjures up images of political fragmentation, although, as discussed in a book by Balkan scholars (Bjelić and Savić 2002), the metaphor is far more complex and contested than it might at

first glance seem. Contestation over the meanings of metaphors, in fact, is part of the process by which metaphors are injected into politics.²⁴

Even before cognitive linguists such as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) uncovered the experiential context of metaphors, scholars of politics have intuited that human experience can manifest itself in language (including metaphors), which then shapes political views of the world. Writing about the “balance of power” metaphor in 1948, Alfred Vagts observed: “Political ideas usually have no single ascertainable point of origin; they only have origins, antedating first formulations in speech, writing, or the pictorial expressions” (Vagts 1948, 87).²⁵ This leads Vagts to speculate that the desire for a balance of power in contemporary times may very well reflect a felt affinity for similar experiences and wishes of scholars and practitioners in Renaissance times who expressed their desires in the metaphorical language of “balance.”

As mentioned, a prominent example of how metaphors can shape foreign policy thinking is the “falling dominoes” image that framed US Cold War policy. The metaphor, coined by President Dwight Eisenhower, was embraced by other members of the foreign policy establishment regardless of partisan affiliation. Former US Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara noted in a 1996 interview that President Eisenhower was not alone in this thinking and that the falling dominoes metaphor came to shape American foreign policy:

If Vietnam were lost, or if Laos and Vietnam were lost, the dominoes would fall. That was a famous expression. It wasn't just President Eisenhower who believed it; I'll call it the establishment in the U.S. It didn't matter whether you were Republican or Democrat, if you had been associated with foreign relations and responsibilities in the postwar period and were dealing with the Soviet threat to the security to the West [then you believed in the “Domino Theory”]” (Kreisler 1996).

This is not necessarily to say that US foreign policy would have been significantly different had the metaphor of “falling dominoes” never entered the lexicon, but rather, the metaphorical image galvanized policymakers across the political spectrum and provided a shared image, which informed debates on how best to achieve American foreign policy objectives. Even with the defeat of American Cold War objectives in Southeast Asia, iconic metaphors that may or may not help public policy objectives persist in policymaking debates.

Metaphors persist in shaping policy debates, perceptions of opportunities, and threats to international stability, as the “falling dominoes” example illustrates. The post-Cold War era provides additional examples of the sorts of optimism and pessimism about IR embodied in metaphorical concepts. The end of the Cold War heralded, for instance, the promise of a metaphorical “peace dividend” that would result in greater global wealth and prosperity. More than just monetary benefits, the “peace dividend” served as a metaphor for an improved quality of life that would accrue to large numbers of individuals around the world once the specter of superpower conflict had been diminished. Within a short period of time, however, economists such as George Brockway (1990, 15) were cautioning “don’t cash your peace dividend,” when the optimistic vision of a metaphorical post-Cold War payoff did not quickly materialize. More ominously, the attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States elevated the metaphor of a “war” against not only terrorism but against a host of potential threats to international security, with United States Representative Dennis Kucinich (2008, no page number) writing that 9/11 was “the day America embraced a metaphor of war.”²⁶ The awareness of the influence of metaphorical concepts on international affairs is shared among government officials and scholars alike.

CONCEPTUAL VERSUS LINGUISTIC METAPHORS

Metaphor scholars make a distinction between conceptual metaphors and linguistic metaphors. Quite simply, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) identify conceptual metaphors as cognitive processes, and linguistic metaphors as the spoken manifestations of those thought processes. “The conceptual metaphor underlies most of our use of metaphorical expressions, whereas the linguistic coding is supposed to be only the final stage in the construction of metaphors” (Moura 2006, 82). Thus, for example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 27) have determined that humans experience thought as a mechanical process, leading to the conceptual metaphor *THE MIND IS A MACHINE*.²⁷ There are numerous linguistic metaphors that then serve as manifestations of that conceptual metaphor, such as “My mind just isn’t *operating* today” and “Boy! the *wheels are turning* now!” (ibid., italics in the original).²⁸ Thus, while all conceptual metaphors give rise to linguistic metaphors, not all linguistic metaphors are concepts. Rather, they serve as linguistic manifestations of those underlying metaphorical concepts.

For cognitive linguists and metaphor scholars, the distinction between conceptual metaphors and linguistic metaphors is an important one. In Lakoff and Johnson's thesis, physical and sensory experiences give rise to thoughts (conceptual metaphors), which then lead to linguistic expressions (linguistic metaphors). Language follows thought, not vice versa. This insight marks a critical turn in the field of linguistics. However, language scholars acknowledge that the distinction between conceptual and linguistic metaphors is not always so clearly defined. For example, Heronides Moura (2006, 84) notes that certain metaphors in Brazilian Portuguese originate in conventional linguistic use, not necessarily cognitive frames: "It is difficult to see how these metaphors could be derived strictly in conceptual terms, since it depends upon the usage and the social context, linguistically expressed." Moura then opines that it should be possible to see an interdependence between conceptual and linguistic metaphor. Likewise, Hartmut Stöckl (2010, 197) argues that any theory of metaphor must take account of at least four elements: "semantic features, ... conceptual metaphor and its mappings, encyclopaedic, symbolic and socio-cultural knowledge, [and] sensory experience."

In recent years, linguists have also highlighted the distinction between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors. While much of language involves metaphors used in a reflexive, non-deliberate way, there are also metaphors used deliberately, often via analogy or simile, to alert audiences to an overt comparison that is being made between one idea and another: "When a metaphor is used deliberately, it instructs the addressee to momentarily adopt another standpoint, in another frame of reference, and to reconsider the local topic from that point of view" (Steen 2013, 58).²⁹ In IR theory there are examples of both deliberate metaphors, which are consciously deployed, and non-deliberate metaphors which are referenced reflexively by IR scholars. Examples of the former include the wide range of game theory metaphors such as Prisoner's Dilemma which set up a direct analogy between the predicament of criminal suspects and the strategic choices faced by governments. Examples of the latter include the pervasive metaphor of a "balance of power," which serves as a master theoretical principle of Realist IR theory. Thus, as with conceptual and linguistic metaphors, an investigation of metaphors in IR theory must acknowledge the presence of deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors, the distinction between which is obvious to linguists but mostly lost on IR scholars.

For the purposes of the present study, are the distinctions between conceptual metaphor and linguistic metaphor, and deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors, important for investigating metaphors in IR theory? Obviously, even for scholars such as Moura and Stöckl who seek a synthesis of conceptual and linguistic metaphor, the need to maintain analytical categories is necessary. Thus, over the course of this book I will endeavor, where relevant, to indicate where conceptual and linguistic metaphors are involved. For example, in the chapter on metaphors and democratization, the underlying conceptual metaphor *DEMOCRATIZATION HAS A DIRECTION* will be shown to manifest itself in a variety of linguistic metaphors such as “waves of democratization.” However, as is true in any interdisciplinary effort, certain disciplinary imperatives will take precedence over others. Thus, linguists may note that at times conceptual and linguistic metaphors may be discussed simultaneously inasmuch as scholars of IR, not to mention practitioners of politics, are not necessarily inclined to grasp the finer details of metaphor scholarship. For linguists the difference between conceptual and linguistic metaphors is an essential distinction, but for IR scholars that distinction is secondary to the way that both conceptual and linguistic metaphors frame an understanding of IR, shape its conduct, and have an impact on theoretical explanations.³⁰ Similarly, scholars of IR will be more interested in the way deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors influence subsequent theorizing than in definitively determining when and in what ways each sort of metaphor prevails within the scholarly community.

It is also worth noting that in IR theory and practice, the distinction between conceptual and linguistic metaphors (as well as deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors) is not always strictly maintained. For example, in his investigation of the metaphors that shaped the development of a national missile defense (NMD) system in the United States, William Flanik (2011, 234–235) finds that these metaphors were a combination of conceptual metaphors such as *NMD IS A SHIELD* and linguistic metaphors such as the national metaphor defense system provides “cover.” Moreover, IR theorists and policymakers alike speak in ways that make underlying conceptual metaphors obvious, without the need to engage in analysis of large amounts of language data to find underlying meanings. Even George Lakoff (2013, no page number) noted with reference to Barack Obama’s “red line” metaphor: “We cannot think about a situation as complicated as Syria without conceptual metaphors and scenarios driving policy proposals. In many cases, the conceptual metaphors are unconscious. But

with Syria, the policy-defining metaphors are being put into language and are showing up front and center.” Much of what is examined in this book involves a combination of obvious linguistic metaphors that are “up front and center” as well as underlying conceptual metaphors that underlie many theoretical propositions of IR theory. In this book, while every effort will be made to distinguish conceptual and linguistic metaphors in IR theory, emphasis will be placed on how both types of metaphors influence theories of IR and foreign policy conduct, that is, how metaphors operate “further down the line” of theory and practice.

GOVERNMENTS AND METAPHORS

It has long been the case that governments, politicians, leaders, and political officials have used metaphors to frame policy issues and advance policy objectives. Scholars such as Murray Edelman have described how governments can systematically use metaphorical imagery to convince the mass public to support an issue or form an opposition to political adversaries. Increasingly, government officials are aware of the role of metaphors in framing political discourse and thus shaping policy options. In this context, a recent development is the effort by some governments to catalog the metaphors used in political discourse for the purpose of advancing a broad range of policy objectives. In an attempt both to gather intelligence about the policy priorities of other countries and to tailor their own policies to receptive audiences, governments are engaging in research to systematize the collection of information regarding metaphorical discourse in politics. Perhaps the most notable of these endeavors is the so-called Metaphor Program currently being developed by the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA), an agency of the United States government housed within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.³¹

The goal of the Metaphor Program is to develop computer programs to decipher the metaphors that form part of the political discourse of selected cultures so as to enable the US government to identify potential sources of national security threats. A synopsis of the program is posted at IARPA’s dedicated web page outlining the project:

The Metaphor Program will exploit the fact that metaphors are pervasive in everyday talk and reveal the underlying beliefs and worldviews of members of a culture. In the first phase of the two-phase program, performers will develop

automated tools and techniques for recognizing, defining and categorizing linguistic metaphors associated with target concepts and found in large amounts of native-language text. The resulting conceptual metaphors will be validated using empirical social science methods. In the second phase, the program will characterize differing cultural perspectives associated with case studies of the types of interest to the Intelligence Community. Performers will apply the methodology established in the first phase and will identify the conceptual metaphors used by the various protagonists, organizing and structuring them to reveal the contrastive stances (IARPA 2011, 4).³²

The aim of the Metaphor Program is to give government officials the ability to identify potential threats to national security by understanding their cultural contexts through linguistic analysis. The IARPA overview of the project states in part: “The Metaphor Program will exploit the use of metaphors by different cultures to gain insight into their cultural norms” (ibid.). Researchers who are awarded contracts to develop the Metaphor Program “will develop and test methodologies for the automated discovery, definition and categorization of linguistic metaphors found in large amounts of native-language text. These methodologies will produce conceptual metaphors that capture aspects of the tacit knowledge of the culture” (ibid., 5).

It is clear from the Metaphor Program document summarizing the initiative that the project designers are well-versed in the scholarly literature on cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphors. The overview document observes that “metaphors shape how people think about complex topics and can influence beliefs. Metaphors can reduce complexity of meaning associated with a topic by capturing or expressing patterns. Metaphors are associated with affect; affect influences behavior” (ibid., 4). What the project developers hope is that automated methods (i.e., computer processing of large amounts of written text) will result in a “metaphor repository” that will then aid government researchers to identify potential sources of threat to national security through examination of communications that may contain within them indications of such threats. Rather than relying on human resources in the form of intelligence agents, the Metaphor Program is designed to automate textual analysis with the assumption that conceptual metaphors in specific cultures can provide a clue to the objectives of foreign governments and individuals.

Despite the obvious difficulties in implementing the Metaphor Program, what is striking is the fact that individuals within the United

States government are aware of the role metaphors play in framing and shaping policy. Government officials grasp the way that policy agendas are situated within the conceptual metaphors scholars and policymakers alike rely on to understand the world. It is also clear that government officials comprehend how metaphor analysis can be used to identify the motivations of potential adversaries and try to persuade them to adopt alternative positions.

However, as with all intelligence gathering, there is a fine line between accumulating information and imputing motives behind that information. Just as scholars often unwittingly imbue the study of IR with meanings and narratives that reflect the metaphorical concepts with which they see the world, so too policymakers can erroneously infer intent from behavior in an unwarranted way as well as impute to themselves motives that mirror deeply held beliefs. Concepts are metaphors and therefore metaphors create realities. However, what is real is a set of shifting cognitive constructs, which, because of the changing and contested nature of conceptual metaphors, are only imperfectly construed through metaphor analysis. Government policy based on such metaphor analysis is inevitably fraught with the same sorts of analytical problems that confront scholars who study these same topics. It is therefore incumbent on scholars to be attentive to the role metaphors play in their own research and analysis. The link between scholarship and government policy begins in the academic realm requiring scholars to be vigilant in examining the way metaphors conceptualize subject matters under investigation.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN POLICY METAPHORS AND SCHOLARSHIP

Scholars have fully established that policymakers marshal metaphors to frame political issues, shape policy debates, influence public discourse, and persuade government officials and the population at large to act in specified ways. Despite the inclination by scholars to separate themselves from policymakers by adopting a detached, objective perspective relative to the political world, there is an inevitable sharing of metaphorical concepts between the realm of politics and scholarly efforts to study it. That is to say, what constitutes an area of study is not a set of self-evident, objectively arising facts, but the very range of conceptual metaphors that policymakers articulate as they advance both an understanding of the world around them and

their political objectives. The IARPA Metaphor Program discussed in the previous section demonstrates that there is an awareness among policymakers and other political officials that political discourse incorporates metaphorical concepts. The Metaphor Program solicits inputs from the scholarly community indicating that there is a growing sense among policymakers that research on metaphors is relevant to the formulation of policy frames.

As an example of the nexus between policy metaphors and academic scholarship we can examine the work of Jerel Rosati and Steven Campbell as they seek to understand the foreign policy objectives and practices of the presidential administration of Jimmy Carter in the United States. In their analysis of the two dominant metaphors that shaped the thinking of Carter and his closest foreign policy advisers, Rosati and Campbell (2004) identify a pair of contending metaphors that alternately influenced the early and late foreign policy views of the Carter administration. In the early years of the administration, Carter and his advisers subscribed to a metaphorical view of the world expressed in terms of the “global community.” As world events disrupted both the thinking and actions of the administration, the “global community” metaphor was replaced with one of a metaphorical “arc of crisis” (*ibid.*, 220ff).

While Rosati and Campbell seek to remove themselves from historical events as they endeavor to adopt the position of scholarly observers of the Carter administration’s metaphorical thinking, an interesting connection between scholarship and politics can nonetheless be observed. Interestingly, both the administration and Rosati and Campbell alike situate the “global community” and “arc of crisis” metaphors within a larger metaphorical construct. Specifically, the Carter administration sought to develop a foreign *policy* that best suited “U.S. global leadership,” while Rosati and Campbell similarly take as a *fact* the same metaphorical concept of “U.S. global leadership.” In other words, Rosati and Campbell at once attempt to detach themselves in a scholarly fashion from the “global community” and “arc of crisis” metaphors so as to treat them as objects of study, while, at the same time, both the Carter administration and Rosati and Campbell alike treat as an objective fact what is actually a metaphor in and of itself, that is, the idea that the United States exercises metaphorical global “leadership.”

What constitutes “leadership” in global relations is not unambiguously clear. The relationship between any two or more countries can and has been conceptualized in any number of ways including notions of “alliances,” “friendships,” “patron–client” relations, “partners,” and “neighbors,” just to

name a few. What it means for countries to “lead” or “follow” each other in global affairs reflects a particular metaphorical understanding of one or more states being “in front” of others in devising diplomatic, political, military, and economic affairs. “Leadership” is not a self-evident fact but an understanding of international politics played out in terms of states taking other states from one place to another through deliberate and focused direction. That the Carter administration tried to ascertain the contours of US “global leadership” and that scholars accept that concept as a fact highlights the nexus between policymaking and scholarship, a nexus held together by a common and prior shared understanding of certain metaphorical “truths.” Indeed, as Rosati and Campbell unpack the “global community” and “arc of crisis” metaphors, they leave the metaphor of “U.S. global leadership” largely unexamined.

Of course, Rosati and Campbell are not alone in the way they share with the objects of their study a common metaphorical view. A large number of metaphors that are employed by policymakers to frame issues are treated by scholars as objective categories of political phenomena. As Richard Little (2007), for example, notes, the metaphor of the “balance of power” has a long pedigree in the world of international diplomacy. First used to justify the actions of rulers, the concept today is treated as a basic fact of world affairs by a large body of scholars. More recently, political leaders have spoken of arms “races,” power “vacuums,” and the danger of “failed” states, all of which have also been treated by scholars as factual elements of international affairs. Moreover, as William Flanik has observed, the influence of the scholarly community on the metaphorical framing of foreign policy concepts can be overt. Flanik (2011, 432) notes that the metaphorical concept of the “rogue state” “was disseminated by a small group of defense intellectuals during and shortly after the collapse of the USSR.” As long as all thinking is metaphorical, it is impossible for scholars to fully divorce themselves from the conceptual metaphors policymakers rely on to shape discussions about IR.

More to the point, in recent years, some politicians, showing an awareness of the role of metaphors in human communication, have reached out directly to metaphor scholars for advice on formulating political frames. Most notably, George Lakoff, one of the originators of the theory of conceptual metaphor, has consulted with politicians of the Democratic Party in the United States to advise on policy framing. Lakoff was one of the co-founders of the now-defunct Rockridge Institute, which was created to aid activists and politicians devise rhetorical arguments in favor of

progressive causes. Lakoff also consulted with one-time presidential candidate and Chair of the Democratic National Committee Howard Dean who wrote the Foreword to Lakoff's book *Don't Think of an Elephant!* (Lakoff 2004). Lakoff's work with Democratic Party leaders did not escape the notice of detractors such as Rahm Emanuel who served as Chief of Staff for President Barack Obama. In a chapter in a co-authored book (Emanuel and Reed 2006), Emanuel excoriated Lakoff for trying to convince party leaders that the key to electoral success was political messaging.³³ Criticisms of Lakoff notwithstanding, other progressive Americans have spearheaded efforts to influence policy discussions by formulating political messaging using metaphorical concepts, including the creation of the Metaphor Project in 1997 (not to be confused with the IARPA Metaphor Program discussed above).³⁴ The debate over the extent to which policymakers should overtly craft metaphorical messages shows that a bridge between metaphor scholars and political officials has been established.

That scholars have adopted as analytical categories certain metaphors that policymakers have used for the purposes of advancing political objectives begs the question of whether those scholars can truly exercise an objective analysis of concepts that are not neutral in their implications for understanding IR. As the foregoing discussion of post-Cold War concepts such as the "peace dividend" and metaphors of "war" illustrate, metaphorical concepts can reflect and foster prevailing political sensibilities and moods. While it is impossible for scholars to devise a vocabulary that is entirely distinct from the agenda-laden terminology of policymakers, scholars should nonetheless be vigilant when they seek to formulate theoretical explanations for world affairs. Among the things scholars can do is exercise a critical interrogation of policy metaphors in ways that policymakers may be disinclined to do. Scholars can ask themselves not only how metaphors shape policy, but how they shape the very study of policy. In what ways are categories of policy created that complicate the study of international affairs? Scholars cannot reasonably be expected to use a completely different vocabulary of terms, but in thinking about IR, they can ask what more can be learned about world affairs by being conscious about how issues are framed. Dissecting how policy is conceptualized can also assist in determining how it is best explained.

The purpose of this book is precisely to continue the process of interrogating metaphors in IR theory, which was initiated in my previous work on this topic. The present volume in many ways is more attentive to the

ways that scholarly thinking, which involves conceptual metaphors, influences policymakers who engage in real-world international affairs. Specifically, the book acknowledges the fact that theory and practice in IR often rest on common metaphorical concepts, which have implications for the ways people around the world pursue their lives. With some exceptions, IR theories often focus more on abstract concepts than the lived experiences of individuals around the world. Moreover, in the same way that IR theory in general often ignores real-world experiences of individuals, metaphors in IR theory often frame a view of the world which marginalizes everyday people. To the extent that government policy also is shaped by metaphorical concepts that originate in the academic realm, and to the extent that IR scholars are therefore partially complicit in this marginalization, it is vitally important to subject metaphors in IR theory to critical interrogation. The rest of this book is devoted to that task.

NOTES

1. For a sampling of how metaphors inform scholarship in academic inquiry see, for example, Black (1962, 1979), McCloskey (1985, 1995), Henderson (1994), Klamer and Leonard (1994), Eubanks (2000), Brown (2003).
2. Since the publication of *Metaphors in International Relations Theory* other scholars have devoted research to understanding how specific metaphors shape understandings of IR. See, for example, Susanna Hast's (2014) book-length examination of the metaphor of "spheres of influence."
3. Mine is not the only method for critically interrogating the ontological bases for the study of IR. See, for example, Acuto and Curtis (2014) for an approach that uses assemblage thinking as a way for unpacking the conceptual bases of IR theory.
4. The role of metaphors in IR theory had interested scholars such as Hayward Alker for a number of years. Analysis of metaphor could provide a way to bridge the various epistemological traditions that were not fully reconciled in the field. On Alker's efforts in this endeavor, see Blanchard (2012).
5. "The main function of reasoning is argumentative: Reasoning has evolved and persisted mainly because it makes human communication more effective and advantageous" (Mercier and Sperber 2011, 60).
6. The *Oxford English Dictionary* recognizes the phrase "red line" as meaning a "limit" with origins in the image of "a mark on a gauge or dial indicating a safety limit or critical point; *spec.* one denoting a maximum operating speed."

7. Although the “red line” Obama laid down in the case of Syria provided the basis for subsequent American foreign policy it was not the first time the Obama administration had invoked that metaphor. In January 2102, “senior Obama administration officials...said publicly that Iran would cross a ‘red line’ if it made good on recent threats to close the [S]trait [of Hormuz]” (*The New York Times*, January 13, 2012, A1).
8. For an analysis of Obama’s “red line” metaphor, see Lakoff (2013).
9. Reprinted from an essay by Albert R. Hunt in the *International Herald Tribune* (September 2, 2013, no page number).
10. On the use of metaphors in the discourse of foreign policy leaders see, for example, Andrews (1979), Ivie (1980, 1982, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2004), Lakoff (1991), Chilton and Lakoff (1995), Chilton (1996), Milliken (1996), Mussolff (1996, 2001, 2004), Beer and De Landtsheer (2004), Charteris-Black (2004), Slingerland et al. (2007), Flanik (2008, 2011), Oppermann and Spencer (2013), Korkut et al. (2015). Metaphors are frequently used among policymakers to frame debates over the formation, implementation, and assessment of government policy. See, for example, Papparone (2008, 2010), Poletti (2004).
11. Elliot Zashin and Phillip Chapman (1974, 309) concur: “Metaphors are used, then, to persuade and to influence attitudes, as well as to assist in the interpretation of experience.” See also Mio (1997), Schlesinger and Lau (2000), Punter (2007, chapter 3), Charteris-Black (2005, 2009), Carver and Pikalo (2008), De Landtsheer (2009), Neagu (2013).
12. For example, George Lakoff (1991) argues that during the Persian Gulf War, members of the Bush administration invoked a series of metaphors that were designed to depict Iraq as a villain, make Kuwait look like a victim, and characterize the United States as the savior of Kuwait.
13. Lakoff (2001, 1) writes that “the strategic framing of issues matters to foreign policy” and therefore “an understanding of such framing, together with a systematic reframing, is necessary for the Global Interdependence Initiative,” a program he favors. Similarly, Arie Kruglanski et al. (2007) suggest metaphors for how strategies for counterterrorism “should” be framed.
14. “Strategic narratives are representations of a sequence of events and identities, a communicative tool through which political actors—usually elites—attempt to give determined meaning to past, present, and future in order to achieve political objectives” (Miskimmon et al. 2013, 5).
15. Metaphors also affect how citizens think about what is presented to them as political “problems” and their “solutions.” Thus, for example, Paul Thibodeau and Lera Boroditsky (2011) find that how members of the public respond to issues of crime depends on how metaphors frame the issue of crime either as a “beast” or as a “virus.”

16. On sports metaphors in political discourse, see Herbeck (2004).
17. For instance, in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Cathleen Bridgeman (2002, 165) writes that policymakers and other interested parties depict the conflict using a variety of metaphorical terms: “Examples of game metaphors include such references to ‘pawns in an increasingly dangerous game’, ‘the rules of the game have changed’, ‘reminder of how easily the prize could slip away’, ‘prize of a lasting peace’, ‘victory for peace’, etc.” Likewise, George Lakoff (1991, no page number) points out that in the first Persian Gulf War President George H. W. Bush used metaphors to refer to “to strategic moves in the gulf as a ‘poker game’ where it would be foolish for him to ‘show his cards’, that is, to make strategic knowledge public.”
18. For instance, John Lewis Gaddis (1987, 237ff) uses the term “rules of the game” to describe the mostly unstated tacit agreements the United States and the Soviet Union abided by so as not to disrupt the “long peace” of the Cold War.
19. As an example, with specific reference to the metaphor of the “war on terror,” Vincent Pouliot (2008, 34) argues that “the academic discourse on the globalization of threats happens to coincide almost perfectly with the rhetorical strategies of certain politicians.”
20. On the state as a container metaphor see, for example, Chilton (1996).
21. “Agents create new meanings by drawing on existing metaphors and applying them to new situations, by extending metaphorical entailments in novel ways, and by articulating and sharing new metaphors...In sum, metaphorical frames constitute agents, and agents (re)produce social structure in part through metaphorical framing” (Flanik 2011, 432). Flanik (436) also points out that “by stressing the interdependence of cultural and embodied meanings, metaphorical framing avoids the fallacy of reducing decision making to social facts, on the one hand, or innate cognitive capacities on the other.” See also Oppermann and Spencer (2013).
22. The “disease” metaphor has also been used to frame debates about immigration in the United States. See Cisneros (2008). For a discussion of additional medical metaphors in political discourse, see Shogimen (2008).
23. However, as Shimko (665) points out, the “domino metaphor and the imagery accompanying it [did] not offer much in terms of policy specifics.” For more on the falling dominoes metaphor, see also Jervis and Snyder (1991). On additional rhetorical uses of metaphors during the Cold War, see Milliken (1996), Medhurst (1997), Hirschbein (2005). For the use of metaphors in the post-Cold War era, in particular metaphors used to frame US military interventions in the Persian Gulf, see Lakoff (1991), Pancake (1993), Chilton and Lakoff (1995), Bates (2009), Blum (2009).

24. Thus, for example, legal scholars in the United States have engaged in an ongoing argument regarding the meanings and implications of the metaphor that judges should act as “umpires” (Weber 2009).
25. On the balance of power as a metaphor, see also Little (2007).
26. On the “war” metaphor, see Marks (2011, 116–118).
27. The convention in the field of linguistics is to indicate conceptual metaphors such as *THE MIND IS A MACHINE* with small capital letters.
28. While conceptual metaphors in the field of linguistics are indicated with small capital letters, linguistic metaphors are denoted in regular typeface, occasionally in italics or enclosed within quotation marks.
29. For additional works on deliberate versus non-deliberate metaphor see, for example, Goatly (1997), Shen and Balaban (1999), Goddard (2004).
30. In fact, scholars of IR likely are unaware of the many metaphorical concepts that permeate their field. Linguists, however, have developed ways for identifying metaphors in academic discourse. See, for example, Steen et al. (2010, chapter 6).
31. Information about the Metaphor Program can be found online at http://www.iarpa.gov/solicitations_metaphor.html. For an analysis of the Metaphor Program, see Madrigal (2011).
32. IARPA has solicited project proposals to develop the Metaphor Program. The online solicitation is located at http://www.iarpa.gov/solicitations_metaphor.html.
33. Emanuel’s criticisms of Lakoff were picked up by progressive commentators who echoed those themes. See Cooper (2005), Green (2005).
34. The website for the Metaphor Project is <http://metaphorproject.org/>.

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Metaphors of International Political Economy

In the theoretical narrative of IR, part of the story involves establishing central and subordinate plot lines. In a novel, motion picture, or television program, the attention of readers or viewers is drawn to the central story line by how much significance is hanging on the resolution of a point of tension. Subplots can bring to bear information involving central characters, but their resolution is less critical to the outcome of the central story arc. In IR, the resolution of problems of international security, that is, issues of war and peace, is central to the study of the field. Matters of international economics, while significant aspects of IR, typically are afforded a lesser status. The order of chapters in introductory textbooks on IR illustrates this phenomenon; in almost every case, chapters on security precede chapters on commerce and trade. As we will see in the following discussion, the metaphorical separation of matters of security and economics into hierarchically ordered realms of “high” and “low” politics is a key linguistic cue in the unfolding of the IR narrative.

METAPHORS IN ECONOMICS¹

Scholars have established that metaphors often serve as the basis for models and theories in the physical and natural sciences.² Inasmuch as the study of economics relies on formal modeling, it is not surprising that metaphors figure prominently in the field of economics, although, ironically, as Deirdre McCloskey (1985, 74) points out, “non-economists find

it easier to see the metaphors than do economists.”³ Furthermore, economists’ acceptance of the practical utility of metaphors in developing theoretical propositions has not always been forthcoming since many economists have viewed metaphors as antithetical to their view of economics as a science. Yet as Arjo Klamer and Thomas Leonard (1994) point out, despite the resistance of some economists, it needs to be acknowledged that many of the metaphors of the language of economics involve core concepts in the field.⁴ For example, Willie Henderson (1994, 356) observes that “the language of supply and demand is built on the transference of the idea of balance and equilibrium, forces and pressures (leading to the directional metaphors: ‘upwards’ and ‘downwards’) on price and equilibrium.” This point of view, Henderson argues, attributes economic behavior to the metaphorical functions of mechanistic forces as opposed to individual economic agents. “Thus, in the simple supply-and-demand model ‘prices rise’ rather than ‘prices are raised’ by some active and deliberate economic agent” (ibid.). The reliance on metaphors of forces is found elsewhere in the language of economics, as Henderson points out, for example, in instances of watery images such as “liquidity, floating exchange rates, flotation, flows, circulation, leakages, injections, [and] trickle-down effects” (ibid., 358). McCloskey (1985, 76) adds to this list economic terms such as “elasticity,” “depression,” “equilibrium,” “competition,” and “velocity,” all of which are metaphorical in nature.

The origins of economic theory are in many ways founded in stories, fables, and metaphors. In his fascinating study of the evolution of economics as a field of inquiry, Tomas Sedlacek (2011) traces the historical succession of parables and imagery that have guided economics theory. In addition to the obvious metaphor of Adam Smith’s “invisible hand,” economic transactions have been imagined via a variety of metaphorical frames including the Epic of Gilgamesh, the theology of the Old Testament and Christianity, and Descartes’ mechanistic view of humans’ place in nature. Indeed, as Sedlacek hints at in the title of his book, economic metaphors reside even in human conceptions of good and evil. Similarly, chapters in Philip Mirowski’s edited volume *Natural Images and Economic Thought* (1994) highlight the role of metaphors of nature and how they figure in economic theory. Thus, for example, Geoffrey Hodgson (1994), Sharon Kingsland (1994), Alexander Rosenberg (1994), and Margaret Schabas (1994) highlight evolutionary metaphors in economic thought, Paul Christensen (1994) discusses metaphors of energy, Michael Hutter (1994) explains the notion of organism as a metaphor in German economic

thought, and Neil Niman (1994) explicates the role of biological analogies in the theory of the firm, among other naturalistic metaphors for economics laid out in Mirowski's tome.

Biological metaphors appear frequently throughout economic thought. Cristina Bicchieri (1988, 104) writes that "both the Physiocrats and Adam Smith described the relations among the spheres of production, circulation, and distribution in terms of functional relations among the parts of the human body. Economic society was described as a 'social body,' from which the division of labor and specialization of the parts naturally flow." Bicchieri (*ibid.*) notes that the consequences of such metaphors for economic theorizing are not insubstantial: "It is precisely this 'naturalness' of the economic sphere that directs one to find the underlying causes of such regularities, to state the principles that account for the coordination of economic activities." Just as in IR theory, terms that are used in contemporary economics theory in a literal sense have metaphorical origins, which, while perhaps concealed today, have served to shape economic theorizing. For example, Bicchieri (105) notes that the term "equilibrium" in economics currently is "obviously taken to be literal," but "two hundred years ago, was taken to be figurative; it evoked an unspecified gravitational process of prices toward their 'natural' values."

Furthermore, the ontological bases of the field of economics itself, while presumably straightforward and unambiguous, are subject to metaphorical conceptualizations. The *American Heritage Dictionary* (583) defines economics as "the social science that deals with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services and with the theory and management of economies or economic systems." While seemingly straightforward, this definition presents to economics the challenge of how to conceive of the constituent elements of the field, elements such as "distribution" and "management," that could imply any number of mechanisms by which economic transactions take place. This is part of the reason why metaphors are as integral to the study of economics as they are to the study of IR and why economists have disagreed on how to metaphorically conceive of the field. To give an example, Klammer and McCloskey point out that there have been disagreements among economists about what metaphors should direct their inquiries. Klammer and McCloskey argue that "accounting" has long served as the "master metaphor" of economics, but other economists have suggested other metaphorical ways of framing the discipline. In particular, the accounting metaphor, which conceptualizes economics in the language of households and businesses,

has contended with a metaphor (which Klamer and McCloskey argue was advanced by the economist Paul Samuelson) that “persuaded economists to think about economic processes as the outcome of maximization under constraints. In [Samuelson’s] hands the individuals became abstractions, imagined as rational calculators” (Klamer and McCloskey 1992, 151). Despite Samuelson’s move, however, Klamer and McCloskey (152) argue in favor of the “inescapability of the accounting metaphor,” which is to say that “questions about the appropriateness of a set of accounts are questions about our use of language, constrained by the universe sitting out there, to be sure, but matters of human decisions about human usefulness” (ibid., 154). What is clear is the fact that human experience serves as the basis for the metaphors people use to think abstract concepts. This is no less true for economics as it is for other academic disciplines.

Also significant, important strides in economic theorizing have had their origins in metaphorical formulations. McCloskey (1985, 77) cites the notion of “human capital,” a concept developed at the University of Chicago by Theodore Schultz: “In the phrase ‘human capital’ the field in economics treating human skills was at a stroke unified with the field treating investment in machines. Thought in both fields was improved—labor economics by recognizing that skills, for all their intangibility, arise from abstention from consumption; capital theory by recognizing that skills, for all their lack of capitalization, compete with other investments for a claim to abstention.” The metaphorical humanizing of capital and the metaphorical monetizing of labor led to a new set of assumptions about capital investment and new theoretical propositions about macroeconomic behavior. McCloskey (79) asserts that mathematical theorizing in economics is also metaphorical, giving as examples “aggregate capital,” which relies on the metaphor of material addition to make assumptions about labor, and “production function,” which employs the metaphor of fabrication to theorize about mathematical multiplication.⁵ McCloskey (82) thus cautions that the “metaphors of economics often carry in particular the authority of Science and often carry, too, its claims of ethical neutrality” (“Science” capitalized in the original). Hence, McCloskey (ibid.) stresses the importance of admitting “that metaphors in economics can contain...a political message,” and therefore the need to examine their implications.

Metaphors in economics theory range widely across rival schools of thought. Combined with stories, McCloskey (1995, 216) opines, metaphors create allegories which frame the agendas of economic research:

“Marxism combines a metaphor of class struggle with a story of the proletarian journey. Mainstream economics combines a metaphor of free exchange with a story of the bourgeois journey.” Depending on which allegory economists subscribe to, their hypotheses about relationships between capital and labor will reflect their assumptions about which “journey” dictates the exchange of economic resources.⁶ Even “basic concepts” are metaphorical in economic thought: “The rational-choice model is the master metaphor of mainstream economics, enticing one to think ‘as if’ people really made decisions in this way” (*ibid.*, 224). The economic concept of a “market,” too, is metaphorical when used to describe the economic activity that takes place in delineated or metaphorically “contained” spaces (Eubanks 2000, 54).

In short, metaphors are integral not only to economic models but also to the formulation of core economic concepts. Economics, preoccupied as it is not only with the production and consumption of goods and services but also with the nature of wealth and commercial exchange, draws on abstract concepts of the valuation of material relationships among humans. As such, economists, like all scholars engaged in theorizing about abstractions, theorize economic behavior with the aid of metaphorical concepts. While economic models often generate hypotheses and theories in the same way as models in the physical and natural sciences, just as those sciences make use of metaphors, so too economic models have metaphorical bases. Although IPE as an area of inquiry tends to involve less formal modeling than economic theory, economic metaphors inform the scope of inquiry that frames IPE.

METAPHORS IN THE STUDY OF RELATIONS AMONG INTERNATIONAL ACTORS OF UNEQUAL WEALTH

Of all the areas of IPE that rely on metaphors to convey abstract ideas, perhaps the most interesting is the study of relations among actors of unequal wealth. As is always the case in any area of IR theory (or any field of abstract study), one could approach inquiry in this area using as literal, precise, and unadorned language as possible, keeping in mind that no form of human communication is completely free from metaphors. Thus, one could study matters in this realm using precisely the explicit term with which this section is headed, namely, “relations among international actors of unequal wealth.” Of course, at the very least this term is not devoid of

linguistic metaphors by any means—“among” employs a spatial metaphor, “unequal” uses a metaphor of measure, “actors” treats states and other international entities as individuals—but it tries to spell out an empirical subject matter without making reference to conceptual metaphors that imply more judgments about the factual data in question than the relatively straightforward linguistic metaphors that “among,” “unequal,” and “actors” do.

Rather, as this section will suggest, the competing metaphors that are involved in the definition of the empirical concepts at play involve a range of metaphorical concepts, the meanings of which impart distinct judgments about the nature of relations among international actors of unequal wealth. Scholars face a number of choices when they theorize about any abstract concept. The difference between this area and other areas of IR theory is that scholars seem to have been unusually conscious about the implications of whatever metaphor they choose to conceptualize the relations at hand, and that consciousness may be driven by a desire not to portray impoverished international actors in a negative light. As we shall see, none of the choices that have been made about describing and explaining relations among international actors of unequal wealth have been entirely acceptable because of their potential to offer a negative picture of those of lesser wealth.

Ordinal Worlds Metaphor

By the ordinal worlds metaphor I mean the terms “First World” and “Third World” (and, to a much lesser extent, “Second World”) that are used to refer to wealthy and less wealthy parts of the world. Numerical metaphors (including ordinal metaphors) are not found widely in IR theory, although they are used in other areas of theory and practice such as physics and the law.⁷ The term “Third World” was coined in 1952 in an article in *L’Observateur* by Alfred Sauvy. Sauvy based this term on the French concept of the “Third Estate,” that is, the economic class comprising the “commoners.” Having classified less economically advanced countries as “third” in rank, it was only natural that a “first” and “second” had to be defined. The “First World” came to describe countries of advanced economic development, while the “Second World” took on a somewhat different meaning applied to the Soviet-dominated communist countries. In this sense, the term implies both political difference and economic characteristics.

The reason “First World” and “Third World” qualify as metaphors and not literal expressions of how wealth and economic activity are distributed throughout the world is that there is no way to “count” which parts of the world come “first,” “second,” “third,” or anywhere else in a ranking of where wealth and economic activity are concentrated. These are merely convenient expressions meant to capture the way that, on a scale of economic development, certain areas are more advanced than others (although it should be noted that the concept of economic “development” itself is fraught with its own problems, as will be explained). Obviously wealth is unevenly distributed throughout the world, and economic activity takes place to various degrees and in varying types of economic pursuits (e.g., agricultural production, industrial manufacturing, the provision of services, and financial transactions); thus, it is convenient to come up with some way of providing a scale that gauges these varying levels of wealth and economic activity. As simplifying terms go, “First World” and “Third World” appeal to people’s ability to think in terms of ordinal rankings.

However, it should not be surprising that such starkly oversimplified terms such as “First World” and “Third World” can obscure and mask the wide range and type of economic activity that results in unequal monetary distributions. As with the other metaphors that will be dealt with in this discussion (e.g., the “core” and “periphery” metaphors, “North–South” relations), “First World” and “Third World” provide spatial imagery that is at odds with the actual global distribution of wealth and economic activity. While the “First” and “Third” parts of the metaphor are ordinal in nature, the “World” terminology evokes a geographic place, that is, a self-contained universe or “world.” Yet, while wealth and economic activity can take physical forms, they are also abstractions that defy geographic boundaries. Money itself is simply an accounting principle—a store of wealth—and banking and financial transactions, increasingly electronic in nature as they are, are not constrained by physical borders. To speak of distinct geographic “worlds” that are set off from each other on the basis of the distribution of economic transactions is a gross oversimplification.

Additionally, like the “core” and “periphery” metaphors and the metaphorical images of “North” and “South” discussed further in the chapter, “First World” and “Third World” also imagine as homogenized that which actually is economically diverse. Within the seemingly coherent “First World” are communities that are deprived of economic benefits, while in the seemingly uniformly impoverished “Third World” there are areas of quite appreciable wealth. We can acknowledge, as is true for “core” and

“periphery” and “North–South” relations, that “First World” and “Third World” are ideational conceptions of concentrations of economic activity, but as metaphorical images they cannot help but lead scholars to focus their analytical and research energies on literal parts of the world that are meant to embody “First” and “Third” world characteristics. Thus, the “First World” is commonly associated with places such as Europe and North America, while the “Third World” is seen as large portions of the rest of the world. A scholar who applied for research grants to study the “Third World” by examining the economic life of impoverished immigrant communities in, say, Sweden, would likely have to offer a more convincing justification for such a grant proposal than someone studying similar “Third World” economic phenomena in Mozambique. Such is the simplifying set of expectations that the “First World” and “Third World” metaphors create.

Ordinal rankings also can have the effect of suggesting quality in addition to mere numerical classifications. Someone who comes in “first place” in a contest obviously has done better than someone who has come in third. This is not necessarily the connotation Alfred Sauvy had when he coined the term “Third World” after the fashion of the French “Third Estate.” Sauvy’s intention was to make an analogy between the economic condition of certain countries relative to the wealthier and more industrialized countries to which they were compared. Nonetheless, proponents of economic development in the “Third World” have objected that the “Third World” label stigmatizes the regions and countries in question and assigns to them a status of inferiority, or, at the very least, lagging to one extent or another “behind” other places. As Mark Berger and Heloise Weber (2014, 9) point out: “The association of development with the third world was from the start conceived through the categorization of individual nation-states (primarily post-colonial nation-states), based on how they measured up in relation to the main (often economic) indicators of development.” Berger and Weber (*ibid.*) continue, saying that “the question of development, therefore, was in the past, and still is, firmly grounded in relation to the idea of a Third World in perpetual need of catching up to the developed world.” This is the nature of metaphors; they bring meaning to a situation, but they can also problematize an issue or frame a concept in such a way that it is in need of a solution. It is for this reason that the “Third World” metaphor has been challenged in recent years in favor of ostensibly less pejorative linguistic constructions such as those focusing on “development.”

Concerns about the connotations (both overt and subtle) of the ordinal world's metaphor have been raised by scholars who specialize in this area. In the inaugural issue of the journal *Third World Quarterly*, which debuted in 1979, questions were raised in a forum about why the term "Third World" was chosen for the journal's name over other possible monikers. As Leslie Wolf-Phillips (1979, 105) points out in that forum, when Sauvy coined the term "Third World" in 1952, he did so in a Cold War context: "It may be that in the 1950s the phrase *tiers monde* was used more in the sense of 'Third Force' rather than 'Third World,' indicating 'non-alignment' rather than 'underdevelopment.'"⁸ Wolf-Phillips continues that this sense of the term has been verified by William Safire in his *The New Language of Politics* (1972) in which Safire supplements the "force" metaphor in "third force" with additional metaphorical imagery, implying a meaning of political alignment rather than economic development. Safire defines *tiers monde* as: "Third Force:...a weight added at the fulcrum of the balance of power; a group of nations, or an ideology, between the communist and the western camps" (Safire 1972, 67 quoted in Wolf-Phillips 1979, 106).⁹ Wolf-Phillips (106) observes that with the easing of some Cold War tensions in the 1960s and the emergence of newly independent countries as a result of European decolonization, *tiers monde* took on the new meaning of poorer countries relative to the industrialized world. It is interesting to note that as the shift took place from political alignment to economic status, the metaphorical imagery associated with ordinal rankings also shifted from that of "force" to that of "world," perhaps conveying that people associate politics with notions of physical capabilities as captured in the word "force," while the term "world" is associated more with notions that economic activity is physically contained within metaphorically conceived of spaces. Wolf-Phillips goes on to observe that as political alignment as expressed in the phrase "third force" was replaced by economic conditions as expressed in the phrase "Third World," this led scholars and practitioners to experiment with alternate language such as that involving the concept of "development."

Metaphors of "Development"

Metaphors in the study of relations among international actors of unequal wealth include the metaphorical concept of "development" captured linguistically with a variety of terms including "developed," "less developed," "developing," and "least developed" regions of the world, as well as the

associated concept of “underdevelopment” associated with the theory of the same name. In her historical review of terms referring to the “Third World,” Leslie Wolf-Phillips (1979, 106) avers that the “phrase ‘under-developed’ was probably first coined ‘officially’ in the 1951 UN document *Measures for the Economic Development of Under-Developed Countries*”; however, the *Oxford English Dictionary* finds a reference in a January 1949 speech by US President Harry S. Truman in which he proclaimed, “we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas” (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

As a literal expression, and in its simplest sense, the verb “develop” means “to bring from latency to or toward fulfillment” (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 511). The term can be applied to any number of processes, for example, it can refer to sexual maturity. In this sense, the term connotes a process of completion, and thus the same *American Heritage Dictionary* (ibid.) defines the adjective “developed” as “advanced in industrial capability, technological sophistication, and economic productivity.” Linguistically, then, the transition from the verb “develop” to the adjective “developed” represents a metaphorical application of a generic process to a specific quality associated with a discernible empirical realm.¹⁰ The qualities of “fulfillment” associated with the verb “develop” are metaphorically applied to the realm of industrial production where they take on the new quality of “technological sophistication and economic productivity” (ibid.).

The metaphorical translation of qualities from the realm of processes to descriptors occurs with other definitions of “developed” as well. Secondary and tertiary definitions of the verb “develop” include “to expand or enlarge;” “to aid in the growth of; strengthen;” “to improve the quality of; refine;” “to cause to become more complex or intricate; add detail and fullness; to elaborate” (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 511). As with the primary definition, these are largely generic processes. Yet when they are translated as an adjective in the term “developed” (“advanced in industrial capability, technological sophistication, and economic productivity”), a metaphorical process has taken place such that the qualities of one realm (processes of growing or coming to completion) are applied to a separate realm of industrial production, and new meanings (“technological sophistication and economic productivity”) are the result.

When it comes to researching the relationship between “developed” and “less,” “under,” and “least” developed regions, the implications of

the metaphorical complications that arise when moving from verb to adjective become apparent. Whereas fulfillment or completion as processes can be value-neutral (the development from larvae to pupae in insects, for example, represents little more than an organic transition), developing “industrial capability, technological sophistication, and economic productivity” can be seen either as desirable or less desirable qualities. The *American Heritage Dictionary* (511) defines “developing” as “having a relatively low level of industrial capability, technological sophistication, and economic productivity.” So, as an analytical concept, the metaphor of a unit being “developed” or in the condition of “underdevelopment” implies something about the desirability of certain qualities that the literal processes of the verb “develop” largely leave out.

Because the metaphor of “development” brings to mind improvements over some underdeveloped state of being, theories of development and underdevelopment typically proceed on the assumption that development is a more desirable state than underdevelopment. As has been discussed elsewhere in this book, metaphors in human language frequently have the unintended effect of creating problems that must be solved. With regards to the metaphors of “development,” clearly a state of development is seen as preferable to what is deemed metaphorically as “underdevelopment.” Indeed, some scholars and practitioners have come to see the metaphor of “under-development” as a pejorative, preferring instead “developing” or “less-developed,” which implies the possibility of room for improvement.¹¹

Using more literal language (or as literal as is permitted given the ubiquity of metaphors in human communication), one could describe the economic conditions of areas of the world with lesser amounts of economic activity and commodified wealth using any number of descriptive terms. One could say, for example, that they are based on sustainable agricultural production in which a variety of crops are grown and stored to maintain the lifestyle and culture of self-supporting groups. Obviously this sounds less like a problem for both practitioners and theoreticians alike than if the situation is described metaphorically as “underdeveloped.” Likewise, scholars and government officials probably would be far more alarmed about communities whose economic structure is based on (using literal description) unsustainable commodified manufacturing in which wealth is expressed in terms of monetary instruments that are unequally distributed throughout society than by a metaphorical description of a “developed”

economy. As obvious as this observation sounds, it is worth reminding oneself regularly that theories such as those that apply to “development” can support only those hypotheses and predictions which can be imagined by the metaphorical concepts that inform their very assumptions. This is no less true for theories of “development” than any other area of study in IR theory.

The implication that “development” follows a linear trajectory is perhaps an inevitable result of what Patrick Breslin (2004, 2) identifies as the mechanistic Newtonian metaphors that frame much of the theorizing about economic development, particularly in areas of the world where economic activity has not produced comparable forms of wealth as “more developed” parts of the world: “Given the pervasive influence of Newton’s paradigm, it was only natural that when attention turned, for a variety of reasons in the 1950s, to the problems of poverty in the poor countries, those problems, and assumptions about how to solve them, were understood within a linear framework. This way of thinking was reinforced by the success of the Marshall Plan—the first great experiment in fostering economic development.” For Breslin, the problem is obvious: Economic activity does not follow a linear logic of “development” which takes regions in poverty and inexorably transforms them into regions of wealth by way of a mechanical process of inputs and outputs, as would be suggested through Newtonian metaphors of physics. Rather, what is more useful for Breslin (4–5) are metaphors of “chaos” and “complexity,” which, while no less grounded in theories of physics, reflect the multitude of variables that can have an impact on outcomes. Breslin (6–7) writes: “To use the language of the new sciences, a development project is an intervention in nonlinear and complex adaptive systems. When it has been planned with linear methods and expectations, chaos theory suggests what can happen... What would a nonlinear development model look like? Metaphors from chaos and complexity studies suggest that it would look very much like what we call grassroots, participatory, bottom-up development.” Thus, changing the language of development from metaphors of mechanical linear progression to chaos and complexity fundamentally alters scholars’ understanding of economic activity and the policies that bring it about.

A variation on the “development” metaphor is the metaphor of countries that possess high degrees of technological achievement or economic activity as “advanced” industrial societies. “Advanced” in this context is both a spatial and a temporal metaphor. As a spatial metaphor, “advanced” implies something located further along a linear path (e.g., one can “advance” a game piece in a board game with a beginning and an end;

pieces that are more “advanced” than others are closer to the end of the game). As a temporal metaphor, “advanced” suggests a state of being that has been around long enough to acquire qualities not possessed by actors or processes that have not achieved the same state (e.g., one can speak of “advances” in understanding about scientific principles; these advances come with time since a new discovery advances a theory compared to what the theory was able to say given a limited knowledge base in the past).

As with the metaphors of “development” and its variants, the metaphor of “advanced” can lead scholars unwittingly to equate economic “advancements” with some sort of improvement. Consequently, use of the term “advanced industrial societies” can create the same sort of theoretical propositions as theories that are based on the assumptions of desirability of economic “development.” “Advancement” as a metaphor glosses over the details of economic activity that characterize metaphorical “advanced” industrial societies. Rather than being seen as spatially and temporally further along, literal descriptions of these societies would demonstrate that they simply have different characteristics than societies based on other forms of economic activity. Comparing different types of economic systems rather than communities that are more or less “advanced” is a qualitatively different theoretical endeavor than one that relies on metaphorical constructions for its starting point.

Lost in the “scaling” (“least” developed, “less” developed, “developing”) and directional (“advanced”) metaphorical conceptions of development is the *content* of development which can become obscured by efforts to think of development in metaphorical terms. As Ha-Joon Chang points out, the policy and scholarly discourse has followed two distinct strands that conceptualize development in starkly different terms. On the one hand, Chang (2013, 129) identifies the “humanistic” dimension of development that relies on measures “which try to incorporate non-income dimensions of human welfare, such as education, health and gender equality.” On the other hand, there is the “productionist” view of development, a perspective held by a wide range of scholars along the political spectrum who at one time “shared the view that development is something centred [sic] around a process of transformation in the productive sphere” (ibid., 130). For Chang acknowledging these distinctions is important because they help classify countries in terms of their relative development. Thus, for example, one could speak of Germany after World War II as lying within the developed world, because it had the ability to re-build its productive capacity despite a precipitous drop in incomes. By contrast, the

increase in income levels in today's oil-rich states does not necessarily translate into development when conceived of in terms of productive capabilities (ibid.). Moreover, this is not a purely academic debate inasmuch as policy options directed toward bringing about development depend in part on how the concept is conceived. Chang (131) argues that discourses which "have a view of 'development' that lacks a vision of transformation in productive structure...are, consequently, unable to promote development" because they rely "upon uncoordinated individual initiatives." Chang's cautionary note about classifying countries such as post-war Germany and contemporary petroleum-exporting states applies also to additional metaphors which bring about systems of classification such as the "core," "center," and "(semi)periphery."

The Metaphors of "Core," "Center," and "(Semi)Periphery"

The metaphors of "core," "center," and "(semi)periphery" apply common spatial imagery to the study of relations among international actors of unequal wealth.¹² Literally, of course, countries and regions that represent the "core" or "center" of international economic interactions are not located at some definable site that can be located geographically at a polar point surrounded by a tangible "periphery." Rather, what is meant by these terms is that economic activity and wealth are concentrated within certain communities that exert economic and political control over global economic interactions.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the first use of the term "periphery," meaning "the outlying areas of a region, most distant from or least influenced by some political, cultural, or economic centre," in Andre Gunder Frank's *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution* (1969, 227) in which Frank contrasts the "periphery" to the "metropolis," which "sucks capital out of the periphery and uses its power to maintain the economic, political, social, and cultural structure of the periphery." Frank's "metropolis," a term invoking urban locations, was replaced by Immanuel Wallerstein with "core," for example, in Part I of Wallerstein's *The Capitalist World Economy* (1979), which focuses on "the inequalities of core and periphery," while other authors substitute "center" for "core" (e.g., Cardoso and Faletto 1979).

The obvious problem of the "core" and "periphery" metaphors (and their variations) is that clearly the world's geography does not indicate that there is any definable "center" of the world (leaving aside, of course,

the earth's *geological* center within the planet's core). Land, sea, and the distribution of human populations simply do not form in such a way that economic and political communities form in concentric circles. Another issue involved with the imagery of these spatial concepts is the fact that those individuals who possess concentrations of wealth typically associated with the "core" or the "center" are in fact spread out widely throughout the world. Major urban areas associated with high levels of economic activity and wealth accumulation, for example, also typically harbor pockets of economic need. Likewise, countries that commonly are associated with the "periphery" can be home to economic sectors that are highly lucrative to those engaged in them. The so-called *semiperiphery* presents the same problems of spatialization, as it is difficult to locate portions of the world that are part- or half-way between the center and the periphery.¹³

Obviously scholars who speak of "core," "periphery," and their variations are not so naive as to think that these terms refer to geographic locations. These are clearly metaphorical images meant to connote concentrations of wealth, not clearly identifiable physical locations. These scholars would be the first to point out, for instance, that poor people in the richest and poorest countries of the world represent the global "periphery" despite being scattered throughout the world (just as "core" economic activity takes place in Paris and Dakar alike). So the purpose of this discussion is not to "disprove" the core-periphery thesis. Rather, the point is to recall that, like all metaphors, the metaphors of "core," "periphery," and their variations bring to mind images that can invite misleading conclusions. Despite the fact that world systems theorists are the first to point out that "core" and "periphery" refer to instances of economic activity, the shorthand of the spatial images suggests avenues for research, which involve empirical evidence of a geographically divided economic and political universe. Thus, it is not surprising that when researchers set out to study the "core" they focus on entire parts of the world (e.g., Europe, North America, Japan) that certainly do contain high concentrations of wealth but also pockets of poverty. Likewise, when scholars research the "periphery" they tend to focus on parts of the world (e.g., Africa, Latin America, large portions of Asia) that contain communities of little wealth but also centers of intense economic activity. Thus, "core" and "periphery" *do* tend to be associated with distinct geographic regions despite the fact that they are meant only to refer to institutions and people involved in economic activity and the concentration of wealth. In a world in which

increasing number of economic transactions are conducted electronically, the geographic implications of the “core” and “periphery” metaphors are of decreasing relevance.

Additionally, as Paul Chilton (1996, 62) observes, the “core” or “center” and “periphery” metaphors and their variations share some common traits with the “container” metaphor and its variants that are typically associated with states. The “container” metaphor envisions states as hard-shelled entities that are set off from one another. If there are any interactions among container-like states, they must take place across definable boundaries. “Core” and “periphery” also bring to mind the strict spatial imagery associated with the “container” metaphor. The “core” or “center” is what is on the inside of the global distribution of wealth while the “periphery” lies at the outer reaches. There is a distinct sense of division between the two. As is true for all metaphors, however, there can be multiple interpretations. Thus, while Chilton sees synergies between the “core,” “periphery,” and “container” metaphors that reinforce the fiction of state sovereignty, Ian Clark (1989, 44) argues that, in conceptualizations of hierarchy in IR, “outside a statist perspective, [hierarchy] may be analysed in terms of centres or cores, semi-peripheries, and peripheries.” Thus, for Chilton the core–periphery metaphor is *evidence* of statist thinking, while for Clark this metaphor is an *alternative* to the statist point of view. These different types of analytical conclusions highlight the imprecision of metaphors in the development of useful theories.

Metaphors of “North” and “South”

Interactions among international actors of unequal wealth also have been deemed metaphorically as “North–South” relations. This term is meant to refer to the fact that the majority of economic activity and wealth is located above the equator, while lesser amounts of economic resources are allocated to regions further south.¹⁴ In addition, the rhetorical division of the world into one of a “North–South” divide was in some respects a purposeful endeavor by leaders in the “South” to reorient the “East–West” conflict of the Cold War in order to rectify the economic exploitation and political marginalization of former European colonial states (see Berger 2004). However, the expression also carries a metaphorical connotation since scholars who use this term explicitly assert that they mean to convey more than a literal geographic division of economic activity. Through this metaphor, disparities in the global distribution of wealth are reduced to

and imagined as a binary opposition between two distinct geographic poles.

As with the “core” and “periphery” metaphors and their variations, the “North–South” metaphorical imagery oversimplifies the complexity of the global distribution of wealth. Obviously, economic activity is unevenly located around the world, and even within regions of relative economic wealth or poverty there are great variations within close proximity to each other. The terms “North” and “South” (curiously capitalized inasmuch as map directions typically are denoted in lowercase letters) suggest the same sort of compartmentalized images that the “core” and “periphery” metaphors imply in which there is little fluidity between two spatially separated realms. Just as north and south are fixed directions on a map, the metaphors of “North” and “South” in IR theory suggest a permanent state of economic affairs. Furthermore, as polar directions, “North” and “South” imply a dyadic relationship quite possibly involving an oppositional component. The imagery also suggests a one-dimensional dynamic in that the relationship between “North” and “South” is defined on a linear axis.

Metaphor of “Dependency”

The *American Heritage Dictionary* (501) defines “dependent” as “contingent on another; subordinate; relying on or requiring the aid of another for support: *dependent children.*” The same dictionary (ibid.) defines “dependence” as “the state of being dependent, as for support; subordination to someone or something needed or greatly desired; trust; reliance,” and “dependency” as “dependence; something dependent or subordinate.” Like all metaphors, the metaphor of dependency (as found most prominently in the theory of the same name) provides images with which to imagine a particular aspect of IPE. Generally speaking, and especially as depicted by Dependency Theory, the condition of dependency in international politics and economics is thought of as an exploitative relationship between international actors of unequal wealth.¹⁵ If the terms “dependent,” “dependence,” and “dependency” were used in their literal sense alongside additional descriptive terminology, the connotation of exploitation would not necessarily be implied. As these definitions indicate, conditions of dependence can be desirable because of the supportive qualities they offer. A dependent child, for example, is supported and sustained financially by his or her parents or guardians in what many, if not most, people would describe as a relationship of nurturing and care. In its most basic sense, something that is dependent

on another is merely contingent on a certain set of circumstances. Therefore, in the generic sense, to be dependent is simply to occupy a position along a chain of cause and effect, as in a “dependent variable.” A “dependent variable” in a causal chain of events is not being “exploited” by the independent or intervening variables that precede it.

The negative connotations associated with dependency in the study of IPE demonstrate, in part, one of the perils of metaphors in IR theory, namely, metaphors that are broad and with the potential for suggesting multiple meanings can be interpreted in any number of ways, some of which reflect the personal perceptions of scholars themselves. Many of the broadest metaphors in IR indicate this phenomenon. For example, the metaphor of “system” is used throughout IR theory and differs in meaning from paradigm to paradigm. Because a “system” can mean many things, its suggestiveness as a metaphor is subject to multiple interpretations. The same is true with the metaphor of “dependence,” the literal meaning of which has a variety of definitions. Since the term can mean a range of things literally, it is not surprising that its meaning as a metaphor is multi-form. Obviously not all scholars are predisposed to see the relationship between an international actor of limited wealth and an actor of greater wealth as exploitative in nature, but since many do, the “dependence” metaphor gives them an opportunity to theorize this exploitation in a systematic fashion.

As typically constructed, the dependency metaphor depicts a situation in which international actors of lesser wealth are trapped in a permanently subordinate position because their choices are contingent on the economic advantages that international actors of greater wealth have over them. Cardoso and Faletto (1979, 22), for example, depict dependence, in part, as a situation in which local classes or groups in Latin America are involved in “enforcing foreign economic and political interests.” In this view, scholars are encouraged to quantify the extent of those economic advantages as opposed to other ways of measuring the relationship between the two sets of actors involved. For example, if a metaphorical picture of dependence emerged that highlighted the trust or reliance elements of dependence contained in the dictionary definition of this term, scholars might put more effort into measuring confidence-building institutions that make economic growth contingent on growing prosperity in both sets of partners. This is not necessarily to say that the predictions of Dependency Theory are wrong, but rather that with different metaphorical sense attached to them, they would be based on analysis that triangulates

a range of ways in which relations between international actors of unequal wealth are constituted and constructed. This requires examining the multiple ways that a broad metaphor such as dependence can be interpreted.

“Global Inequality”

Finally, we come to the concept of “global inequality,” which, when compared to other frames discussed earlier, sounds less like a metaphor and more like a literal expression to describe what scholars envision when they use those terms. Etymologically speaking, however, even the literal-sounding “global inequality” is a figurative expression in terms of what it imagines. In particular, the term “inequality” is a metaphorical way of expressing measurement for something that is hard to measure. As counterintuitive as it may seem, equality (or inequality) of wealth is subjective.¹⁶ Obviously, we can discern *some* absolute measures of wealth such as the gross economic output of a country, per capita income, and distribution of wealth throughout society. But beyond that, how people measure their economic well-being, and how they judge whether or not they have achieved a certain standard of living, depends on custom, culture, convention, and personal taste.¹⁷

Studies of global inequality often are built on the same assumption that metaphorically frames investigations into “North–South,” “core–periphery,” and “First World–Third World” relations, namely, the image of undifferentiated regions possessing wealth that can be measured in an absolute sense, irrespective of how that wealth is defined or locally distributed. The metaphor of “inequality” presumes an ability to quantify amounts in ways that do not differentiate among different ways of measuring prosperity. A wealthy person in the year 1000 would be considered by the standards of the year 2000 to suffer a meager existence, such an existence lacking as it does the modern “luxuries” of electricity, indoor plumbing, and mechanized transportation, not to mention modern medicine and means for creating a reliably plentiful food supply. By the same token, in the contemporary world, conceptions of global “inequality” make little accommodation for differing standards of living that depend on custom, culture, and choice, not to mention those imposed by a lack of options in the international economy. As Berger and Weber (2014, 11) observe, “the Third World and its ascribed condition, ‘underdevelopment,’ is separated out from any account of the wider (global) power relations (of the colonial and Cold War era) from which it originated.”

Furthermore, there is a cognitive bias built into notions of equality as applied to the social world. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the meaning of the word “equal,” as borrowed into English from the Latin root *equā-lis*, connotes magnitudes and numbers that are “identical in amount; neither less nor greater than the object of comparison” and things that have “the same measure; identical in magnitude, number, value, intensity, etc.” The *OED* goes on to explain that in this sense, the term “equal” often is expressed “with latent notion of ‘at least equal’; hence not equal to means usually ‘less than’, ‘inferior to’.” Herein lies the metaphorical notion of measure that frames the study of global “inequality.” In matters of the distribution of wealth among all individual and corporate actors on Earth (including states, other political divisions, and private organizations), equality is an impossibility and thus what frames the issue for scholars is a focus on the metaphorically imagined condition of those who have “less.”

After all, in mathematics, in the expression $2 + 2 = 4$, what is on each side of the equals sign may represent an *equal* amount, but it is not the *same*. Two plus two may *equal* four, but two plus two is not the *same* as four. Two plus two on the one hand and four on the other are separate and distinct numerical quantities. On one side are two sets of two; on the other is a single set of four. Cumulatively four equals the sum of two and two, but one set of four is not the same collection of items as two sets of two. For mathematicians this is not a “problem” as much as it is simply the solution to an arithmetic question. There is no expectation that what is equal is necessarily the same, let alone there be anything problematic about two quantities that are *unequal* in their amount.

For scholars of global “inequality,” however, the impossibility of distributing wealth “equally” around the world is complicated by the “problem” that results from imagining that there can be equality, and the reality that even if such equality could be achieved it would still appear “unequal” since it is unrealistic to expect that equality of wealth would be experienced the *same* on a global scale. “Inequality” thus becomes less a literal substitute for metaphors such as “North” and “South” and more a metaphor itself for the lack of sameness in how individuals experience wealth. However, as the math analogy earlier demonstrates, one does not necessarily expect a sameness where there is equality. For example, at one time, the United States and the European Union represented roughly equal amounts of wealth. However, how that translated into economic opportunity was not the same. The United States, comprised as it is of a single

economy, provides greater opportunity for the free movement of economic assets, including human labor. Although the European Union (EU) has made strides toward complete economic and monetary union, it still comprises separate economies that complicate the free movement of capital and labor. Thus, *equality* of wealth between the United States and the EU does not necessarily mean that economic circumstances are the *same*. “Inequality” is an invented “problem” just as “equality” does not necessarily provide a “solution.”

To this, scholars of IR would ask, of course, what is the purpose of studying something unless it is a “problem?” This is precisely the point. Academics who study metaphors have long noted that one of the functions of metaphors is to create in the minds of people “problems” that need to be “solved.”¹⁸ It is therefore not surprising that in many introductory IR textbooks, the topic under discussion here is presented as the “problem of global inequality.”¹⁹ As the etymology of the word “equal” suggests, “inequality” is more than merely a numerical situation of two or more sums not of the same value, but a condition in which one thing is *less* than another.

However, the “problem” for most scholars of IR actually is not “inequality” but economic deprivation, or better yet, poverty, and, as Paul D’Anieri (2011, 305) points out, “poverty” and “inequality” are not the same thing: “In contrast to ‘poverty,’ ‘inequality’ is inherently comparative; in measuring inequality, the question becomes, ‘How much wealth or income does one person have *compared to someone else*?’ It is very possible that a person’s income is growing, but more slowly than that of others. As a result, income is *increasing* but so is *inequality*. Does this mean *poverty* is increasing or decreasing?” (emphasis added). D’Anieri’s observations and rhetorical question are useful because they highlight the fact that while poverty may be measured in an absolute sense, inequality is inherently relative. Whether or not poverty or inequality is a “problem” depends not only on one’s perspective relative to one’s own situation over time and to other individuals’ condition at present but also on the perspective of observers who make their own determinations about what is a “problem.” The “problem” of poverty can be solved by providing individuals who lack resources with additional resources that bring them out of poverty, while the “problem” of inequality can only be solved *not only* by eliminating poverty but *also* by providing individuals with the same amount of resources, providing they value them in the same way.

Used as a metaphor for conceptualizing any number of qualities of the human condition, “inequality” implies an undesirable situation that requires a solution which is unique from a separate undesirable situation—“poverty”—which can be solved in distinct ways. There are no intrinsically better ways for solving inequality versus poverty since they represent analytically distinct empirical questions. However, the metaphor of “inequality” privileges one way of thinking about a problem and thereby a set of solutions that emanate from it. The metaphor of “inequality” presumes what is missing from global economic interactions is an outcome of sameness as opposed to an outcome of improved economic conditions over time for any one individual, which is suggested by the separate concept of “poverty.” Thus, not even the seemingly literal term “global inequality” resolves the dilemma of conceptualizing specific aspects of IPE that are complicated by the other metaphors (e.g., “Third World,” global “south,” “periphery”), which scholars employ in this area of investigation.

Additional Thoughts About Relations Among International Actors of Unequal Wealth

In addition to these common metaphors, there have been other metaphorical images that have been attached to countries in terms of their economic conditions relative to wealthier states. Although typically associated with political neutrality *vis-à-vis* the Western and Eastern blocs during the Cold War, the term “non-aligned” also can refer to countries that often are included among states possessing lesser amounts of economic wealth. The term “non-aligned,” of course, is associated with the “non-aligned movement,” that is, the “international anti-colonialist movement founded in Belgrade in 1961 to promote the interests of neutral (especially Third World) countries not aligned with the superpowers of East or West” (*Oxford English Dictionary*).²⁰ As is true for many metaphors in IR theory, “alignment” is a spatial metaphor inasmuch as the process of “aligning” is to “to range, place, or lay in a line” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Metaphorically, in politics, “alignment” is to “bring into line with a particular tradition, policy, group, or power” (*ibid.*). In a metaphorical sense, “non-aligned” countries occupy a physical space that is not associated with states which possess economic wealth or power. Non-alignment implies a sense of being set apart, either by choice or by circumstances, from countries that, by virtue of wealth and ideology, have gotten into line with each other or, to use yet another metaphor, have formed a “bloc.”²¹

Another term that has been advanced to describe countries of lesser economic resources is “threshold” states or countries. In particular, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (a United States government corporation) have instituted the Threshold Program designed to provide economic assistance to poorer countries around the world. As the word implies, “threshold” countries are those that, metaphorically speaking, are on the verge of making reforms which would create greater levels of economic prosperity. Originating in Old English meaning “the sill of a doorway” (and hence metaphorical in its origins), a threshold in common parlance is “the beginning of a state or action, outset, opening” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). As applied to countries deemed worthy of economic assistance, the metaphor of “threshold” implies that, with some help and assistance, threshold countries, which are on the verge of improvement, could commence on such a path. In light of its association with aid-granting agencies, the metaphorical connotations of “threshold” countries seem particularly appropriate. It is somewhat surprising in this context that this linguistic metaphor has not caught on with scholars as a conceptual category inasmuch as referring to countries on the “threshold” implies the possibility for economic improvement more so than static metaphors such as “periphery” or “dependent” states.

What the myriad of metaphors, either as theoretical concepts or simply linguistic expressions referring to policy initiatives, indicates is that there is no unambiguous way to think about relations among international actors of unequal wealth. The futility of prevailing metaphors of global inequality is not lost on journalist Dayo Olopade. Citing Bill and Melinda Gates in the 2014 annual Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation letter, Olopade refers to the metaphor of “development” as an example of a concept no longer useful for describing global economic conditions.²² Olopade (2014b, SR4) writes about just how misleading metaphorical terms describing world economics can be:

Only when employing a crude “development” binary could anyone lump Mozambique and Mexico together. It’s tough to pick a satisfying replacement. Talk of first, second and third worlds is passé, and it’s hard to bear the Dickensian awkwardness of “industrialized nations.” Forget, too, the more recent jargon about the “global south” and “global north.” It makes little sense to counterpose poor countries with “the West” when many of the biggest economic success stories in the past few decades have come from the East. All of these antiquated terms imply that any given country is “developing” toward something, and that there is only one way to get there.

Olopade's alternative, which she elaborates on in her 2014 book, is to refer to economies as either "fat" or "lean." In countries with "fat" economies, that is, countries with large amounts of accumulated wealth, "plenty is normal. Abundance is the average... Problem solving is well beyond the basics of sanitation, vaccination, and electrification" (Olopade 2014a, 12). Yet "fat" economies are plagued with the problems of being "fat," such as an inclination toward financial instability (as illustrated by the financial collapse of 2008), hyper consumption, and a dependence on imported sources of energy (*ibid.*).

By contrast, "lean" economies—those in places such as sub-Saharan Africa—grapple with problems of disease, unemployment, lack of adequate medical resources, and limited access to reliable sources of energy (*ibid.*). Yet, "these difficulties obscure more than a few silver linings. Individual Africans waste less food, owe less money, and maintain a regional carbon footprint that is the lowest in the world" (*ibid.*, 13). Thus, for Olopade, the terms "fat" and "lean" are far more descriptive in highlighting the qualitative differences in economic practices and conditions around the world than previous metaphors that seek to quantify a certain economic standard to which countries strive. Such a standard fails, Olopade argues, to acknowledge the different ways in which people live.

In fact, most of the metaphors that have been discussed have a sort of finality to them that does not capture the processes of change which are inherent in IPE. One of the natural qualities of metaphors is that they provide terms of convenience. Yet convenience can have a price, in this case to fix a meaning in place so that it can be referred to without the necessity of repetition. Terms such as "Third World," "periphery," and "South" may identify a set of economic conditions at a particular time, but they are also terms of classification which, like other terms of classification—for example, those found in biology to classify the various kingdoms, phyla, genera, and species—group together a class of items, objects, or individuals, which are then hard to conceive of outside of those groupings. This obviously can be problematic in the realm of global economics in which the economic conditions of regions, countries, and localities are constantly changing relative to their prior conditions and to the conditions of others. Metaphorical concepts, in their analytical convenience, are resistant to the changing conditions of that to which they refer.

More to the point, the metaphors of global inequality—and more seriously, *debates* over the best way to theorize global inequality—obscure the

absence of change that characterizes entrenched poverty in certain and large parts of the world. Mark Berger and Heloise Weber (2014, 2) perhaps say it best: “The framing of the problem of development is not resolved by replacing the term Third World (or the wider imaginary of Three Worlds distinguished by ‘stages of development’) by the use of related terms such as ‘less developed countries’ (LDCs), ‘developing countries,’ or even ‘the Global South.’” Rather, Berger and Weber (*ibid.*) contend that what stymies both thinking about economic growth and strategies for bringing it about is acceptance of “the nation-state as the primary unit of development.” As long as the conditions of economic inequality are left unchallenged (both in theory and in practice), changing what they are called is quibbling around the edges.

On the other hand, Vicky Randall (2004, 43) warns us that “we should not be too preoccupied with semantics. Obviously the specific phrase ‘Third World’ is largely anachronistic in the wake of the collapse of what, in the original schema, was held to be the Second World, that is the Soviet Union and its satellites, although a case could possibly be made for continuing to distinguish for the moment between the (former) Second and First Worlds because of the enduring consequences of their very different histories.”²³ On the other hand, these terms persist and, as metaphors, evoke the same sorts of responses and generate the same sorts of research agendas when they are anachronistic as when they possessed some geopolitical relevance. In fact, as Randall (*ibid.*) concedes, a “Third World-type category...draws attention to what continues to be a major axis of economic and political inequality” and “Third Worldist ‘discourse’ potentially provides a powerful rhetoric and rallying-point.”²⁴ So the metaphorical qualities of terms such as “Third World” continue to provide both analytical and political functions. Ironically, one of the terms to describe changing economic conditions around the world in recent years is also one of the more literally descriptive, namely, the concept of “Newly Industrialized Countries.” This term both describes the economic condition of the countries in question in a fairly straightforward fashion and serves the purpose of a metaphor in its abbreviated state—NICs—by providing a succinct reference point that economizes on language by substituting literal language with an evocative term. To a certain extent, then, debates over the metaphors of the international distribution of economic resources and political influence can be circumvented with more literal terminology designed to be analytically useful in the study of “global inequality.”

FOREIGN “AID”

At first glance, foreign aid is a seemingly straightforward concept. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “aid” in the relevant context as “material help given to a country or region by another country or an international agency; esp. economic assistance to a poor or underdeveloped country, or supplies of food and medicine given to alleviate the effects of a natural disaster, war, etc.” This would appear to be a literal definition of aid, one which describes an objective set of self-evident facts. However, as with many conceptual metaphors, understanding of an issue reflects transferred meaning from a related realm. In this instance, the etymology of the term “aid” reveals its metaphorical underpinnings. Specifically, “aid” has its origins in the Latin *adiuvāre*, meaning “to help” or “assist.” Drawing on the human experience of providing help or assistance, the concept of aid in political relationships conveys the intent of providing succor and relief.

As it shapes foreign policy in practice, this conceptualization of aid both guides and constrains the policies that governments, international organizations and agencies, and non-governmental organizations conceive of when they contemplate means for bringing about productive economic activity and increasing levels of prosperity in “aid”-receiving regions of the world. The historical origins of the contemporary concept of foreign aid are worth considering. The *OED* records the first English use of the term “aid” in the aforementioned meaning of “material help given to a country or region” in a 1940 article in *The Economist* in the context of United States economic assistance to Great Britain. In the circumstances involving the transfer of economic assets from the United States to Great Britain during World War II, “aid” is meant precisely as it would seem, that is, temporary help to assist a government in need.

Once framed as help, foreign aid has been institutionalized as a wide-ranging set of policies aimed at less economically developed parts of the world. Drawing on the World War II examples of US economic transfers to Great Britain, policymakers and scholars alike had the expectation that aid more broadly provided to poor regions of the world in the post-war period would yield similar beneficial effects. Yet often policymakers and scholars wonder why foreign aid so often does not work in the ways it is imagined. There are any number of theories as to what why foreign aid does not bring about the desired outcomes. Among the factors complicating foreign aid that have been hypothesized are government corruption,

inefficiency in aid provision, economic and political conditions attached to aid, endemic poverty, globalization, structural inequalities in global capitalism, and the lending practices of international organizations.²⁵ Yet, regardless of competing theories for why foreign aid often does not currently work as intended, what remains largely unexamined is the notion of “aid” itself.

That is to say, despite debates over the ultimate causes of economic deprivation in many parts of the world, what is often overlooked is that the very conceptualization of a range of economic transfer policies as foreign “aid” limits how problems of economic deprivation can be addressed. Notably, the conceptual metaphor of foreign “aid” prioritizes third-party help over other economic and political approaches to poverty and inequality. This political conceptualization of economic provision has inadvertently framed subsequent efforts by governments, international agencies, and non-governmental organizations such that the range of options to promote economic growth is limited by the very conceptualization of the problem that needs to be solved. Quite simply, it is thought that the “problem” of regions experiencing lack of economic prosperity can be “solved” not by attending to systemic economic conditions, but by the provision of outside “help” and “assistance” in the form of metaphorical “foreign aid.” Strategies that might emphasize indigenous or autonomous economic practices are marginalized by the emphasis on help and assistance which are the consequences of thinking about the issue metaphorically in terms of aid.²⁶

The conceptualization of economic conditions in terms of the need for “foreign aid” has had long-term consequences for a large number of people around the world. It is perhaps logical that humans’ desire to see others enjoy increased prosperity should be expressed in terms of the experience of providing help. As cognitive linguistics has shown, conceptual metaphors are cognitive manifestations of physical and sensory experiences. Research in cognitive linguistics demonstrates that human thinking is a process whereby physical experiences shape the way humans comprehend the world. The most basic sensory perceptions gathered through sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch give meaning to abstract ideas by transferring meaning from one domain to another. In this instance, the experience of providing help and assistance gives meaning to the abstraction of economic need. Policymakers conceptualize monetary transfers as foreign “aid” because they want to help. However, and ironically, this desire to help nonetheless can constrain policy in potentially unhelpful ways.

“GLOBALIZATION” IN METAPHORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives as the first written reference to the term “globalization” comments by W. Boyd and M. M. Mackenzie in the 1930 book *Towards a New Education*, which collected discussions of curricular matters at the Fifth World Conference of the New Education Fellowship held at Elsinore, Denmark.²⁷ The concept of “globalization” substitutes for a literal description of what the term is meant to describe, namely, the economic, political, and cultural effects of increasing interactions among individuals, institutions, and entities brought about by advancements in transportation, communication, and commerce, no matter where these individuals, institutions, and entities physically reside.²⁸ Naturally it is not efficient to utter or write literal expressions such as this one in oral communication or prose, and thus the metaphor of “globalization” has caught on as a convenient way to imagine the complex processes it represents. Moreover, as Manfred Steger (2009, x) observes, “globalization contains important *ideological* aspects in the form of politically charged narratives that put before the public a particular agenda of topics for discussion, questions to ask, and claims to make. The existence of these narratives shows that globalization is not merely an objective process, but also a plethora of metaphors and stories that define, describe, that analyse that very process” (emphasis in the original).²⁹ Timothy Luke (2004) thus considers “globalization” one of the major “megametaphors” of the post-Cold War age, that is, a rhetorical concept representing the opinions of world elite that politics, economics, and social relations have been redefined in terms of “omnipolitan” international order. For Luke, “globalization” is not a self-evident fact, but a metaphorical interpretation of elite “doxosophers” who have sought to conceptualize the post-Cold War world in ways that accord with commercialized economic exchange.

The visual image created by the metaphor of “globalization” is, not surprisingly, that of processes spreading around the “globe.” Like many metaphors in IR theory, it is a spatial image that invites observers to imagine the processes of globalization taking place within the confines of a discernable place. In fact, as Jonathan Joseph (2012, 82) observes, the discourse of globalization prioritizes and privileges conceptions of space and time over the social aspect of world affairs.³⁰ Wielding a Foucauldian perspective, Joseph (87) argues that the discursive aspects of globalization establish the “objects” and “boundaries” of a set of social and political practices.

Taking a cue from Foucauldian analysis we could argue that the metaphorical element of globalization theory involves a set of processes, hence “globalization,” and not some variant thereof such as “globalism,” which has more of a sense of finality to it. One is tempted to think of the logo for the United States paint manufacturer Sherwin-Williams—an upturned paint can situated over the planet with paint pouring out of the can and flowing over the contours of the globe with the slogan “Cover the Earth.” “Globalization” evokes images of a spreading, moving, and extending process that is diffused around the whole world. These images are consistent with the metaphor of “liquid” (as opposed to “solid”) political authority, which several scholars (Black 2017; Krisch 2017; MacDonald and MacDonald 2017; Sending 2017; Zürn 2017) have suggested as a way to conceptualize the dispersed nature of politics evident in emerging forms of global governance. The direction from which the spread of globalization flows, however, is contested. Richard Falk (1999) hypothesizes metaphorical directionalities of globalization, a “globalization from above” which emanates from the forces of market-based and statist corporate capitalism, and a “globalization from below” which has its origins in democratic movements pressing for global solutions to issues of social justice. The globe itself may be a sphere, but metaphorically globalizing influences can be located spatially “above” in the form of political authority tied to global capitalism or “below” in the form of the mass base of humanity.³¹

Given the images suggested by the globalization metaphor, much of the theorizing about globalization focuses on the spatial scope of its processes, namely, its reach throughout all areas of the world.³² Globalization theory typically emphasizes economic, political, and cultural processes that have the potential, through their ability to exploit modern information technologies, electronic monetary transfers, transportation systems, and so forth, to be implemented virtually anywhere in the world. The image of the globe inherent in the globalization metaphor directs the gaze of observers to the total worldwide experiences that can be manifest through these means. Conversely, the metaphor of globalization also suggests a coming together on a large scale, a global replication of local processes. However, that image is not as simple as it seems. As Jan Blommaert (2010, 1) is quick to point out, the metaphor of globalization as small-scale interactions is misleading: “Sociolinguistically, the world has not become a village. The well-matured metaphor of globalization does not work...The world has not become a village, but rather a tremendously

complex web of villages, towns, neighbourhoods, settlements connected by material and symbolic ties in often unpredictable ways.” Even Blommaert’s alternative metaphor of a “web” is problematic in that it implies a specific way of thinking about the connections between locations that collectively comprise what is known as “globalization,” that is, they are connections of bidirectional links between spatially separated nodes of activity. Thus, Blommaert (1–2) says what is “needed is a new vocabulary to describe events, phenomena and processes, new metaphors for representing them, new arguments to explain them—those elements of scientific imagination we call theory.”³³

In fact, the notion of globalization as a contemporary phenomenon, one that challenges state-centric conceptions of IR, is not at all new. As Jens Bartelson (2010, 231) points out, “the construction of a global sociopolitical space antedated the emergence of both sovereign states and the international system.”³⁴ Historically, “the prior existence of such a global political space enabled the emergence of the international system of states, insofar as the creation of early-modern states took place by means of conceptual resources that had been distilled from Renaissance conceptions of single planetary space as the stage on which human affairs unfold” (ibid., 231–232). Likewise, Jordan Branch (2011, 2) observes that the advent of modern cartography contributed to changes in how Europeans viewed political authority: “In particular, the treatment of political authority exclusively in terms of homogeneous territorial areas separated by discrete boundary lines, which is unique to the modern state system, resulted from the development, distribution, and use of modern mapping.”³⁵ In many ways, this was a metaphorical mapping of the way in which Renaissance actors experienced the world. Today, as humans’ experience with a spherical earth reflects the ability to observe the planet in new ways (e.g., in the air and from space), the globe metaphor is conceptualized differently and thus is played out in IR in ways that are described as processes of “globalization.” Branch (29) sums this notion up: “Today’s new digital cartographies present at least the possibility of depicting more complex nonstate forms of political authority. This offers a new focus for the study of globalization, the information technology (IT) revolution, and possible contemporary changes in political territoriality.” In particular, as Bartelson (2010, 232) observes, the result is that “the relocation of authority to territorialized states [that occurred in Renaissance times] is in the process of being reversed, in favor of global governance institutions.”

While globalization is often conceived of as a new set of processes that challenge state-centric notions of the territorialized state, some conceptualizations of globalization, even what Aqueil Ahmad calls “new age” globalization, rely on metaphorical images steeped in traditional theories of IR. Thus, for example, the same Ahmad (2013, 1) who argues for a new way to think about globalization draws on the metaphors of “structure” commonly found in orthodox IR theory: “The term global society refers to the *architecture* of this world order, while globalization is treated as its process dimension. Global or ‘globalized’ *structures* refer to the institutions, agencies, and organizations whose missions, mandates, networks, and even the workforce, with its values and attitudes, are essentially global rather than local in nature” (emphasis added). Ahmad’s emphasis on a metaphorical architecture of globalized structures sustains a view of IR in which even “new age” globalization emphasizes global interactions in terms of the physical organization of politics on a grand scale.

The irony of the metaphorical imagery of globalization is that this worldwide gaze directs the attention of scholars in one direction—the entire world—while leading this attention away from other areas in which the effects of “globalization” are felt. Globalization involves economic, political, and cultural processes of increasing interactions among individuals, institutions, and entities brought about by advancements in transportation, communication, and commerce, no matter where these individuals, institutions, and entities physically reside. Yet many of the effects of these processes of globalization actually are local, not “global” in nature. It is interesting to note that a literal description of what is metaphorically referred to as “globalization” more readily directs one’s attention to the immediate effects of said “globalization” than the “global” metaphor does. Much like the aforementioned Sherwin-Williams company logo, the metaphor of globalization evokes images of large systemic processes. The more detailed, literal description of “globalization” emphasizes the means, content, and targets of those processes that may have a global reach but the effects of which are ultimately more localized in their impact.

Using literal language to emphasize the local effects of what is referred to metaphorically as “globalization” is an endeavor similar to the studies Cynthia Enloe carries out in her metaphorical-sounding but rather literal text *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* (1989). In that book (subtitled *Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*) the “bananas,” “beaches,” and “bases” in question are not metaphors for some aspect of IR, but rather

literal expressions of the means, mechanisms, and locations in which international politics is played out. Enloe focuses on the everyday acts of everyday people and encourages scholars to consider that these acts and individuals are or should be the main focus of study in IR. Enloe's project is one of re-directing the attention of scholars away from what is in many ways the superficial level of governments and international institutions and onto the experiences of the individual people whose actions shape what is referred to as international politics as well as the individuals who experience those effects. In both cases, those people include everyone who lives in the world. Thus, Enloe's emphasis on the local is, in many ways, a more authentic study of "globalization" than what typically comprises scholarship in the field.

One of the impetuses for the search for metaphors that capture the dynamics of globalization is the notion that state sovereignty traditionally conceived of in terms of bordered territoriality no longer captures the extent, scope, and reach of political authority. As Stephen Krasner (1999, 2001) reminds us, sovereignty is an ideal type that takes on several forms, which are overlapping and at no time are exercised fully or exclusively.³⁶ More dramatically, L. H. M. Ling (2014, 20) suggests thinking about IR using a "worldist" perspective informed by Daoist insights in which the "Westphalian World-*yang*" is juxtaposed alongside a "Multiple Worlds-*yin*" so that states and non-state actors are considered equally in the study of global affairs.

Globalization metaphors are premised on the hunch that even the idea of imperfect sovereignty is no longer useful for theorizing political authority that exists beyond the reach of territorially defined state sovereignty. The *American Heritage Dictionary* (219) defines "border" as "a part that forms the outer edge of something...The line or frontier area separating political divisions or geographic regions; a boundary." In an age of globalization, political relationships defy notions of political authority that are conceived of as stopping at a clearly demarcated "outer edge." Political authority is now exercised in multiple ways that, in many cases, ignore territorial borders. People and corporate actors are subject to political rules applied in a variety of jurisdictions. Electronic communication, although perhaps the most obvious mechanism for subjecting people to political rules across geographic space, is supplemented by the choices individuals make about which rules to obey. Moving beyond territoriality is an IR theory that sees the possibility of political communities based on voluntary association and affinity grouping as a way to organize political authority.

This being said, as K. M. Fierke (2008, 226) observes, “many of the metaphors [of globalization] reveal the tension between the ‘as if’ of globalization and practices within a world of sovereign nation states. One such tension is between a social desire to act for a global good and the continuing pull of power politics between states.” Fierke (227) suggests that the metaphors of globalization construct a world of multiple potential worlds. Globalization thus is an incomplete process, and therefore many of the metaphors of globalization skirt the line between reification between what they reflect and what they re-imagine (Pouliot 2008, 35).³⁷ Like many other metaphors in IR theory, the metaphors of globalization are borrowings from the policy world, which become core concepts in the narratives that scholars then construct to make sense of the very same world that then needs to be explained (Kornprobst et al. 2008, 245). The reification of the globalization metaphor creates an entire category of theories of IPE focused on an area of interactions that is imagined as a coherent whole.

SOME METAPHORS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

In light of the relatively unprecedented nature of transformation of relations among the states of Europe, European integration has received special attention from scholars of IR. However, much of the scholarship on metaphors in European integration focuses on the conceptual metaphors inherent in the discourse of policymakers as opposed to metaphorical expression in the language of scholars who theorize about European integration. Thus, for example, Cris Shore (1997, 127) points out that “studying discourses on European integration—particularly metaphors—can reveal a great deal about the cultural differences and ideological rifts underlying current debates and disagreements between member states over the future shape and direction of the European Union.”³⁸ These debates and disagreements are often played out discursively in metaphorical frames, for example, as Mika Luoma-aho (2004) observes, in different agendas for European policy which are implied by the contrasting metaphors of “arms” versus “pillars” of European integration, or in the metaphors EU policymakers rely on to frame the EU’s role as “model,” “player,” or “instrument” in the context of multilateralism (Barbé et al. 2014).³⁹

Scholarship on the linguistic metaphors political officials use to frame the discourse of European integration permits for distance between scholars and policymakers: Policymakers conceptualize European integration

using metaphorical frames; scholars make inferences about how conceptual metaphors guide the policymaking process. In this chapter I focus on metaphorical expression in the *scholarship* on European integration because my aim is not to make predictions about policy outcomes on the basis of what discourse is adopted by policy practitioners but to indicate how the metaphors scholars use to think about IR lead directly to the hypotheses and theories they develop from these metaphors.⁴⁰ It is not unexpected that theories of European integration are replete with metaphorical images that aid scholars as they conceptualize this change. This section explores how these metaphors and others reveal theoretical assumptions underpinning the major schools of thought in the study of European integration.

Early theories of European integration are notable in that they were dealing with a metaphorical blank slate on which to imagine nascent processes of political and economic convergence in Europe. When one thinks about it, even the language to name and define what is now known as European integration relies on metaphorical imagery. This is because these processes were unfolding contemporaneously with efforts to identify and explain them. Indeed, there is not one term to label these processes but many, reflecting both rival theoretical schools of thought and policy positions. Many of the processes and even names European political leaders have attached to the institutions of European integration themselves are metaphorically inspired. Even to refer to European “integration” is to invoke a metaphor inasmuch as other concepts could have been chosen to define these processes. In fact, when the processes first were set in motion, other metaphorical terms were brought to bear, including “amalgamation,” “confederation,” and “unification,” as well as “harmonization” of European social policy provision.⁴¹ Why scholars and practitioners settled on “integration” in part reflects the power of this metaphor to transcend theoretical debates in academia and political disputes in the political realm. The same is true for naming the institutions of European integration themselves. Many of the metaphors of European integration have been examined in other forums.⁴² What follows is a look at otherwise unexplored metaphors that shed light on the meanings of European integration.

Functionalism, Neofunctionalism, and “Spillover”

Functionalism and neofunctionalism, as some of the earliest concepts in the study of European integration, incorporate a metaphorical frame,

implying as they do the transference of certain functions of governance from the governments of European Community (later, European Union) member states to the supranational institutions of European integration. In one sense, the theory of functionalism is synonymous with the policy prescriptions of early integration proponents. Scholars both *predicted* that integration was an inevitable outcome of transferring government functions to European-wide agencies and also tended to *support* such a process since it was a logical byproduct of the agenda of individuals who favored an integrated Europe as a bulwark against authoritarian forms of government as well as armed conflict and economic deprivation.

The main theoretical device of the theory also relies on a vivid metaphorical image, specifically, the concept of “spillover.”⁴³ As metaphors designed to evoke a conceptual picture of a political phenomenon, the spillover image is fairly straightforward. Quite simply, the term refers to a process by which agencies of European integration are created to assume the functions of government. The logic of integration dictates that such governmental functions “spill over” to other areas of government, thus necessitating the creation of additional agencies to coordinate European integration.⁴⁴ The image is one of water cascading over partitions, resulting in small bodies of water eventually forming one large pool. Ernst Haas (1958, 298) sums up the image of spillover as follows: “Economic integration—with its evident political implications and causes—then becomes almost a universal battle cry, making complete the ‘spill-over’ from ECSC to Euratom and its promise of independence from oil imports, from sector common markets to the General Common Market.”

An ironic aspect of the spillover metaphor is that some of the images it brings to mind hardly suggest the positive qualities of European integration they presumably imply. The spillover metaphor typically is framed in terms of the aforementioned imagery of water spilling over dams to create a large body of government imagined as the emergent institutions of European integration. However, one could also imagine water spilling over levees flooding populated areas or water spilling over the tops of supposedly water-tight compartments on ships causing the vessels to sink. The early authors of the spillover metaphor could hardly have imagined its relevance to events of the early twenty-first century in Europe when the financial crisis manifested in countries such as Greece “spilled over” to the rest of the EU threatening to “sink” the entire endeavor of European monetary integration. Ironically, and contrary to the images evoked by the “spillover” metaphor, Tana Johnson and Johannes Urpelainen have found

that, in fact, “negative spillover,” that is, cooperation in one area that undermines cooperation in another, actually leads to greater integration, while “positive spillover,” that is, cooperation in one area that reinforces cooperation in another, leads to less integration. Johnson and Urpelainen (2012, 646) thus conclude: “States integrate not to exploit positive spillovers between issues but to mitigate negative spillovers. In short: negative spillovers encourage integration; positive spillovers do not.” These are findings that seemingly do not follow logically from what the spillover image suggests.

The “spillover” image is also one of those conceptual metaphors that is subject to multiple interpretation. Early functionalist theory imagined an automaticity to the process by which functions of government would be transferred from national governments to European supranational institutions through what was imagined as “spillover.” Later neofunctionalists, however, argued that the accretion of governmental functions by agencies of European integration would require greater agency on the part of European officials, national leaders, and transnational interest groups. Stanley Hoffmann, who acted as a critic of functionalist theories of integration, imagined spillover metaphorically as actually leading back to state sovereignty, not away from it. Hoffmann (1966, 909) invokes the metaphor of a spiral, arguing that “functionalism tends to become, at best, like a spiral that coils ad infinitum,” leaving “the nation-state both as the main focus of expectations, and as the initiator, pace-setter, supervisor, and often destroyer of the larger entity” of supranational institutions. Ironically, in opposition to critics such as Hoffmann, the “spillover” metaphor united both functionalists and neofunctionalists despite what the image of spillover implies, that is, a series of steps by which government functions are inexorably transferred from national governments to the institutions of European integration. Neofunctionalists objected to the automaticity assumption of early functionalist theory, yet even the halting, stop-go processes they hypothesized and the requirement for political agency continue to rest on the assumption of inevitable transference of governmental functions suggested by the “spillover” concept. Such is the pervasive influence of metaphors over the development of theory.

Another problem with the spillover metaphor is that it can lead to non-falsifiable and *ex post facto* claims. The “theory” of spillover essentially states that European integration will proceed when there is a demand for European institutions that have competency over certain functions of government, which have been transferred to European institutions to include

additional functions of government in related economic and political realms. To state this as a hypothesis, if there is a demand for spillover, then European integration will spill over from one function of government to another. The obvious problem with this formulation is that it relies on *ex post facto* observations. When new institutions of European integration are created, it can be said to be because of spillover, but when new institutions of European integration are not created, it can be said to be because the conditions favorable to spillover were not in evidence. There is no way to falsify such a claim.

This logical fallacy is created in part by the spillover metaphor itself. There are any number of ways of hypothesizing the transfer of governing authority from the member states of the EU and its predecessors to the institutions of European integration. One way would be simply to use more literal terminology to describe what is captured metaphorically through the spillover image. Literal terminology would then lend itself to a testable set of propositions. For example, one could assume that, like state governments, agencies governing areas in which European countries have chosen to cooperate efficiently rely on bureaucratic consolidation of tasks. One could hypothesize that if cost savings are demonstrated, then national governments would choose to support European-wide governing agencies. This hypothesis could be tested by seeing if European agencies are created in areas where efficiencies can be found. If they are, it would serve as confirming evidence, and if they are not, it would provide disconfirming evidence. By the same token, the hypothesis also would be disconfirmed if European agencies were created even where no efficiencies are obtained, but confirming evidence would be found if no European agencies are created in areas where cost efficiencies cannot be demonstrated. All of this poses a better way to test a theory of European integration and does not rely on vague metaphors such as that found in the spillover image.

The spillover metaphor also seems somewhat arbitrary and could have been substituted with any number of other metaphors meant to illustrate the notion that policies are transferred from the governments of European countries to the institutions of European integration. Of course, any other metaphor would be as arbitrary as the spillover metaphor and potentially fraught with the same or similar analytical problems, but one could engage in a thought experiment and examine how, say, the metaphor of a “ratchet” would figure into theories of European integration. One could say that each step by which European governments accede to European-wide

agencies to coordinate policy formulation represents a “ratcheting up” of European integration. As with the spillover metaphor, the ratchet metaphor contains within it implied assumptions about the sources of European integration which inform the hypotheses that emanate from these assumptions. Thus, while the choice of a metaphor to illustrate European integration is to one extent arbitrary, it does reveal the starting assumptions scholars make about the nature of integration, which shape the theoretical propositions of the theory. In the case of a ratchet metaphor, unlike spillover, which implies a sort of organic and somewhat automatic process, the ratchet metaphor implies intentionality inasmuch as usually a ratchet tool depends on someone wielding the device. So a theory of European integration resting on a ratchet metaphor would tend to yield predictions that depend on the presence or absence of agents with an interest in furthering the processes of European integration as opposed to the automaticity implied by the spillover image.

As mentioned, functionalists were both analysts and proponents of European integration, and thus to some extent the metaphors they used were reflected both in theoretical analyses and in policy preferences. It is very difficult from a theoretical standpoint to disprove the predictions of functionalist theory since the theory is a description of the integration process itself seen as a logical process by which European countries cede governmental authority to the institutions of European integration. Policies “spill over” from one realm of governance to another when they do. This assertion creates a situation in which predictions of when this process will happen are hard to come by. The *ex post facto* nature of these concepts renders them impervious to rigorous theoretical testing.

Yet even as neofunctionalism has enjoyed a resurgence of popularity in European integration theory, the financial crisis that began in 2008 throughout the EU rendered the “spillover” metaphor problematic. Inasmuch as opposition to further integration has emerged among both political leaders and the public, the “physics” of “spillover” has seemingly been replaced by an alternate metaphor borrowed from physics, that is, the notion of European integration conceived of in terms of the outward forces of expansion contending with the gravitational forces of contraction. This metaphor has been expressed in the scholarly literature in the form of the so-called tensions of “push–pull” factors in European integration.⁴⁵ In this view, European integration is not an inevitable process of increased economic and political unification through the inexorable transference of authority from national governments to the agencies of the EU,

but a dynamic process akin to the very physical forces of the universe which combine the outward expansion of mass and energy unleashed by the Big Bang countered by the inward forces of gravity which threaten to collapse the universe in on itself. Push–pull factors translated into theoretical models seemingly allow scholars to determine which set of forces exert greater influence on political decision-making resulting in the ability to predict whether European integration will continue to proceed or whether efforts will be made to halt or undo that which has been accomplished by the various treaties of European integration.

European Neighborhood Policy

The EU's European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) also presents an interesting metaphorical frame with which to conceptualize elements of European integration. First proposed in 2003 and later developed in 2004, the ENP represents an effort by the EU to foster political ties and economic relationships with the countries geographically close to the EU.⁴⁶ As described at the Europa Website of the EU, the ENP

offers our neighbours a privileged relationship, building upon a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development). The ENP goes beyond existing relationships to offer political association and deeper economic integration, increased mobility and more people-to-people contacts. The level of ambition of the relationship depends on the extent to which these values are shared.⁴⁷

Framed initially by the European Commission as an element of creating a metaphorically “wider” Europe, the EU maintains that the ENP constitutes a set of programs distinct from the enlargement process, which is to say that the countries included in the ENP are not necessarily currently slated as candidates for full membership in the EU, although public statements about the ENP, such as those included in the policy's Website, point out that this does not prejudice future relationships between ENP countries and the EU.

The “neighborhood” metaphor is interesting in several respects. First, the changed language from a policy advocating a “wider” Europe to one incorporating the EU's “neighbor” states suggests that the leaders of the EU seek to promote commonalities with geographically proximate states,

albeit ones that at present are not necessarily assumed to share common political and economic values with the EU. As a metaphor, “wider” merely suggests a spatial visualization of Europe’s geographic limits, which has been a preoccupation of European political leaders long before the advent of modern-day European integration. By contrast, the metaphor of a “neighbor” hints not only at geographic proximity but also inclusion in the vicinity where a set of identities are shared. Among the definitions of “neighborhood,” the *Oxford English Dictionary* includes the following: “A district or portion of a town, city, or country, esp. considered *in reference to the character or circumstances of its inhabitants*” (emphasis added). Applied as a metaphor to the entirety of the European subcontinent and its bordering areas in southwestern Asia and northern Africa, the term “neighborhood” apparently is intended to conjure notions of a common character or set of circumstances of countries and individuals living in proximity to each other.

Second, and from a contrary point of view, the metaphor of “neighborhood” can have a distancing effect, especially when contrasted to another prominent metaphor in the construction of European identity, that is, the metaphorical notion of a common European “house” or “home.”⁴⁸ Individuals who live in the same house typically are related in a closer way than are those who merely reside in the same neighborhood. As framing devices, the “house” and “neighborhood” metaphors help European leaders shape the contours and limits of membership in the project of European integration. Those who dwell inside the common European “house” are already members of a community with shared values. Those who reside in the European “neighborhood” share a common “character” or set of “circumstances” with people inside the EU but are psychologically still outside of it.⁴⁹

Third, and in a related sense, using a framing metaphor that situates countries outside the EU but nonetheless includes them in the EU’s “neighborhood” enables agencies of the EU to promote its values to its “neighbors” much as individuals in a literal neighborhood might use their proximity to advance commercial, political, mutual support, or religious opportunities or initiatives by going “door-to-door.” As stated on the EU’s ENP Website (http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm), “central to the ENP are the bilateral Action Plans between the EU and each ENP partner...These set out an agenda of political and economic reforms with short and medium-term priorities of 3 to 5 years.” Put more bluntly, the EU offers a series of tangible incentives (largely in the form of

market access) to ENP countries that agree to political reforms and market liberalization. The EU relies on its location as a geographically proximate source of economic rewards to, in a sense, proselytize among its metaphorical “neighbors” in order to bring about certain desired results. The “neighborhood” frame is a convenient metaphor to create positive feelings among leaders and citizens alike in nearby countries, which can benefit from closer economic ties to the EU but might otherwise resist attempts to meddle in their internal affairs. One could argue that the dictionary defines “neighborhood” in a literal sense as simply a categorization of geographic proximity, which indeed it does.⁵⁰ However, and particularly when contrasted with the agenda for a “wider” Europe which preceded it, the deliberate effort by agencies of the EU to promote an active “European Neighborhood Policy” suggests that policymakers in the EU crafted the term with an eye toward creating a sense of shared values between those already in the “common European house” and those living nearby who may one day be included in it.

The intent of the EU to use the “neighborhood” metaphor has not been lost on scholars. Even before the European Commission had finalized its proposal for an ENP, a group of authors in an edited volume (Dannreuther 2004) had identified in the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) an effort to develop a “neighbourhood strategy.” More to the point, Alun Jones and Julian Clark have analyzed the ENP from the perspective of discourse analysis. Jones and Clark (2008, 546) have observed that “Europeanisation is a legitimising process through which the EU strives to gain meaning, actorness and presence internationally.” Specifically with regards to the discursive role of EU agencies, Jones and Clark (549) write:

While the European Commission not only has legitimate functions externally (for example, it represents the EU in external trade matters), it also articulates, projects and appeals through the Europeanisation discourses. This involves the careful definition and delimitation of external situations for European intervention, the production of new systems of signification to render logical, meaningful and appropriate this intervention, and the deployment of a suite of tactics to ensure the survival of EU-brokered Europeanisation discourses.

For Jones and Clark (552), the ENP specifically “represents a manifest effort by the EU to structure European relations with a binary

Mediterranean ‘other’.”⁵¹ They also point out that there was disagreement within the European Commission about how to frame the discourse of the EU’s “neighborhood: “In particular, Commission officials were worried about the vagueness in socio-cultural terms of European neighbourhood as a discursive construction” (ibid., 553). In the end, “the Commission’s role was to define and enable ‘neighbourhood’ in such a way as to facilitate its endorsement by Member States as a legitimate means for projecting Europeanisation, and as an appropriate political mechanism for European intervention” (ibid., 555).

What this meant discursively was that the concept of a European “neighborhood” had to provide a logic for EU intervention in surrounding states but retain a separate logic by which the integrity of the EU would not be jeopardized by uncontrolled immigration or exposure to terrorist activity emanating from those states (ibid.). The need to demarcate the limits of the EU while at the same time discursively frame a geographic area subject to the EU’s scope of influence is summarized by Rikard Bengtsson (2008, 598): “On the one hand, both EU representatives and incoming members argue that the exclusivity of membership needs to be upheld, while, at the same time, the foreign policy of the EU deliberately embraces liberal ideas of advanced cross-border cooperation and the merits of interdependence, aiming at reducing or mitigating the difference between the inside and the outside.” How to discursively present the ENP thus becomes a delicate balancing act in which the language of “neighbors” is harnessed such that “the EU stresses that the policy should reflect the mutual interests of the two sides, rather than the EU imposing change” (ibid., 611). What comprises the EU’s “neighborhood” thus represents political calculations supported by a metaphor that is ambiguous by design. This was for the EU what Julien Jeandesboz (2007, 387) deems a problem of “labelling the ‘neighbourhood’,” that is, coming up with discursive strategies to manage the EU’s desire to have an influence on surrounding states while protecting the EU from threats emanating from those countries.⁵² Among those threats is economic vulnerability represented, for example, by the EU’s reliance on energy resources, brought to the EU through a series of pipelines which John Gault (2004, 182) describes as metaphorical “umbilical cords” tying the EU to its neighbors in the east.

Given the inherent tensions within the EU with regards to defining the meaning, scope, and implications of the EU’s geographic neighborhood, it is not surprising that as a discursive trope utilized by agencies of the EU,

Europe's metaphorical "neighborhood" is subject to multiple interpretations. Thus, for example, Katja Weber et al. (2008, i) ponder whether those countries included in the ENP have been treated as "partners or periphery" by the EU. Likewise, Päivi Leino and Roman Petrov (2009) see in the creation of the ENP a debate between "common values" and "competing universals." Meanwhile, Bohdana Dimitrovova (2012, 249) on the one hand sees in the ENP an "imperial re-bordering of Europe," but on the other hand Dimitrovova (2010, 463) acknowledges that the Neighborhood Policy leaves room for framing ENP states as variously "strangers" and "neighbours," and potentially even "members" in a wider Europe, depending on the spread of common values.

More pointedly, Ruben Zaiotti (2007, 143) employs a different metaphor to highlight what he sees as the exclusionary subtext of the ENP, arguing that "despite its stated objectives, the ENP is actually reproducing—if not reinforcing—some of the existing barriers between the EU and its neighbours and, more problematically, is creating new ones. This tension is a symptom of a pathological condition affecting the ENP that is called here the *'gated community syndrome'*" (emphasis added). Freerk Boedeltje and Henk van Houtum (2011, 142) echo these views: "The EU seems to consciously produce a fuzzy space between inclusion and exclusion. In so doing, it gives way to neo-colonial frontier-like aspirations in defining the border both as a security and buffer zone as well as a zone to ease up and construct the neighbours it desires." Boedeltje (2012, 4) also notes that "what is reflected in the ambiguous overlap between Europe and the European Union is the tension between on the one hand the 'top-down' script of Europe as reflected by the EU and the European Neighbourhood Policy, and on the other hand the voices embodied in the various pleas for a more 'bottom-up' vision of Europe." These authors are skeptical of what European leaders say when they assert an inclusive vision of the EU's "neighborhood."⁵³ This sentiment is reflected in the framing of "building" a European security community by delineating that which is "external" to the EU by virtue of it residing not within Europe, but rather in its adjacent neighborhood (Rieker 2016).

As much as the metaphor of "neighbor" would seem to imply closeness, many critical analyses of the ENP point out that the metaphorical connotations of Europe's "neighborhood" involve drawing borders of exclusion. Pertti Joenniemi (2012, 35) writes: "The moves of neighbouring could hence...be viewed as efforts of portraying the newly nominated neighbours as wholly external to the EU due to their inherent and not just

acquired qualities...The neighbours do not stand, in this context, for a mutated form of self but figure rather as an anti-thesis of the Union in order to outline what the EU is not.” Ulrike Guérot (2012, no page number) offers a different view, arguing that the problem is not so much what other countries include or exclude from Europe’s neighborhood, but “putting the EU back into the European neighborhood,” that is, answering the question about how Europe can act as a responsible actor in light of political upheavals in countries along Europe’s periphery (e.g., in countries that experienced the “Arab Spring”). Like other concepts that become the subject of political analysis, the ENP started out as a metaphor used by policymakers to frame a “problem” that needed to be “solved.” And, as is common in such cases, the ambiguity in what the problem is and what solution exists also creates ambiguity in what the metaphor implies for conceptualizing the issue at stake. Scholars understandably have no choice but to deal with the name of any given EU agency, policy, program, or initiative. But by accepting that what the EU frames as its “neighborhood” is a logical way of conceptualizing geographic proximity, scholars also accept the notion that geography can be metaphorically constructed in terms of the “character or circumstances of its inhabitants” as the aforementioned dictionary definition of the term implies. For EU policymakers this is a political strategy, yet for scholars it represents an analytical question as to whether this is a logical way of thinking about things in the first place.

In sum, the arguably unique nature of European integration in the realm of IR makes it especially susceptible to attempts to use novel metaphorical formulations to help devise theoretical propositions about processes that perhaps are qualitatively distinct from other areas of international affairs. As discussed elsewhere in this book, metaphors are particularly useful for theorizing in that they can provide a heuristic function. That metaphors are pervasive in theorizing about European integration demonstrates the need to think creatively about an area of IR that is empirically distinct, and in many ways unprecedented yet controversial in contemporary world affairs.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SUBPLOT OF IPE

Metaphors which delineate the scope of IR also play a role in defining the relative significance of specific issue areas in the narrative of scholarly analysis. Obviously matters of IPE are important in the study of IR, but the

relegation of economic matters to the metaphorical realm of “low” politics sets the tone for subsequent conceptual formulations. While international security is characterized in rather dire terms through metaphorical concepts such as the “distribution of power,” “brinkmanship,” and “rogue” or “pariah” states, metaphors of IPE center on the nuances and distinctions of “development,” “interdependence,” and “globalization.” Scholars do not deliberately set out to diminish the study of international economic affairs, but the metaphors of IPE imply a less pressing set of issues than international security to be studied and addressed.

IPE thus represents a subplot of IR relative to the main story of war and peace. It is no less interesting than international security, but perhaps framed as just a bit less critical to the resolution of the story. This is not necessarily by design, and no doubt not a conscious decision by scholars of IR. Despite the fact that introductory contemporary IR textbooks almost invariably place chapters on security before chapters on IPE, it is unlikely scholars of IR deliberately endeavor to diminish its role. Rather, as metaphors frame subjects of academic inquiry, they tell a narrative of the cumulative attention that story lines receive. To date, the emphasis of international economics relative to international security has been a secondary one.

Metaphors of IPE also are characterized by a great deal of ambiguity. For example, scholars disagree about how best to describe relations among actors of differing wealth, relying on a wide range of metaphors of global inequality, with even the notion of “unequal” presenting a conundrum of metaphorical conceptualization. Moreover, metaphorical concepts such as “interdependence” and “globalization” contain within them politicized connotations that have an impact on theoretical analysis. The irony is that, from the perspective of political scientists, the field of economics might appear at first to possess a more “scientific” quality, grounded as it is in quantitative analysis, and thus would be less prone to the analytical problems that arise from a reliance on metaphorical concepts. However, as we have seen, all academic disciplines rely in part or even in whole on conceptual metaphors, even the most “scientific” among them. Theoretical abstractions depend on metaphorical conceptualizations to give meaning to empirical facts. Matters of IPE are no less inclined in this direction.

In sum, at the intersection of economics and political science lies the field of political economy, combining both disciplinary perspectives and conceptual metaphors borrowed from both disciplinary traditions.

The narrative of IPE in particular is the story of how the politics of international economics fits into a larger preoccupation with the nature of world political affairs. Seen as “low” politics, IPE is at once relegated to a secondary role, but at the same time offers a wide range of often imprecise and ambiguous ways of thinking about trade, commerce, and international monetary and financial affairs. Metaphors determine what is important in this narrative, but also what is complicated and problematic. In this sense, IPE is framed by metaphors in ways that are similar to other aspects of IR.

NOTES

1. IPE draws on metaphors from the field of economics, which are as common in that discipline as they are in political science. An examination of metaphors in economics is beyond the scope of this study. On metaphors in economics, see, for example, McCloskey (1985, 1995), Henderson (1994), Eubanks (2000), Bracker and Herbrechter (2005).
2. See, for example, Black (1962), Brown (2003).
3. The works of Deirdre N. McCloskey were previously published under the name Donald N. McCloskey.
4. Klamer and Leonard caution that not all economics metaphors have equal utility. Some provide only a pedagogical function (i.e., by illuminating basic principles), while others have a heuristic role serving to “catalyze our thinking, helping to approach a phenomenon in a novel way” (Klamer and Leonard 1994, 32). Still other metaphors in economics are what Klamer and Leonard refer to as constitutive of the very concepts under investigation.
5. For more on metaphorical thinking in mathematics, see Núñez (2000), Van Bendegem (2000).
6. McCloskey (1995, 225) writes: “The disagreements among economists turn often on metaphorical choices, unexamined because unselfconscious.”
7. In physics one can speak metaphorically of numbered dimensions (“first dimension,” “second dimension,” etc.), while in the law certain crimes can be imagined with ordinal metaphors such as murder in the “first” or “second” degree.
8. Wolf-Phillips was challenged on her dating and origins of the term “Third World,” but defends her findings in a later article in *Third World Quarterly*. See Wolf-Phillips (1987). Mark Berger and Heloise Weber (2014, 3) back up Wolf-Phillips’ claims.
9. On the history of Third Worldism as a political force in international affairs, see Berger (2004), Prashad (2007), Berger and Weber (2014).

10. The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines the noun “development” generically as “the act of developing” and “the state of being developed.”
11. Leslie Wolf-Phillips (1979, 106) refers to Gunnar Myrdal’s *Asian Drama* (1968) in which he suggests that opting for “developing” or “less-developed” over “under-developed” represents a linguistic gesture to countries in that category amounting to “diplomacy by terminology.”
12. The “core” metaphor is not limited to studies of relations between economically disparate parts of the world. Samuel Huntington (1996) uses the term in conjunction with his analysis of the “clash of civilizations.”
13. While the existence of a metaphorical “semiperiphery” seemingly acknowledges the existence of a realm between the core and the periphery, this semiperiphery is imagined more as an intermediate concentric circle than a zone of fluidity between the periphery and the core.
14. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the first written use of the expression “north–south,” pertaining to relations between more and less industrialized parts of the world, was in Franz Schurmann’s *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* in which Schurmann (1966, 79) refers to the “growing north–south gap between industrialized and nonindustrialized countries.”
15. Cardoso and Faletto (1979, xxiii) prefer the expression “situations of dependency” instead of the “theory” of dependency.
16. As Debra Liebowitz and Susanne Zwingel (2014) observe, indications of global gender equality also rely on subjective measures.
17. It is not for nothing that Patsy Cline sang “And yet the hand that brings the rose tonight is the hand I will hold, for the rose of love means more to me more than any rich man’s gold.” From the song “A Poor Man’s Roses or a Rich Man’s Gold,” written by Bob Hilliard and Milton Delugg.
18. See, for example, Schön (1979).
19. See, for example, D’Anieri (2011).
20. While the *OED* includes a reference to the Non-Aligned Movement founded in Belgrade in 1961, it notes that the first written use of the term “non-aligned” was in 1957 in an article in the *Journal of Asian Studies*.
21. The term “bloc” is a variation of “block,” which in politics has its etymological origins in “block vote,” itself a metaphor for grouping together votes into a “block” (*Oxford English Dictionary*).
22. Bill and Melinda Gates (2014, 6) write in the Gates Foundation annual letter: “It is fair to say that the world has changed so much that the terms ‘developing countries’ and ‘developed countries’ have outlived their usefulness. Any category that lumps China and the Democratic Republic of Congo together confuses more than it clarifies. Some so-called developing countries have come so far that it’s fair to say they have developed. A handful of failed states are hardly developing at all. Most countries are somewhere in the

- middle. That's why it's more instructive to think about countries as low-, middle-, or high-income (Some experts even divide middle-income into two sub-categories: lower-middle and upper-middle.)”
23. These trends, and the implications for the utility of the term “Third World,” are also discussed in Randall (1992) and Berger (1994).
 24. As the foregoing discussion shows, an ongoing debate in the journal *Third World Quarterly* revolves around whether or not the term “Third World” has any relevance in the study of international affairs.
 25. On theories of foreign aid failures, see, for example, Calderisi (2006), Easterly (2006, 2008), Lancaster (2007), Moyo (2009), Maurits van der Veen (2011), Riddell (2007), Picard et al. (2015).
 26. Additional metaphors emanate from thinking about differing levels of economic prosperity in terms of the need for the provision of foreign “aid.” For example, foreign aid has been proposed as a solution to the so-called poverty trap from which less-developed regions of the world cannot “escape.” On the “poverty trap,” see Easterly (2006).
 27. Boyd and Mackenzie mention “globalization” among other words such as “wholeness” and “integration,” “which would seem to be the keywords of the new education view of mind” (*Towards a New Education* 1930, 350, as referenced in the *Oxford English Dictionary*).
 28. “The term globalisation denotes a set of inducing arguments and seductive images rather than a stark and incontestable fact of life” (Pemberton 2001, 185). As Nicole Oke (2009) points out, much of the discourse surrounding globalization involves a vocabulary of time and space. In most respects, this time/space language is used in a literal sense to involve the pace of globalization and its geographic scope. See also Fairclough (2006).
 29. Nisha Shah (2008) suggests that the metaphor of globalization itself has been conceptualized metaphorically in three main ways, in the form of “cosmopolis,” “empire,” and “network society.”
 30. See also Rosenberg (2005).
 31. Timothy Luke (2008, 132) suggests an alternative to Falk’s “globalization from above” and “globalization from below” metaphors, suggesting instead that the spread of technology allows for a “globalization-from-in-between,” instantiating a “world that is more of the same, but never truly universal.”
 32. The *American Heritage Dictionary* (772) gives one definition of “global” as “of, relating to, or involving the entire earth; worldwide.”
 33. The metaphor of the world as a “global village” has been captured in the expression “glocalization,” which implies that what globalization actually entails is increased interactions between processes that occur globally,

locally, and in the form of some combination of the two. See, for example, Sullivan (2008) who prefers the metaphor of a “rhizome” to conceptualize the organization of “glocal” politics.

34. On sovereignty as a symbolic form, see also Bartelson (2014).
35. Branch (2) continues: “Because of changes in cartographic depictions and their use, Europeans shifted from seeing the world as a series of unique places to conceiving of the globe as a homogeneous geometric surface. This shift had direct implications for how they understood political space and territorial political authority.”
36. Krasner (3) points out that what typically is construed as “sovereignty” actually comprises four forms of political authority: “International legal sovereignty, Westphalian sovereignty, domestic sovereignty, and interdependence sovereignty.”
37. Fierke and Pouliot’s comments on reification convey the tensions in metaphors of globalization elaborated on in the edited volume by Kornprobst et al. (2008) in which their chapters appear. The subtitle of Kornprobst et al.’s edited book *Metaphors of Globalization: Mirrors, Magicians and Mutinies* captures the multifaceted quality of metaphors as concepts that can reflect, transform, and rebel.
38. Shore (140–145) notes that metaphors such as “Europe à la carte,” “variable geometry,” “concentric circles,” “two-tier” integration, and “multi-track” or “multi-speed” policy implementation reflect the prevailing ways in which political leaders conceptualize European integration.
39. For additional studies of the metaphorical language of policymakers in framing European integration, see Chilton and Ilyin (1993), Cattaneo and Velo (1995), Musolff (1996, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008), Schäffner (1996), Hülse (2006), Carta (2014), Nitroiu and Tomić (2015).
40. On the distinction between conceptual metaphor and metaphorical expression in the study of European integration, see Drulák (2006) as well as a critique of Drulák in Onuf (2010) and Drulák’s reply (Drulák 2010).
41. Article 117 of the Treaty of Rome introduces the concept of “harmonization” of European social provisions: “Member States agree upon the need to promote improved working conditions and an improved standard of living for workers, so as to make possible their *harmonisation* while the improvement is being maintained. They believe that such a development will ensue not only from the functioning of the common market, which will favour the *harmonisation* of social systems, but also from the procedures provided for in this Treaty and from the approximation of provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action” (Treaty of Rome, 42, emphasis added). From a metaphorical perspective “harmonization” represents a lesser degree of coming together than “integration.”

- The former is defined in terms of “agreement,” while the latter is defined in terms of “unifying” (*American Heritage Dictionary*).
42. See, for example, Musolff (1996, 2001, 2004), Schäffner (1996), Shore (1997), Diez (1999), Drulák (2006).
 43. “Spillover” should not be confused with the similarly sounding metaphor of “tipping points” in international regimes. On tipping points, see Vormedal (2012).
 44. On functionalism, see Mitrany (1966).
 45. On push–pull factors in European integration, see, for example, Farrell et al. (2002), Kühnhardt (2009), Finke (2010).
 46. The European Neighborhood Policy was proposed and developed in two reports from the European Commission. See Commission of the European Communities (2003, 2004). The 16 countries and political units included in the ENP are Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine.
 47. This description is posted online at http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm.
 48. On the common European “house” or “home” metaphor, see Chilton and Ilyin (1993), Chilton (1996, chapters 8–9), Schäffner (1996), Fierke (1997), Musolff (2004, 122–140).
 49. On metaphorical constructions of areas outside the European neighborhood, see Šarić et al. (2010), Silaški and Đurović (2014).
 50. Among the definitions of “neighborhood” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is “the vicinity or surrounding area.”
 51. Jones and Clark (552) quote Michael Smith (2004, 77) who writes that the ENP produces a “Europe of boundaries in which a variety of geopolitical, transactional, institutional and cultural forces create a world of separated spaces framing inclusions or exclusions. The resulting negotiations are focused on inclusions and exclusions, across boundaries.” See also Charillon (2004), Dannreuther (2004), Sedelmeier (2004), Comelli et al. (2007), Cierco (2013).
 52. Ambiguity in the meanings associated with the European Neighborhood Policy created policy problems for the EU. As Karen Smith (2005, 769) observes: “Yet ambiguity is not boosting the EU’s leverage: in fact, it is forcing it into a reactive and defensive rather than a strategic mode. Thus a policy based on ambiguity may not produce the effects the EU expects—and will therefore probably not last very long.”
 53. For a critical view of the ENP, see also Bialasiewicz et al. (2009), Scott (2009).

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Metaphors of Democratization

METAPHORS IN THE STUDY OF DEMOCRATIZATION

While the study of democracy typically involves theories of comparative politics, scholarship on processes of democratization also implies international influences and hence engages, at least indirectly, theories of IR.¹ Where democracy comes from, the stages by which it develops, the direction it takes, the efforts needed to build it, democracy's density, and the absence of democratic accountability, all involve conceptual metaphors that imply theories of how democracy emerges and exists as a system of governance. Scholars seeking to explain the formation of democracy following periods of non-democratic rule in particular rely on metaphorical frames to develop explanations for the origins and development of democracy around the world.

The influence of metaphors on theories of democracy has been noted by attentive scholars. Laurence Whitehead, for one, argues that in modern parlance democracy and its ongoing status often are framed using mechanical metaphors. Thus, "democracies are 'consolidated,' or 'built,' advance by 'institutional engineering,' sometimes suffer crises due to exogenous 'shocks,' or even 'break down' as a result of internal 'pressures'" (Whitehead 2011, 291). For Whitehead, these mechanical metaphors mistakenly imagine democracy as a *thing* as opposed to a *process*. To rectify this error, Whitehead suggests approaching the study of democratization with the aid of biological as opposed to mechanical metaphors. In the biological view, democracy is not an end point, but is a "living practice

permanently directed towards self-preservation and propagation” (ibid., 292).² In many ways, the contrast between mechanical and biological metaphors in the study of democracy and democratization is similar to the debate between those same sets of metaphors in the study of IR writ large.³ In particular, mechanical metaphors imply a theory of linear cause and effect, whereas biological metaphors suggest causation that involves evolution and “life cycle” change (ibid., 293).⁴ Whitehead (293) seeks to substitute the physicalist metaphors of “waves” and “snowballs” of democratization with metaphorical frames that incorporate ongoing biological processes. Thus, for example, Whitehead (293–294) would replace metaphorical conceptions of “equilibrium” in democratization with metaphors that envision change in terms of “homeostasis” and “autopoiesis” and would supplant Samuel Huntington’s “snowballing” metaphor with the metaphors of “contagion” and “viability,” which draw on biological views of life cycle and change.⁵

For Whitehead (294), biological metaphors of democratization take as their starting point the notion that democratic political systems can be likened to living and evolving organisms: “The biological perspective directs attention to the adaptive processes that can generate diversity within a lifeline and explain the possible emergence of new organisms only partially related to established types.” To extend this metaphor, political systems imagined metaphorically as living organisms can also be compared to healthy organisms that are susceptible to infection or disease (ibid.). Furthermore, political systems are subject to evolutionary adaptation in the current view understood in terms of punctuated change (ibid., 295). Evolution can also bring about hybridization, which can be transferred metaphorically to political regime type. Whitehead (296–297) is careful to observe that biological metaphors of democratization should not be confused with direct one-to-one analogies and therefore does not suggest, for example, that Thomas Seeley’s (2010) study of “honeybee democracy” be used as a scientific model to test levels of democratization in a human political context. Rather, Whitehead’s point is that as a way to understand political change, the evolutionary nature of change in democratic politics is better understood by means of organic and biological metaphors than the model of change entailing mechanistic cause and effect suggested by prevailing metaphorical images of democratization.

Whitehead’s observations are only a start. It is important to acknowledge that metaphorical conceptions of democracy and the processes of democratization as mechanical or organic in nature have an influence on how democ-

racism is theorized. This acknowledgment also emphasizes the need to critically assess the myriad ways that democracy has been subject to metaphorical notions of politics. This chapter follows Whitehead's lead by taking metaphors of democratization seriously. It examines a range of metaphorical concepts and the ways in which they lead scholars to make certain assumptions about democracy, devise hypotheses about processes of democratization, and contribute to theories that offer explanations for how democracy develops over time. The chapter concludes that democratization is not an unambiguous process, but, rather, is most often understood through the same sorts of metaphors that frame the study of other aspects of IR.

DEMOCRATIC "TRANSITION" AND "CONSOLIDATION"

While terms such as "transition" and "consolidation" sound as literal as concepts get in the study of politics, as with other conceptual categories, they convey metaphorical narratives—often subtle, but on occasion overt. The following passage illustrates any number of metaphorical tropes that have made their way into the study of democratization: "Originally, the term 'democratic consolidation' was meant to describe the challenge of making new democracies *secure*, of extending their *life expectancy* beyond the short term, of making them *immune* against the threat of authoritarian regression, of *building dams* against eventual '*reverse waves*.' To this original mission of rendering democracy '*the only game in town*,' countless other tasks have been added" (Schedler 1998, 91, emphasis added). The author of this passage includes two terms in quotation marks ("reverse waves" and "the only game in town") as a way of acknowledging their metaphorical qualities, but, as I have indicated by adding italics to other words in this passage, democratic consolidation has also been imagined with a whole series of metaphorical frames. Democratic consolidation is thought of metaphorically as something that can be made safe (by keeping it "secure" behind "dams" designed to keep out the flood waters of "reverse waves"), as having a form of biological life (with a "life expectancy") that represents a healthy form of politics (by making it "immune") and is part of a process of competition ("the only game in town"). As will be made clear in the discussion that follows, despite the range of metaphorical images that are represented in the literature (as illustrated by the afore-quoted passage), the dominant theme that emerges is that democratization is marked off as a series of discrete processes as opposed to a constantly changing process of "normal" politics in general.⁶

Whitehead's observations about the possibility of replacing mechanical metaphors of democratization with metaphors based on biological images of political behavior are prescient. As I discuss in *Metaphors in International Relations Theory*, the dominant metaphors of transformation in IR conceptualize change in terms of either "construction" or "evolution" (Marks 2011, 74–78). These represent, respectively, Whitehead's mechanical and biological categories of metaphors of democratization.⁷ Among the prevailing mechanical metaphors that have served to frame processes of democratization are the concepts of "transition" and "consolidation."⁸ Unlike biological or evolutionary metaphors that imagine change as a gradual process of adaptation, the mechanical metaphors of "transition" and "consolidation" evoke images of transformation which involve clearly demarcated processes set off from each other as part of a change that is segmented and entails sequential steps, much like a process by which something is "constructed" as opposed to how it "evolves." Thus, for example, although Guillermo O'Donnell (1989, 62) is careful to point out that "transitions do not have inevitable outcomes," the very notion of an "outcome" suggests that transition is part of a segmented process where the transition is followed by a distinct political result (i.e., the "outcome"). Subsequent scholars affirm the notion of demarcated stages implied in metaphors such as "transition." For example, following the lead of O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), Kathryn Stoner et al. (2013, 6) define a political transition as "the interval between one political regime and another" (emphasis added).⁹ In this formulation, politics is understood not so much as a mix of practices but more as a system of classification along a spectrum with strict distinctions drawn between different types of governance.¹⁰

Dictionary definitions of "transition" and "consolidation" back up a sense of these concepts, implying a metaphorically mechanical view of political change. "Transition" is commonly defined as "passage from one form, state, style, or place to another" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1901). It is worth noting that there is little to suggest in this definition a gradual process of change. Rather, one thing becomes another through a sequential process, with little intervening between these two states or forms. Similarly, the dictionary defines "consolidate" as "to unite into one system or whole; combine" (ibid., 403). As with "transition," this image of "consolidate" brings to mind a process of production or construction whereby something is mechanically formed or shaped in a purposeful way. Unlike "evolution," which involves ongoing processes that have no clearly

identifiable end point, both “transition” and “consolidation” are metaphors of mechanistic change in which some set of operations lead to the creation of distinct states of existence and which can end with the presentation of a final product.

How do these metaphors of “transition” and “consolidation” frame and influence the study of democratization? As the definitions of these terms imply, analyses of democratic transition and consolidation focus on clearly demarcated processes of change on the one hand and stasis on the other. Thus, for example, in a classic statement on the subject, Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter (1986, 6) define democratic “transition” as “the interval between one political regime and another.” This interval is “delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of some form of democracy, the return to some form of authoritarian rule, or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative” (ibid.). Hence, while obviously O’Donnell and Schmitter’s definition of “transition” involves dynamic change, it nonetheless implies a process with a clearly discernible beginning and end. Later, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996, 3) set out conditions under which a democratic transition could be said to be “complete.”¹¹

Although democracy itself is often understood as a dynamic form of government, the metaphor of “transition” understood as an interval, stage, or phase imputes to this aspect of democratic politics a closed-ended process that is analytically distinct from other aspects of ongoing political change. Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer (1998, 7) say as much when they observe: “To describe new democracies as being in transition is misleading; it implies that we know a society’s starting point, we know where it is today, and where it is heading. The term is also bland, suggesting that changes are virtually friction-free.” Questions also can be advanced about the generalizability of metaphors, such as transition, which may not transfer well from one political context to another. As Jordan Gans-Morse (2004, 324) writes: “The processes of change under way in the post-communist region are fundamentally different from other forms of transition that social scientists have previously encountered; some analysts even raise the question of whether these processes are best described as ‘transitions’ at all, or whether some other guiding metaphor, such as revolution, institutional breakdown, or decolonization, might be more apt.” As a metaphor of political change, “transition” may be limiting in terms of its ability to capture regional variations as well as altered circumstances over time.

Likewise, Linz and Stepan's definition of "consolidation" implies a static condition, which, as they state, could "at some future time...break down," but "would not be related to weaknesses or problems specific to the historic process of democratic consolidation per se, but to a *new* dynamic in which the democratic regime cannot resolve a set of problems" or otherwise resist anti-democratic forces (Linz and Stepan 1996, 6). Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman (1994, 6) define "consolidation" as "processes through which acceptance of a given set of constitutional rules becomes increasingly widespread, valued, and routinized." In other words, it is not the process of democracy itself that constitute political change but a unique set of factors that are indicated by identifying an analytically distinct phase of political activity suggested by the "consolidation" metaphor.

The irony is that behind the metaphors of transition and consolidation that frame these periods as discrete processes set off from "normal" politics are in fact a range of political undertakings which would otherwise render meaningless the notion of separate and distinct stages of democratic politics. For example, after pointing out the various ways in which democratic consolidation is understood, Andreas Schedler (1998, 91–92) observes that what is known as a distinct period of democratic "consolidation" is in fact a host of processes, many of which can be found in other political contexts:

The list of 'problems of democratic consolidation' (as well as the corresponding list of 'conditions of democratic consolidation') has expanded beyond all recognition. It has come to include such divergent items as popular legitimation, the diffusion of democratic values, the neutralization of antisystem actors, civilian supremacy over the military, the elimination of authoritarian enclaves, party building, the organization of functional interests, the stabilization of electoral rules, the routinization of politics, the decentralization of state power, the introduction of mechanisms of direct democracy, judicial reform, the alleviation of poverty, and economic stabilization.

Schedler's point is not that democratic consolidation is not worth studying, but that because scholars associate with it so many different qualities of political change, "the reigning conceptual disorder is acting as a powerful barrier to scholarly communication, theory building, and the accumulation of knowledge" (ibid., 92).

What I would add to this is that metaphors are an integral reason for why terms such as “democratic consolidation” have become problematic. On the one hand, as Schedler observes, concepts such as “democratic consolidation” have become vague and imprecise. On the other hand, there seems to be some agreement that, as nebulous as the term may be, it represents a distinct stage of political change to the extent that, when the conditions promoting consolidation are removed, governments can enter a phase of what Roberto Foa and Yascha Mounk (2017) refer to as democratic “deconsolidation.” Metaphors that imagine democratic consolidation as something with a “life expectancy” that must be made “immune” to anti-democratic forces or “secured” behind “dams” to keep out “reverse waves” promote the idea that theories of “normal” politics do not apply to stages of democratization. The metaphor of “consolidated” democracy, for example, suggests that there is no opportunity for political change. In *some* instances this may in fact be the case. But what is conveyed with this concept is the *assumption* that different hypotheses apply to stages of democratization than they do to periods of “normal” or ongoing political activity.

DEMOCRATIZATION HAS A “DIRECTION”

If democratic “transition” and “consolidation” suggest mechanical processes, they also imply stages in some process moving from one state of existence to another. The idea of transitory and consolidating stages is closely related to the metaphorical conceptualization of democratization as something that has a “direction.” More specifically, there is an idea that democratization proceeds “forward” toward democracy from non-democratic forms of government, but it can also suffer from “reversals” away from democracy “back” toward non-democratic politics.¹² As with the notion of “progress” as articulated by political partisans, there is in the “forward” direction of democratization (and “reversals” away from democracy) a not-so-subtly implied preference for democratic forms of government. Thus, for example, Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter (1986, 65) write that “transition in regime type implies *movement from something toward something else*” (emphasis added), while the subtitle of Larry Diamond’s 1999 book *Developing Democracy is **Toward Consolidation*** (bold added).¹³ The forward direction of democracy inherent in metaphors such as the “wave” image (discussed later in the chapter) also can be harnessed by those asserting the desirability of avoiding meta-

phorical “reversals.” Thus, for example, President Thein Sein of Myanmar commented in 2012 about processes of democratization in his country and said that “the road to democracy in Burma is so narrow that you cannot turn back” (Chongkittavorn 2012, no page number). The president’s message, tinged with a political agenda such as it is, was designed to soothe Western sensibilities by tapping into the notion, propagated in Western scholarly circles, that democratization is a “forward moving” process embraced even by those (such as the leadership of Myanmar) with suspect commitments to democratic forms of government.

The metaphor of moving forward (which is reinforced by the opposite, which is a “reversal” in the other direction) carries with it the connotation of making progress in a desired direction. This is a language often picked up by journalists and others in the news media. For instance, an article in *The New York Times* describes the difficulties in maintaining democratic practices in directional terms: “After 50 years of independence, the *path* to democracy does not follow an obvious *straight line* in this region, just as it did not in the West...Across the region [Africa], democracy, even amid *set-backs*, seemed to *inch forward*” (Nossiter 2012, A4, emphasis added). The notion of forward and backward direction in the process of democratization is encapsulated in the title of İter Turan’s 2015 book on processes of democratization in Turkey, *Turkey’s Difficulty Journey to Democracy: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*. Here, we find every aspect of the directional metaphors used to conceptualize democratization—the idea of democracy having a spatial “direction”; the notion that democratization represents a sense of physical movement, in this case, an extension of the metaphor that life is a “journey”; the understanding that journeys are traveled with physical “steps” that can be measured metaphorically as human locomotion complete with the idea of pacing (i.e., counting “steps” forward and backward); and the concept of “forward” and “backward” direction in politics.¹⁴ While Turan’s analysis is far-ranging, incorporating variables related to the role of the military in politics, economic activity, party and electoral politics, the composition and quality of civil society, and the ideological orientation of political groups in Turkey, the general thesis of the book is that democracy represents a point along what Turan (2015, 217), using the metaphor of direction, calls “the *road* to a more democratic Turkey” (emphasis added).

Scholars who are skeptical of such facile imagery can still succumb to it. For instance, while eschewing the simplicity of a vague term such as democratic “consolidation,” Andreas Schedler (1998, 92) nonetheless uses forward-facing arrows to diagram democratization as progressing in

stages, from authoritarianism to electoral democracy to liberal democracy to metaphorical “advanced” democracy, although regression can take the form of metaphorical democratic “breakdown” or “erosion.” No one wants to reverse direction away from the progress he or she has already made toward a desired goal. Many, if not most, Western political scientists likely accept that democracy is the preferred form of government for the advancement of political freedoms and rights, but this is an ideological assessment, not an analytical one. Furthermore, as Thomas Carothers (2002, 15) points out, “the assumed sequence of stages of democratization is defined by the record of experience.” Leaving aside my own biases, which are predisposed toward democracy, political change that alters a country’s form of government is a matter of evolving constitutive rules, institutions, and forms of governance, not progress forward toward a preferred form of government (democracy) or backward toward something else. The directional view of democratization thus frames political change in terms of desired political forms and the problems associated with it. Metaphors frequently are used to frame “problems” that need to be “solved,” and the directional image of democratization is not immune to this tendency. The directional metaphor in the analysis of democracy takes a variety of forms, all of which frame the problem of non-democratic governance as something that can be solved by moving in the right forward direction toward democracy.

“Waves” of Democratization

The metaphor of “waves” of democratization was popularized by Samuel Huntington in his book *The Third Wave*. Huntington (1991, 15) defines a “wave of democratization” as “a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time. A wave also usually involves liberalization or partial democratization in political systems that do not become fully democratic.” A number of things are noteworthy in how this definition fits with the metaphorical concept of democratic directionality. First, a wave is conceived of as a singular process involving multiple units, that is, a group of regimes undergoing political transition.¹⁵ When one thinks of a wave, for example, in a body of water or as a cycle of radiation (as in frequency waves in radio transmissions), what comes to mind is an identifiable physical shape or form that can be distinguished from its surrounding

context.¹⁶ This image forces observers to focus on the coherence of the phenomenon that takes shape as a wave as opposed to deviations from it. So, for example, although an ocean wave might produce a spray of water droplets that emerges from the motion of water that distinguishes the wave, an observer will focus on the large shape of the wave as opposed to the small drops of water that emanate from it. Hence, one implication of the wave metaphor for the study of democratization is to emphasize the *group* of regimes that comprise it, not individual regimes that may make political transitions outside of the time frame specified when identifying waves of democratization. The existence of outlier states that make transitions to democracy outside of identifiable “waves” is minimized in constructing a wave theory of democratization.

Second, the wave metaphor is mixed with the metaphor of “transition,” which implies a shift from one thing to another as opposed to a gradual process as might be imagined by the progress of a wave through physical space. Third, the “wave” metaphor is also mixed with metaphorical imagery of deliberate motion, specifically, by taking “steps”: “In one sense, the democratization waves and the reverse waves suggest a two-step-forward, one-step-backward pattern” (Huntington 1991, 25). One then wonders if democratization is a wave-like force, beyond any one individual’s control, that carries countries “forward” and “backward,” or a deliberate set of political interests in which people take “steps” to bring about one set of political objectives versus others. The “wave” metaphor suggests processes acting upon political actors, while the “step” metaphor implies volition and purposiveness of action. Fourth, as Jean Grugel and Matthew Bishop (2014, 58) point out, “used as a metaphor, the idea of the wave captures quite graphically how democracy spreads spatially over time. But on closer examination the waves turn out to be rather indistinct and even overlapping.”

Fifth, and as alluded to in the previous paragraph, for Huntington a key factor in waves of democratization is that they move in a metaphorical space involving direction. Waves in nature, for example, in the ocean, obviously have a direction, but for Huntington the significance of a political “wave” is if it moves a regime “forward” toward democracy, or “backward” toward undemocratic forms and practices.¹⁷ This is highlighted in Huntington’s notion of “reverse waves,” which can shift a regime away from democracy toward undemocratic forms of governance. Using the concept of “complex adaptive systems,” Seva Gunitsky argues that democratic diffusion inevitably involves both metaphorical positive and negative

feedback “loops” such that democratization does not inexorably proceed “forward.” Rather, “waves of democratic diffusion have nearly always been followed by partial or total collapse of the waves” (Gunitsky 2013, 53).

Sixth, once the metaphorical concept of a “wave” of democratization has been established, additional questions arise, for example, what causes a wave to begin in the first place? Rather than being viewed as simply a normal part of political life, conceptualizing a group of countries engaged in political processes associated with the adoption of democratic practices as a metaphorical “wave” opens space for additional metaphors with which to conceptualize these processes. This prompts theoretical analysis, where before there might not have been any. Thus, for example, confronted with the phenomenon of “waves” of democratization, Seva Gunitsky engages in a search for the source of these waves and arrives at the metaphorical concept of “shocks” which unleashes those waves. Specifically, Gunitsky (2014, 565) focuses on changes in the distribution of power among hegemonic states creating a “hegemonic shock” defined as “a sudden shift in the distribution of relative power among the leading states in the international system.”¹⁸ Such shocks then create what Gunitsky (*ibid.*, 567) refers metaphorically as “wakes,” which then create “waves” rippling out from hegemonic shocks.¹⁹ Were it not for Huntington’s invocation of a “wave” concept, the search for a cause in the form of points of disrapture that unleashes such waves might not have become a theoretical project.

Finally, for Huntington, the image of a “wave” is a blunt metaphorical tool inasmuch as, admittedly, within the group of countries that comprise a wave of democratization are countries that only partially succeed or even fail to make the transition toward democracy. This is apparent to Huntington (1991, 15–16) who notes that “political changes do not sort themselves into neat historical boxes” and “it is often arbitrary to attempt to specify precisely when a regime transition occurs.”²⁰ Furthermore, the amount of time that constitutes a wave is variable; hence, Huntington (16) classifies historical time frames involving “short” and “long” waves.

Of course, the notion of “waves” of any particular phenomenon is not new. Common terms expressing the concept of forward movement of an idea, practice, or behavior include waves of culture, waves of innovation, waves of feminism, and waves of modern terrorism, among other things. The idea is that certain processes occur according to cyclical patterns encompassing identifiable groupings of instances of those processes. Cycles need not be of a regularly occurring frequency nor of equal size or length, but they are discernible in terms of the grouping of cases that oth-

erwise might appear randomly with no readily recognizable pattern. In this sense, a metaphorical “wave” of democracy is a useful concept because it alludes to some statistical regularity worthy of investigation. On the other hand, the very notion of a wave or cycle creates the impression of a statistically significant pattern even when outlying cases exist. A model of democratization (or any other phenomenon) only takes the form of a theory when it involves generalization across a number of comparable events, so key to theory generation and testing is first establishing that such comparable events do occur in ways that are statistically significant. The metaphor of a “wave” is a framing device for accomplishing this task.

Democratization and Swings of the “Pendulum”

Another directional metaphor of democratization is the view that countries can “swing” like a “pendulum” back and forth between democratic and non-democratic forms of government. In particular, as the metaphor implies, with regard to Latin America, collectively, the countries of that region have, at various times, experienced democratic and non-democratic forms of government, but have done so almost as a group moving from one system to another. Concerning the historical periodization of these shifts, Robert Pastor (1989, 3) writes that in the 1960s in Latin America, “democracy left as abruptly as it had arrived. The pendulum had swung back to dictatorship,” but “in the 1980s, the pendulum made its most majestic swing toward democracy.”²¹ For Pastor, the metaphor of the pendulum is explicitly tied to how one theorizes the nature of political change. Pastor, like many other scholars, seeks an explanation for why countries adopt democratic or non-democratic forms of government. This endeavor is not always realized: “In the case of democracy, theories have been more effective in explaining the previous swing of the pendulum than in predicting the next swing” (ibid., 7). The goal of Pastor and his fellow authors in his edited volume is to use the pendulum metaphor to refine theories of political change.

It is useful, however, to consider the following: The “pendulum” metaphor mimics the related image of a toggle switch that can be turned from an on to an off position. Unlike such a switch, a pendulum seemingly can occupy multiple positions as it swings from side to side, that is, there is neither a definitive “on” nor “off” position to a pendulum but many locations along the pendulum’s arc. The metaphor nonetheless suggests a view of the political processes whereby countries can “swing” from one political

system to another, with gradations of democracy and non-democracy in between. In this view, unlike in the “wave” metaphor, however, it is not assumed that democratization “naturally” moves “forward” away from non-democratic forms of government.²² What there is, however, is a tendency to favor one system over the other, as is made explicit in the subtitle of Pastor’s edited book—*Democracy in the Americas: **Stopping the Pendulum*** (bold added).²³ One can accurately surmise that the authors of the volume do not want to stop the pendulum on the side of non-democracy, but, rather, have a preference to cease the process by which countries swing between democratic and non-democratic forms of government by keeping democracy in place. This desirability of democracy is echoed in secondary metaphors in Pastor’s edited book, for example, the chapter by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1989, 41), who pointedly advance the metaphor of “political crafting,” which can help “consolidate” democracy in ways that do not result in the “breakdown” or “destruction” of democratic forms of government. The “breakdown” and “destruction” metaphors are further reinforced by Laurence Whitehead (1989, 76) in the same volume in which he suggests that democratic consolidation can be “fragile.”

The “pendulum” metaphor, unlike metaphors of “transition” and “consolidation”—but similar to the idea of “forward” and “reverse” waves of democratization—acknowledges bidirectional political change. The “direction” of this change presumably can be detected by scholars; hence, Guillermo O’Donnell (1989, 62) in his chapter in the Pastor volume suggests some “navigation instruments” to discern the direction of that change. Yet, the acknowledgment of bidirectional change is made only by establishing a binary relationship between the categories of democratic and non-democratic political systems, something not necessarily expressed in the “waves” metaphor. Within democracy there are different institutional arrangements that can exist (e.g., presidential vs. parliamentary systems, unitary vs. federal states, etc.), and among non-democratic systems there are myriad forms governments can take. The “pendulum” metaphor glosses over these nuances by imagining a two-dimensional spectrum between ideal types of government, with only gradations of difference between these two imagined extremes. The metaphor makes it hard to imagine political change within democracies, let alone transformation among political arrangements within the multiple forms of non-democratic governance. Government in North Korea takes a far different shape than, say, government in Apartheid era South Africa. Both could fairly be described as non-democratic, and countries could conceivably make a

transition from one non-democratic form to another without the “pendulum” metaphor providing the analytical tools to predict and explain the circumstances under which such change would take place. The swing is only from the non-democratic to the democratic side of the spectrum, with few theoretical clues as to what explains change within democracy and non-democracy alike.

Directions of Democracy and “Modernization”

The metaphorical forward movement that is theorized to be associated with democratization is closely related to the images suggested by the metaphorical processes of “modernization.” As is the case with many words in their contemporary sense, the etymology of the English word “modern” reveals a conceptual metaphor, in this case, the metaphor of temporal progression. The *Oxford English Dictionary* indicates that the word “modern” has its roots in the Latin *modernus*, simply meaning “of the present time” (*modernus* itself derives from the Latin *modo* meaning “just now”). In its earliest usage in English in the fifteenth century, the word “modern” conveyed this sense, meaning “being in existence at this time; current, present” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). By the late sixteenth century, however, “modern” had taken on additional meanings, reflecting what cognitive linguists would see as a conceptual metaphor relating to how humans physically experience time. Specifically, by the late 1500s, “modern” had come to mean “of or relating to the present and recent times, *as opposed to the remote past*; of, relating to, or originating in the current age or period” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, emphasis added). That is to say, as humans physically experience the present in relationship to the past, what once meant only “now” became a conceptual metaphor for “and not then” (i.e., the past). In other words, “modern” has become a metaphor for the passage of time. Moreover, since humans physically experience time as part of a time–space continuum, “modern” came to mean a directional progression forward from times “back” in the past to the present and “forward” into the future. Modernization, then, represents a physical direction through time and space.

It is hence not surprising that modernization theory as it is associated with democratization similarly conveys a metaphorical forward direction toward a desired political outcome. Modernization theory and democratization are closely linked in the theoretical literature. One of the earliest studies linking modernization and democracy was conducted by Seymour

Martin Lipset (1959) who confirmed that economic development and political democracy tend to be correlated, although Lipset was careful to point out that democracy has existed in a variety of economic conditions and therefore one should be cautious about positing a linear causal relationship from modernization to democracy.²⁴ Samuel Huntington (1968), too, cautions that while modernization precedes democracy, it does not do so in an uninterrupted fashion, and non-democratic forms of government can follow processes of economic modernization just as easily as democratic ones depending on a variety of factors.

The relationship between economic modernization and democratization thus is highly disputed. Using statistical analysis, Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi (1997, 177) conclude definitively that “the emergence of democracy is not a by-product of economic development. Democracy is or is not established by political actors pursuing their goals, and it can be initiated at any level of development.” Whether or not economic development brings about democracy, however, is not the point. It also does not matter if it is democratization that creates favorable conditions for economic modernization, a hypothesis that also has been entertained. What matters is that both processes are conceived of as representing a metaphorical forward progression, a directional movement forward through space and time.

This metaphorical image is supported by Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel. Inglehart and Welzel (2005, 1) reject the hypothesis of a linear relationship between socioeconomic development and democracy, arguing that “industrialization brings rationalization, secularization, and bureaucratization, but the rise of the knowledge society brings another set of changes that *move in a new direction*, placing increasing emphasis on individual autonomy, self-expression, and free choice” (emphasis added). Nonetheless, Inglehart and Welzel (2) posit no less than what they call a “unified theory of modernization, cultural change, and democratization,” or what the subtitle of their book refers to metaphorically as *the human development sequence*. Inglehart and Welzel’s addition of culture to the relationship between modernization and democracy provides the previously missing element by which human development moves metaphorically “forward.” The authors’ thesis is supported by what they see as the fact that “to a large extent, culture is transmitted from one generation to the next” (ibid.). This is the experiential context on which the metaphor of movement forward through time and space is built. Sequentialism, as highlighted in the book’s subtitle, is how humans come to conceptualize

progress based on the physical experience of the passage of time in a physical plane. Furthermore, just as physicists tells us that humans experience space and time as two dimensions that are seemingly felt as one, Inglehart and Welzel (3) suggest that the human development sequence has three dimensions, which are socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional in nature. Moreover, in keeping with the notion that democratization can move “backward,” the authors argue that the “sequence can also operate in the reverse direction, with threats to survival leading to increased emphasis on survival values, which in turn are conducive to authoritarian institutions” (ibid., 4).

The important point is that whether they are early theories of modernization, significant modifications of modernization theory such as those advanced by Inglehart or Welzel, or challenges to modernization theory such as those offered by Przeworski and Limongi, what these approaches all share in common is the notion that economic modernization and democratization represent the concept of *progress* that can move “forward” in a desired direction or “backward” toward less desirable outcomes. The notion that progress is desirable is deeply rooted in the human condition of sensing the passage of time as a physical experience (Goatly 2007, 51ff). Progress “forward” seems almost a natural consequence of the space–time continuum. Metaphors of progress are common in the human experience. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980, 1999) and Lakoff and Mark Turner (1989) have observed, a pervasive metaphor in human thought is LIFE IS A JOURNEY. It would appear that part of being human is to conceptualize life as having a direction. Since what precedes any individual’s life is non-existence, it seems natural that anything “forward” from nothingness represents “progress.” Even death, which inspires almost universal dread, is seen as an inevitable natural progression through life.

It should not be surprising then that scholarship on modernization and democratization conceives of these processes as involving “progress” toward desired ends, while other economic and political forms represent “reverse” movement “backward” away those ends. Even scholars who reject a causal relationship between modernization and democratization nonetheless see parallel processes, each of which are imbued with forward direction but with the possibility of moving in reverse. What is missing from this conceptualization is the possibility that economic relationships and politics, each on their own and in conjunction with each other, are constituted by an infinite number of discrete interactions, which are variously interrelated yet independent of each other. Time and space may

indeed carry through them each of these individual interactions, and humans may experience them as a progression (hence the conceptual metaphors of progress). But as analytical categories, there is nothing to suggest an inevitable forward or backward movement through a range of economic and political forms. Human development is not, as Przeworski and Limongi will have it, sequential; it is only metaphorically conceptualized as such, much in the same way “chaos” is made possible as a metaphorical concept from the seeming randomness humans experience in other aspects of their lives. Economic relations and political forms could be, and have been, conceived of as chaotic (as in chaos theory), yielding a different set of analytical propositions than modernization theory. Which set of theoretical propositions scholars choose to accept is to some degree arbitrary, but, once accepted, these propositions determine the conclusions that are drawn. As applied to economic relations and democracy, the metaphor of directional progress has dominated the analysis to a significant degree.

“Advanced Democracies”

A corollary to the concept of democracy having a metaphorical “forward direction” is the notion that once democracy is “consolidated” it metaphorically “advances” in that forward direction to the point that countries can be classified as “advanced democracies.”²⁵ It is not surprising that this term has no universal definition. A review of the scholarly literature along with textbooks, political science syllabi, as well as essays written by political commentators demonstrates that individuals are free to define the concept as they see fit. What unifies conceptions of “advanced” democracies, however, is the idea that political systems falling into this category can be compared as a group to political systems that are “behind” somehow in their political development. Thus, for example, Sheri Berman (2007, 31) writes of the “political trajectories” that countries follow as they move in the direction of advanced democracy. Moreover, Berman (28) writes that “few serious observers today doubt that democracy is the best form of modern political governance,” with the obvious implication that arriving at the state of “advanced” democracy represents, as is clearly implied, an “advance,” relative to other forms of government.²⁶

About “advanced” democracies and “normal” politics, Andreas Schedler (1998, 93) writes

there are those “advanced democracies” that presumptively possess some positive traits over and above the minimal defining criteria of liberal democracy, and therefore rank higher in terms of democratic quality than many new democracies. This term risks idealizing and reifying the wealthy Western democracies, but even if we recognize that admiring references to “established Western democracies” often rely on stereotypes, we have to acknowledge that discursive constructs (such as “democratic normality”) are social realities too.

The attribution of positive qualities to “advanced” democracies relative to those that are, presumably, further “behind” is fully consistent with the notion that democracy proceeds in a direction “away” from something undesirable “toward” a state that is more fully desired. Even within the category of democratic political systems the idea that some governments are more “advanced” than others implies progress toward a state of completion rather than the idea that democracy can take many forms, none of which is necessarily superior to others. The directional metaphor of democratization leaves little room for thinking about democracy as a dynamic process in and of itself, which represents an ongoing process of multiform change.

Summary

In summary, we can construe the “directional” image of democratization as part of a conceptual metaphor similar to linguistic expressions of forward flow. For example, some theorizing about the international diffusion of democracy has borrowed the metaphorical language of “dominoes” that was employed at one time by politicians to frame the danger of the spread of communism by way of states that succumbed to communist expansion (i.e., “falling dominoes”).²⁷ However, unlike the danger posed to democracy by the image of “falling dominoes” inherent in Cold War rhetoric, the literature on the diffusion of democracy conceives of dominoes toppling in a *forward* direction, much like “waves” of democracy carrying the progress of democratic reform into a positive future. Thus, for example, Harvey Starr (1991) writes of “democratic dominoes” that fall “forward” toward democratization as process of a diffusion of democratic practices.²⁸ As with “waves” of democracy, however, there can be impediments to the diffusion of democracy, and thus Etel Solingen (2012) also conceives of metaphorical “firewalls” that impede the diffusion of democracy despite the trend of falling democratic dominoes, although once democratic practices are diffused, they can be set in place wholly or partially through processes of metaphorical “sedimentation.”

Similarly, in her examination of transitional justice and the spread of human rights norms to nascent democracies, Kathryn Sikkink (2011, 5) has dubbed the emergence, spread/diffusion, and impact of human rights norms as part of the “justice cascade”: “Justice cascade means that there has been a shift in the *legitimacy of the norm* of individual accountability for human rights violations and an increase in criminal prosecutions on behalf of that norm” (emphasis in the original). Following the convention of thinking about progress in the transmission of democratic ideas in terms of the forward movement of naturalistic phenomena such as “waves,” Sikkink (*ibid.*) writes that the term “justice cascade” “captures how the idea started as a *small stream*, but later caught on suddenly, sweeping along many actors in its *wake*” (emphasis added).²⁹ This evoking of Huntington’s “wave” image as an aquatic “cascade” suggests that scholars of democratization draw on a shared conceptual metaphor of political change in terms of spatial direction, with progressive movement “forward” in the direction of democracy and non-democratic practices thought of as “regressive” or directionally “backward” toward the past.

Movement through space is a powerful physical experience for humans and is the source of numerous conceptual metaphors that shape understanding of any number of aspects of existence and human relations such as love and romance, work and careers, education and schooling, and economics and commerce. There is a strong connection between the experience humans have of moving forward associated with the basic act of locomotion. To walk forward is to progress toward something; to walk backward is to lose forward momentum and hence move away from a desired goal. This is not always the case, of course. When moving forward is coerced, such as the forward march of prisoners of war, such forward progression is negatively associated. Likewise, individuals moving backward away from danger (e.g., away from a fire) associate such backing away with the positive experience of survival. Nonetheless, the metaphor of life as a process of forward movement is well documented and carries over into numerous realms of human relations. The forward direction of democratization is no exception. To the extent democracy is associated with a desirable system of governance, democratization is metaphorically conceived as having a forward direction, while transformation of politics to undemocratic forms is seen as movement backward. This view sees politics not as a continuous process of dynamic change but as a directional movement forward or backward through physical space.

REFORM/DEMOCRACY “FROM ABOVE” VERSUS REFORM/ DEMOCRACY “FROM BELOW”

While democratization is often said to move metaphorically in the direction “forward” toward democracy or “backward” away from it, political change that brings about democracy is frequently hypothesized to come metaphorically in the guise of reform either “from above” or “from below.” As with many metaphors in political science theory, the concept of political activity occurring spatially “above” and “below” corresponds to other analytical metaphors such as the architectural metaphor of nation- and state-“building.” To “build” a nation or state is to erect a metaphorical edifice with structural activity “above” and “below.” This is noted by Pål Kolstø (2000, 16), who writes: “The traditional, pre-modern state was made up of isolated communities with parochial cultures at the ‘bottom’ of society and a distant, and aloof, state structure at the ‘top,’ largely content with collecting taxes and keeping order. Through nation-building these two spheres were brought into more intimate contact with each other.” To the extent a country’s political “structure” can be “built,” conceptualizing the “top” and “bottom” of that structure in terms of the “structure” of society is a logical metaphorical extension.

To think of politics in terms of politicians, policymakers, and government leaders located “above” and society located “below” is of course about as common a conceptual metaphor as one is likely to find in theories of politics. In fact, it is politicians, policymakers, and government leaders who are most likely to advance the notion that they rule “over” the citizens “below.” Czar Alexander II of Russia is widely quoted as saying that “it is better to abolish serfdom *from above* than to wait until it will begin to abolish itself *from below*” (emphasis added).³⁰ Political leaders, whether they think of themselves as members of the “elite” or hailing from the “common people” are nonetheless prone, in Alexander II’s image, to conceive of a relationship with the rulers located “over” those whom they rule. Spatial metaphors involving the vertical organization of society, of course, are not new in conceptualizations of the politics, society, and law. Politicians and law enforcement officials are often said to operate “above the law” when they attempt to bypass established legal procedures.³¹ In public administration, some managerial practices that ignore input from “lower level” offices are frequently described as “top-down” in nature.³²

Scholars are just as likely to perpetuate images of politics existing in a vertically separated space through such analytical categories as reform

“from above” and reform “from below” in the process of democratization. What makes the metaphor perhaps odd is that it relies on a spatial juxtaposition of rulers “over” the ruled in theories of a political system, democracy, that presumably is egalitarian in its ideal practice. In fact, early appearances of the term “reform from above” in the scholarly literature do not necessarily associate such reform with efforts to establish democratic political institutions. For example, James Bill uses the term in a 1970 article on political reforms in Iran, which, although presented as means for modernizing Iranian economic institutions, nonetheless kept autocratic political institutions intact. Bill (1970, 33) writes:

The White Revolution in Iran represents a new attempt to introduce reform from above which, it is hoped, will preserve traditional power patterns. Through land reform, the Shah has concentrated the aristocracy in the city by severing their connection with the countryside. He has then moved to ally himself with the peasantry against the professional middle class. The first step is designed to buttress the Monarch’s position in the system by weakening the opportunity for upper-class challenger.³³

Here, the metaphor of political leaders reforming “from above” makes sense inasmuch as they sought to preserve their position “above” the citizenry “over” which they ruled.

These types of early uses of the term “from above” often referred to economic modernization more than political democratization. Echoing Bill’s essay on Iran, for instance, James Petras and Robert LaPorte (1970) compared “modernization from above” versus “reform from below” in their article on US policy toward Latin American agricultural development. In later formulations, however, the metaphor of rulers “above” the ruled remained despite the term “reform from above” now pertaining to efforts toward democratization as in the title of John Pevehouse’s (2005) book on regional organizations and democratization, *Democracy from Above*.³⁴ In Pevehouse’s case, the “above” in question is even “higher” than the governments of states, that is, it represents international organizations, which, as global-level governing organizations, are metaphorically “above” the governments of countries in the process of democratization. Country-specific case studies of “democracy from above” include the case of Bhutan where Aim Sinpeng (2007, 27) argues that “the King’s decision to transform the country governance...[was] a carefully planned and calculated decision” that was imposed in a metaphorically top-down fashion as opposed to being a function merely of “the country’s socio-economic development.”

Even in the stages of reform in which such reform is said to be coming from “above,” that is, during change in non-democratic political systems, the spatial location of not only government officials but also individuals in the opposition situated “above” the mass of regular citizens is a metaphorical concept that is rather revealing in its theoretical implications. The term “reform from above” has been applied to countries experiencing democratization in which some of the reformers were in fact not part of the existing political system at all. For example, in the southern European countries of Greece, Portugal, and Spain, which underwent democratizing processes in the 1970s, many of the reformers were in fact, not part of the existing political systems but were vocal opponents, some of whom had lived for decades in exile. These individuals have nonetheless been seen as operating “above” average citizens in their reform efforts. While it is true that some of these reformers were at one time in the past active members of previous governments, for example in Greece, before democracy was established, they held no political office and therefore, in terms of rank, were no different from the average citizen presumably located “below.” What made them metaphorically reformers “from above” was that they were seen as not leading mass-based movements of regular citizens but were members of the political “elite,” that is to say, select members of society who occupy positions “above” others.³⁵

What’s more, it is the position of reformers “from above” that renders tenuous some processes of democratization, particularly in their early stages. Thus, for example, referring to efforts toward democracy in Latin America, Youssef Cohen (1987, 30) writes: “Because they are handed down from above, such democracies are prone to polarization and radicalization. The particular tensions of these democracies work against their transformation into stable democratic regimes. Instead, democracies from above favor the emergence of modern forms of autocracy.” Whether or not a democratic form of government remains in place over a certain period of time is of course an empirical question. However, when making predictions about the longevity of democratic governance, the categorization of reform coming “from above” creates suspicion that such reform may not be long-lasting because it emanates from political rulers and not from the people “below.” This assumption is shared by political commentators such as Tom Bentley (2002, no page number) who proclaimed that “you can’t impose democracy from above,” that is to say, “political reformers need to drop the idea that constitutional blueprints can transform the culture of politics.” Instead, Bentley (*ibid.*) argues that “we should be

looking, not at the formal institutional structure but more at the informal spread of relationships, conversations and ideas,” that is to say, change that comes metaphorically “from below.”

Reform “from below” therefore represents political change brought about by presumably regular or average people who in their collective action force such change. As in “reform from above,” the term “reform from below” can apply not necessarily to efforts toward democracy but also economic modernization. Thus, for example, Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland (2009, 2) discuss economic liberalization in North Korea that emanated not from state structures and institutions but from “opportunity entrepreneurship” on the part of individual citizens in the wake of widespread economic hardship. In a totalitarian state such as North Korea, it makes a certain sense to conceptualize the state as occupying a position “over” the rest of society, which labors “under” the state’s rule. Similar episodes of economic reform “from below” have been noted in China (Liu 1992) where rural populations were given some room by the state to experiment with market liberalization.

Democracy “from below,” in a fashion similar to democracy “from above,” applies not only to economic modernization but also to efforts to fundamentally alter systems of government.³⁶ For example, Norrin Ripsman (2016) posits that following periods of armed conflict, a two-step process occurs, which involves “peacemaking from above,” whereby state leaders orchestrate the cessation of hostilities followed by the establishment of “peace from below” wherein societal actors promote political and economic stabilization. The way the elites and other citizens are conceptualized retains the image that elites are in a position “over” the mass base of the citizenry. Democracy “from below” is thus theorized in the form of mass-based movements, for example, Elisabeth Jean Wood’s (2000) study of democratization movements in South Africa and El Salvador, which she frames as “insurgent” transitions coming “from below.” The notion of an “insurgency” follows logically from thinking of the mass base of a country’s population residing “under” those who rule “over” them. In another sense, democracy “from below” makes a qualitative distinction between the structures and institutions of formal governance and local systems of governance (e.g., the case of Ethiopia examined in Zewde and Pausewang 2002).

However, the term “democracy from below” need not be limited to insurgencies, mass-based movements, or local forms of governance. For example, Stephen Jones (2000) applies the term to interest group politics

in the Republic of Georgia, Ruud Koopmans (1995) harnesses the concept to study social movements in the established democracy of West Germany, and Liebert, Gattig, and Evas (2013) assert that civil society can democratize governance in the EU from below. In other words, regardless of the political context or the type of reform coming “from below,” democracy emanating from that “direction” is conceptualized in this metaphor as pertaining to citizens who are “located” in a spatial sense underneath those who rule them, even in established democracies.

What the metaphors of reform “from above” and reform “from below” have in common is a view of political relationship that distinguishes “normal” politics—in which agenda-setting, policy formulation, and policy-making engage a range of members of society interacting in a variety of ways—from the ostensibly “special” processes of democratization, at which times there is an analytical distinction made between those who rule or presume to rule “above” those who are ruled “below.” While this distinction is latent in much political theory, it becomes pronounced in theories of democratization, which see the democratization process as separate and unique from presumably everyday politics that occur in democracies and non-democracies alike. This dichotomy between democratization, which represents a process of political change, and normal everyday politics, which represents a period of political stasis, is accentuated by the metaphor that imposes a distinct way of conceptualizing relationships among political actors when change is taking place. Of course, change is ever present in all political circumstances. But thinking about reform involving spatial relationships among political actors during periods of democratization masks the varied relationships among political actors that are obscured by imposing a special way of thinking about political actors during times of change.

In addition, it is interesting to note that the spatial metaphor of reform “from above” represents a bit of a mixed metaphor in the sense that such reform is instigated by leaders of a country and “leaders” typically are thought to lead from “ahead” in the “forward direction” of progress toward democracy. Thus, scholars are presented with a mixed metaphor of leaders at once *spatially* “above” the processes of democratization as well as *directionally* “ahead” of society in the progress toward democracy. In this sense, the spatial relationship of individuals being situated “above” and “below” each other during periods of democratization often is accompanied by the spatial metaphor of democratization proceeding spatially in a direction “forward” democracy or “backward” toward non-democratic

forms. In the “space” that politics occupies in human interactions, democratic change is multi-directional, moving in a variety of horizontal and vertical directions. This is not surprising given the tendency to associate politics with a physical “structure.”

GOVERNMENT HAS “DENSITY”: “THICK” AND “THIN” POLITICAL AUTHORITY

To the extent democracy and/or reform can come from “above” or from “below,” an image appears of politics practiced in a vertically aligned space. This notion of politics practiced up and down within a vertical space leads to associated metaphorical constructions. Among the emergent metaphors in theorizing the nature of (democratic) governance within an up-down environment is the notion that government has a “density,” that is, it is characterized by varying degrees of “thick” and “thin” political authority.³⁷ That is to say, if scholars conceive of democratic politics as comprising actors and relationships vertically arrayed relative to each other, it is not surprising that the density of this space thought of in terms of “thickness” or “thinness” would become part of the theoretical language used to interpret democratic politics.

A government’s metaphorical “density”—its degree of “thickness” or “thinness”—is thought of as relating to the number, extent of, and degree of influence of political institutions such as its bureaucratic agencies, executive departments, legislative committees, judicial bodies, and formal and informal practices such as those found in corporatist decision-making or consociationalism. The metaphorical qualities of “thickness” and “thinness” as applied to governments can be likened to how these qualities are associated with cultures. William Mishler and Detlef Pollack (2003, 239) conceive of “thick culture” as follows: “The essential idea of thick culture is that societies are distinguished and structures (and individual behaviour) are fundamentally conditioned by a primordial force, unseen but highly palpable, which contains the genetic code of all that is collectively important and meaningful in that society.” For Mishler and Pollack (239–240), thick culture is “essential,” “fundamental,” “exogenous,” “holistic,” “externally bounded and internally homogenous,” represents “a coherent cluster of orientations,” and is “durable.” “Thin” culture, by contrast, for Mishler and Pollack (241), “might be better understood not as the opposite end of the thick culture continuum but rather as a point

somewhere in the middle of a continuum between thick culture and no culture at all.” Mishler and Pollack (*ibid.*) contend that the concept of “thin” culture represents an effort by political scientists (as opposed to anthropologists) “eager to retain as much of the culture concept as they can while diluting or discarding various aspects of thick culture which are perceived to be incompatible with theory or inconsistent with observation.”³⁸ In other words, while anthropologists see culture as constitutive of people’s interests and therefore a “thick” element of their social and political interactions, traditional approaches to political science prefer to assume that individuals’ choices are dictated by interests. Culture in much political science theory thus only plays a “thin” role in determining what those interests are, assuming interests can otherwise be determined on the basis of individuals’ rational calculations.

As with many metaphors, the quality of “thickness” and “thinness” of political authority presumably exists along a spectrum. Describing the institutions involved in European integration, Jeffrey Checkel (2001, 51) writes: “For historical institutionalists, institutions get thicker, but only in a long-term historical perspective. In the near-term here and now, they are thin—structuring the game of politics and providing incentives for instrumentally motivated actors to rethink their strategies; they are a constraint on behaviour.” Moreover, although largely unspoken, there would appear to be an assumption that in gauging the health or viability of a democracy, “thick” political authority is preferable to “thin” authority. This may reflect a preference among scholars for governments that are poised to provide tangible and intangible benefits to their citizens. That is to say, “thick” political authority is associated with “positive” freedoms that only accrue to polities once democratic governments have been fully institutionalized enough to provide more than the negative freedoms, which governments only enjoying “thin” authority can provide.

Yet what is “thick” and what is “thin” as they apply to politics is to a large extent subjective, thus both limiting the utility of the density metaphor and revealing the theoretical predispositions of scholars.³⁹ For example, in his analysis of Hobbesian notions of absolutism, Shane Courtland suggests a formulation by which distinguishes “thick” versus “thin” absolutism is the extent to which sovereignty is supplemented by additional aspects of governance. For Courtland (2009, 443, n. 25), “thin absolutism” in the Hobbesian sense is comprised of three elements: “(i) there is no legal limit placed on the sovereign authority; (ii) the subjects have a political obligation to obey all laws of an effective sovereign; (iii)

the sovereign is the sole legal judge of whether he has violated the laws of nature.” By contrast, “thick absolutism” is not an increase in the intensity of the three aforementioned elements, but, rather, adds three additional elements to government: “(a) monarchy, (b) strong control of doctrines (to the point of indoctrination), and (c) total elimination of individual freedoms” (*ibid.*, n. 26). In other words, what distinguishes Hobbesian absolutism for Courtland is not a greater extent of government control but a more diverse set of institutions and practices for asserting that control. While some scholars may share this perspective, others may view the “thickness” or “thinness” of political authority in terms of the degree to which a set of defined governmental institutions and practices are exerted over and throughout society. For Courtland, the degree of absolutism resides in the various instruments governments possess, while rival conceptions of political authority see absolutism as a function of the extent to which those instruments are exerted.

Given the subjective nature of notions of “thick” and “thin” political authority, of what utility are these concepts in theorizing about democracy? Despite disagreements about how exactly to think about “thickness” and “thinness,” these metaphors would seem to indicate that scholars perceive of a metaphorical “density” in government and political authority. As is true for virtually all metaphors, this is likely because scholars, like other individuals, experience political authority in a physical sense in terms of the extent to which they feel they are controlled by the institutions of government. Cognitive linguistics tells us that metaphors are an expression of physical experiences. While political authority can, on the one hand, be conceived of as an abstraction, it is, on the other hand, also expressed in terms of the physical control that governments have on all human beings. This can be expressed in extreme ways, for instance, in the form of torture or imprisonment, but it can also be felt in more subtle ways, for example, in the form of waiting in line for government goods or services. Foucault (1978, 1988, 1995) has gone as far as to assert that virtually all forms of political authority is expressed in the physical control that governments exert over people’s minds, bodies, and sexualities. While many political scientists would reject Foucault’s philosophical approach, they nonetheless would likely agree that governments exerting political authority have the ability to have an impact on what people physically experience at various points of life.

That political authority therefore has a metaphorical density is not an exotic notion, but it is not fully developed in the literature, with the result

that it represents more a theoretical hunch than a set of useful analytical tools. Ontologically, scholars have only suggested the ways in which “thick” and “thin” political authority is expressed. Epistemologically, scholars can thus merely hypothesize about how one might understand such “thickness” or “thinness.” Methodologically, there is therefore no agreed-upon way of identifying or measuring the “density” of political authority. As it stands, disagreement notwithstanding, scholars nonetheless seemingly share with Foucault the notion that government physically affects people’s lives, and it is worthwhile to formulate a means to study the extent to which governments have this ability and the degree to which such ability is exerted.

Lastly, in imagining the thickness or thinness of democracy, scholars also frequently invoke the notion of “depth,” as in the concept of a metaphorical “deepening” of democracy.⁴⁰ Ironically, imagining democracy in terms of “depth” invites comparison with other ways of conceptualizing the metaphorical spatial layers at which democracy exists, as illustrated by the newly popularized notion of the so-called deep state, that is “shadow governments” comprising elected and unelected officials, members of security and intelligence agencies, bureaucrats, and individuals in businesses and in some cases criminal organizations who secretly control ostensibly democratic governments.⁴¹ This irony only underscores the way that seemingly straightforward concepts of governance such as density actuality reveal deeply held views of politics that create ambiguity but also reflect the experiential context in which scholarship takes place.

METAPHOR OF THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT

To the extent democracy and the processes by which countries adopt democracy are conceptualized metaphorically, it is not surprising that once democracy has been established the extent and degree to which it responds to citizens’ expectations also is thought of in metaphorical terms. In particular, the presence or absence of democracy relative to what society expects is captured in the metaphorical concept of the so-called democratic deficit. Although the concept of a democratic deficit has been applied to other political contexts, it is perhaps most closely associated with the processes of European integration.⁴² The *Oxford English Dictionary* contains no citation to indicate the first usage of the term “democratic deficit,” although Pieter Bouwen (2003, 3, fn. 4) and Yves Mény (2003, 8) claim that the term was coined in 1979 by David Marquand in his book

Parliament for Europe, referring to the lack of direct elections for members of the European Parliament, which, ironically, held its first direct elections for members in June of that year. As Mény (*ibid.*) points out, linguistically “democratic deficit is a powerful catchword, which can be easily manipulated by all those who are not fully satisfied with the working of European institutions.” Yet most scholars who have studied the democratic deficit observe that there is no unanimous agreement about how to define it, measure it, or even determine what it is.⁴³

Mény and others have opined that the lack of a clear definition of “democracy” renders a clear conception of the “democratic deficit” problematic.⁴⁴ From a metaphorical point of view, the concept of interest in the expression “democratic deficit” is “deficit.”⁴⁵ The term “deficit” is borrowed from the realm of accounting, which, in that context, represents the difference between accounts received and accounts payable when the latter exceeds the former. The accounting metaphor in the conceptualization of the democratic deficit is captured by Pippa Norris (2011, 4–5) who writes:

It has long been thought that regimes are more likely to endure and flourish where a balanced equilibrium exists between citizens’ aspirations for democracy (measured by how much people value democratic ideals and reject autocratic alternatives) and its perceived supply (monitored by public satisfaction with the democratic performance of their own country). The gap between aspirations and satisfaction is captured here by the concept of *democratic deficits*. (emphasis in the original)

It is interesting to note that after using terms associated with finance and accounting such as “balanced,” “value,” and “supply,” Norris refers not to the democratic “deficit” in the singular, but democratic “deficits,” almost as if to imply a running shortage in the accounting of democracy on the national political books of any given country.⁴⁶ Norris points out that while the concept of the democratic deficit has been most associated with public dissatisfaction with accountability of the institutions of European integration, it can be applied to other political contexts where public desire for democracy is not met with governmental institutions that meet the public’s expectations.

What the term “democratic deficit” is meant to imply in the study of democratic politics, therefore, is the lack of *accountability* on the part of political institutions (e.g., as it would apply to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Commission, etc.) relative to the expectations of democratic governance in which democracy is the standard

form of government. Referring to European integration, Giandomenico Majone (1998, 14) writes that “if the expression is taken literally—an absence or incomplete development of institutions which we take for granted in a parliamentary democracy—then a deficit of democracy is indeed a distinctive feature of a process within which economic and political integration not only move at different speeds but also follow different principles—supranationalism in one case, inter-governmentalism in the other.” Of course, in most discussions, “democratic deficit” is not taken literally, a fact which Majone readily accepts, arguing that the term does not capture the expectations of what are understood to be the accepted functions of the agencies of European integration. Rather, Majone claims that as long as the institutions of the EU operate as they are designed, that is, that they are accountable in the administration of their functions, European citizens will adjust their expectations accordingly.

Whether or not Majone’s claims in 1998 can be substantiated in light of subsequent events, his and other scholars’ reference to “accountability” as a measure of a metaphorical deficit is telling.⁴⁷ Majone is right—what is understood as the “democratic deficit” in Europe is not taken literally. The concept of a democratic “deficit” is a metaphor that can have a broad application, but most prominently has been applied specifically to the EU, presumably because the politics of European integration are unique and require a set of terms that reflect the distinctiveness of European integration relative to other realms of politics (both domestic and international). To extend the metaphor, the implication is that there is a certain “amount” of democracy that is not being fulfilled by the agencies of the EU; hence, a “deficit” exists between what is “paid” (metaphorically) by the people of Europe and what is “owed” back to them by the EU to make the “accounts” of democracy come into “balance.”

One way then to measure the democratic “deficit” in any polity would be to compare it “quantitatively” to comparable political systems. Indeed, using this standard several scholars have argued that the so-called democratic deficit in the EU, at least, does not exist. Fritz Scharpf (1999, 10–11) uses the language of “inputs” and “outputs” to test for the existence of a “deficit” in democratic legitimacy in the EU: “The input perspective, deriving democratic legitimacy from a pre-existing collective identity, emphasizes the irredeemable aspects of the European democratic deficit. By contrast, the output perspective allows for the consideration of a much wider variety of legitimizing mechanisms.” Contrary to many popular impressions, Scharpf goes on to argue that from an output perspec-

tive, the EU is not in deficit in terms of democratic legitimacy. Andrew Moravcsik (2002, 621) concurs, asserting that “up till now there is little evidence that these specific examples *add up to* a structural democratic deficit in the EU. Any mature polity could point to areas in which such democratic protections are stronger or weaker; in this regard the EU is hardly exceptional” (emphasis added). Thus, to the extent there is a certain “amount” of democracy at any given time, one can, in Moravcsik’s phrasing, “add up” the amount of democracy, compare it what is available, and determine if the accounts are in deficit.

Moravcsik resurrects this quantitative notion of measuring a “democratic deficit” when he extends the discussion from European integration to global governance writ large. Moravcsik (2004, 337) postulates the ability to quantify democratic government: “Any democratic *metric* derived from ideal theory must therefore be ‘*calibrated*’ in order to assess whether the current arrangements are the best that are feasible under ‘real-world’ circumstances” (emphasis added). Moravcsik (*ibid.*, 362) concludes that if the so-called democratic deficit is to be measured, it should adhere to the standards of social science in which outcomes can be evaluated rigorously: “Any assessment of the democratic legitimacy of regional and global governance must not just be philosophical, but empirical and social scientific as well. Rather than comparing international organizations to idealized ancient, Westminster-style, or imaginary political systems, the baseline should be the real-world practices of existing governments acting imperfectly under complex constraints.” For Moravcsik, quantifying democracy allows one to determine definitively to what extent it might be in deficit, assuming expectations of democracy can be similarly quantified and measured.

The entire idea that democracy can be quantified and measured with metrics is a somewhat odd metaphorical formulation since it implies something novel in the study of politics, namely, that there is a finite amount of democracy at any given time and, presently, international organizations such as the EU may or may not be delivering that sum to the people. Moravcsik, for one, argues that there is *not* a democratic deficit in the EU, a conclusion he arrives at precisely through social scientific means, not philosophical introspection. What exactly is the correct amount of democracy that should be supplied by the EU is subject to scholarly disagreement, but in this metaphorical view, it can be systematically determined if

the institutions of European integration are or are not in “deficit” relative to what is owed back to the citizens of Europe.

This concept—the notion that international organizations such as the EU may or may not respond to the wishes of the populace in the same way as democratically elected bodies do in individual states—could be captured with any number of theories or metaphorical images, many of which already exist when describing lack of accountability in the domestic politics of democratic states. That is to say, one could analyze the failure of European governing institutions to respond to the will of the people in terms of shortcomings in pluralist or corporatist political institutions, or one could frame the issue using different metaphorical terms, for example, democratic “accountability,” which is based on a metaphor that is similar to democratic “deficit,” implying that leaders metaphorically “owe” responsive government to the people. The attention paid by scholars to the presence or absence of a democratic “deficit” thus reflects a specific way of thinking about democratic politics, one which reveals scholars’ preference for thinking about politics as a system of interest inputs and policy outputs. Inasmuch as politicians themselves often interpret voters’ interests revolving around “pocketbook issues,” that scholars should use an economic metaphor to conceptualize citizens’ expectations indicates that their perspectives parallel politicians’ views.

NARRATIVES IN THE METAPHORS OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Part of what metaphors used in theories of democratization reveal is that scholars often conceive of democratization as a political process distinct from the “normal” activities and process of politics within democracy or in other political settings. The metaphorical language of “transition,” “consolidation,” and “waves,” among other things, suggests distinct aspects of governance that are set apart from the types of change that occur as part of the regular processes of politics, which take place in the normal course of political life. In particular, many, if not most, scholars would acknowledge that one of the defining features of democracy is that it is a dynamic system of governance which permits ongoing change in large part because it is a form of government in which contestation is an integral element.⁴⁸ Even the most totalitarian political systems are characterized by change as leaders move in and out of positions of authority and government bureaucracies effect and implement new sets of policies over time. One can speak of stages and phases of political change, but the

ongoing nature of politics makes it difficult to identify clearly demarcated beginnings and ends.

The metaphorical language of scholarship on democratization, however, suggests political activity that is precisely characterized by starting and ending points, even if they are not necessarily clearly discerned. For example, Guillermo O'Donnell (1996, 39) reminds us that "there is no theory that would tell us why and how the new polyarchies that have institutionalized elections will 'complete' their institutional set, or otherwise become 'consolidated.'" The notion that politics is discernible as change is replaced by a language of periods with starts and stops. No doubt this is part of scholars' effort to create systems of classification, political categories, and typologies, which lend themselves to theories specifying the conditions by which one analytical category of political processes leads to another.⁴⁹ Thus, for example, scholars such as Larry Diamond (1999, 65) define "consolidation" in such ways that it represents the end phase in the process of democratization, that is, consolidated democracy is a system of government that is seen as "the only game in town."⁵⁰ This is precisely the point, then, in unearthing the metaphorical concepts that inform such theoretical endeavors. Political science is by its very nature an academic enterprise preoccupied with identifying causal patterns that occur across comparable circumstances. However, as with other academic undertakings, it is the metaphors of inquiry that determine in part what causal logics make intuitive sense and merit empirical research. The inherent ongoing and changing nature of politics notwithstanding, the metaphors of theories of democratization determine a research agenda that assumes beginnings and endings of political cycles more than a view of politics that incorporates unending and ongoing change.

Of course, as with any sets of metaphors in the study of politics and IR, one can ask what alternatives there are to those that currently frame the debate. For example, in response to Thomas Carothers' 2002 article in which he declares an end to "the transition paradigm," Ghia Nodia (2002, 14) asks, "if 'transition' is no longer an apt metaphor for what these countries are experiencing, how *should* we conceptualize their condition? And what, if anything, should we do differently because we have stopped calling them by one name and are searching for another?" (emphasis in the original). David Becker's (1999, 139–140) solution is to "abandon the classification of liberal democracies as 'transitional,' 'consolidated,' and the like" and instead focus on the processes of politics that are ongoing across political forms "by adopting an analytical focus that concentrates its

attention on conflict and collaboration among social forces striving to use structures of institutional authority to serve their own interests.”⁵¹ In other words, rather than thinking about metaphorical democratic “transition” and “consolidation” as distinct phases, Becker suggests that democratization be seen as embodying the same processes of politics that apply to (potentially all) other political contexts.

The need to think about democracy and democratization in the wider context of politics as a dynamic process is highlighted by the failure of political science to adequately explain or predict political change where democratic governance is tenuous. In recent history, the advent of the so-called the Arab Spring does not represent a neat “transition” “to” democracy, but rather, involves a complex array of political practices and institutions that are not easily classified nor defined. For instance, non-democratic regimes in place in countries such as Egypt attempted to orchestrate a variety of political changes in response to popular uprisings, but these changes were not necessarily in the “direction” of democracy. By the same token, those individuals agitating for change were not necessarily demanding a “transition” to democracy as it is commonly practiced in the West. Instead, what the world was seeing were movements for changes in the political practices of these countries as well as efforts by existing governments either to resist such change or accommodate it in ways that the West would not necessarily understand as “democracy.”

It is not just the “Arab Spring.” The complicated nature of politics, which cannot be measured through metaphorical concepts, is not limited to regions where democratization is presumably on a linear path. A variety of Central and Eastern European countries, for example, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania have not necessarily made a full “transition” “to” democracy, much to the consternation of other member-state governments in the EU. The expectation that democratization moves in forward and backward directions, that it goes through stages with beginning and end points, that it can be measured quantitatively in terms of its presence or absence (i.e., in ways that result in a democratic deficit) ignores the “messy” nature of politics in all its forms. Politics, after all, involves people, and people engaged in human relations do not respond to change in fully predictable ways. This is not to say that no patterns of political change can be discerned, but only to caution that metaphors of democracy have their limitations, particularly when they fail to acknowledge that what is normal about politics is its ever-changing nature.

NOTES

1. On the international aspects of democratization, see, for example, Whitehead (1986), Levitsky and Way (2005), Pevehouse (2005).
2. Biological metaphors also are indicated by Larry Diamond's (2011, 17) examination of "why democracies *survive*" (emphasis added).
3. On the debate between mechanical and biological metaphors in the study of IR, see Marks (2011, 74–78 and 162–169).
4. On the contrast between linear cause and effect and evolutionary change, Whitehead references Leydesdorff (2000).
5. Organic, life cycle, and contagion metaphors are carried forward in theories of international diffusion of democracy. Thus, for example, Etel Solingen (2012, 641) suggests that insights about democratization can be gleaned from investigating the concepts of "contagion, firewalls, medium, conductivity, sedimentation, and immunity," which "connect seamlessly with the natural sciences." See also Rosecrance (2014), Solingen and Börzel (2014), Wan (2014).
6. The notion that democratization represents processes that are analytically distinct from "normal" politics is highlighted by Ghia Nodia (2002, 14): "The most basic contention that lay at the basis of 'third wave' optimism was the notion that democracy is now the only 'normal' political regime." Likewise, in distinguishing processes of democratization from the "normal" state of politics in Argentina, Steven Levitsky (2000, 57) writes that the "turn toward 'normalized' democratic politics represents a major break with the past," while Larry Diamond (1994, 15) argues that democratic consolidation "involves behavioral and institutional changes that *normalize* democratic politics and narrow its uncertainty" (emphasis added). See also Michael Shafir's 1997 article on "Romania's Road to 'Normalcy'."
7. The role of mechanical and biological imagery in the study of IR is elaborated at length by Harald Kleinschmidt (2000).
8. "Transition" and "consolidation" dominate the metaphors that conceptualize stages of democratization, but there are others as well. Some commentators (mostly journalists, although some scholars as well) refer to "mature" democracy, which Karol Edward Sołtan (2009, 19) defines as "a form of democracy with the greatest capacity to overcome difficulties." On mature and maturing democracies, see also Diamond and Shin (2014).
9. Stoner, et al. (6) also make distinctions between transitions that can be considered "successes" or "failures," with the latter stuck in political forms that have not made the transformation from one type of governance to another.
10. For additional thoughts on what is deemed "transitions" to democracy, see the essays collected in Anderson (1999).

11. Those conditions are when there is agreement about political procedures for bringing about elected government, when free elections result in a government, when the new government has *de facto* authority to create policies, and when legislative, executive, and judicial bodies do not have to share power with other *de jure* political entities (Linz and Stepan 1996, 3).
12. The “forward” direction of democratization understood normatively as an “advance” and the “backward” direction as a reversal of political progress are captured by a variety of scholars. Thus, for example, the subtitle to Frances Hagopian and Scott Mainwaring’s 2005 edited volume *The Third Wave of Democratization in Latin America is Advances and Setbacks*, an indication that movement toward democracy represents progress toward the desired goal of democracy, while political changes in the opposite “direction” constitute steps backward away from the ultimate goal (as the term “setback” implies).
13. O’Donnell and Schmitter (70) supplement the metaphor of forward direction with the metaphor of democratization as a multilayered game of chess. In this metaphor, direction is not necessarily forward: “Political democracy, then, usually emerges from a nonlinear, highly uncertain, and imminently reversible process involving the cautious definition of certain spaces and moves on a multilayered board.” Thus, democratization is a directional process that can be reversed (*ibid.*, 8).
14. “Forward” and “backward” movement “toward” and “away” from democracy is not the same thing as another metaphor Turan (86ff) uses to conceptualize the politics of democratization in Turkey, that is, the idea of alternating “cycles” of democratization.
15. Following Huntington’s convention, Andreas Wimmer (2013) conceives of metaphorical “waves of war” brought on by the rise of nationalism and nation-states.
16. Scott Mainwaring and Frances Hagopian (2005, 1) follow the oceanic image of the wave metaphor to its obvious conclusion when they write metaphorically that “a *sea change* has occurred in Latin American politics” (emphasis added). Elsewhere in the same volume, Mainwaring and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán (2005) invoke a different set of metaphors to frame reversals in democratization, referring metaphorically to “breakdowns” and “erosions.”
17. It is from this notion that “waves” of democracy represent movement “forward” toward something that prompted the editors of the *Journal of Democracy* to ask in the title of a 2007 forum, “Is East-Central Europe *Backsliding?*” (Plattner and Diamond 2007, 5, emphasis added) and Merle Goldman (1990, 9) to ponder “China’s Great Leap *Backward*” after the Tiananmen Square massacre (emphasis added). For a critique of the directional metaphor for democratization, see Carothers (2002).

18. Gunitsky's definition of hegemonic shocks relies on secondary conceptual metaphors such as the "distribution" of power (a spatial metaphor), "leading" states (a metaphor of position), and the international "system" (an organic and mechanical metaphor).
19. A sustained period of democratization then is conceptualized as a "plateau" (Gunitsky 2014, 590).
20. It is interesting to note that Huntington switches metaphors when conceptualizing a group of countries making a transition to democracy; in one sense those countries comprise a metaphorical "wave," but in another sense they can be situated within historical "boxes." In both cases, Huntington observes that the metaphorical image involved leaves outliers that do not conform to historical patterns of regime type.
21. Outside the Latin American context, the "pendulum" metaphor has also been applied to democratization in Myanmar. See Chongkittavorn (2012).
22. While Huntington clearly acknowledges that there can be "reverse" waves of democracy, the "wave" metaphor nonetheless imparts a view in which democratization is a natural process akin to a wave moving in toward the shore, but there can be forces that stem the metaphorical "tide" of democracy, which can direct the wave in the opposite direction. The forward and backward movement of waves also has been expressed as "cycles" of democratization. For "cycles" of democratization see, for example, Turan (2015).
23. The desirability of democracy is evident in additional metaphors in Pastor's edited book, for example, in the section where suggestions are made for "maintaining the momentum" of the pendulum in the direction of democracy and in the way that democracy is described in the heading of part two of the book in terms of its "decline" and "rise," which, on one the hand, could be merely the swing down and up of the metaphorical pendulum, but which, on the other hand, also could be understood as the ascendance of a political system that scholars would like to see emerge and its demise, which is likened to the falling down of something that has been built.
24. Lipset (1959, 103) writes that the correlation between modernization and democracy "does not justify the optimistic liberal's hope that an increase in wealth, in the size of the middle class, in education, and other related factors will necessarily mean the spread of democracy or the stabilizing of democracy." Lipset's analysis draws on propositions in Lerner (1958).
25. The notion of "advanced" democracies is similar to the way scholars have theorized democratization in terms of whether it corresponds metaphorically to an "early" or "late" period of time. On "early" and "late" democratization, see, for example, Turan (2015).
26. Berman's article appeared in a special issue of *Journal of Democracy* devoted to the theme of "advanced democracies."
27. On the metaphor of falling dominoes see, for example, Jervis and Snyder (1991), Shimko (1994).

28. See also Starr and Lindborg (2003).
29. The concept of a metaphorical “cascade” has been extended to how other international norms emerge and are spread. See, for example, Fisk and Ramos (2014).
30. Czar Alexander II’s statement on abolishing serfdom “from above” is widely quoted. For one discussion of the Czar’s comment, see Skocpol (1979, 85).
31. See, for example, the pointedly titled book *Above the Law* (Skolnick and Fyfe 1993), which describes police action that violates legal prescriptions in combating crime.
32. For more examples of political authority associated metaphorically with positions “above” or “high up” in position or rank, see Goatly (2007, 36ff).
33. Even in the period just before the “Arab Spring,” when rulers in the Islamic and Arab world advanced political changes, such changes were not directed toward democratization and thus could be labeled as what understandably is known as “reform from above.” For such political reform in the Arab world, see Ehteshami (2003).
34. Similar titles include *Representation from Above* (Esaiasson and Holmberg 1996), *Revolution from Above* (Gupta 2013), and *Democratization from Above* (Bohlken 2016).
35. The term “elite” itself is connected to politics. Its origin is in the Latin *ēligere*, meaning “to choose,” and therefore shares with the English word “elect” roots in the political processes by which a group of individuals (the “elite”) are chosen to govern.
36. The concept of democratization “from below” can be applied not only to countries which currently do not have democratic forms of government but also to political arrangements that ostensibly are democratic but seemingly do not fully embody democratic accountability. See, for example, the notion of democratizing the EU “from below” in Liebert, Gattig, and Evas (2013). The concept of reform coming “from below” has been applied to other areas as well, such as what Geoff Dancy and Verónica Michel (2016) refer to as “human rights enforcement from below.”
37. Thick political authority is different from thick democracy, which John Ryder (2008, no page number) defines in terms of a country’s “common interests with those beyond its borders.”
38. In contrast to thick culture, Mishler and Pollack (243) see thin culture as “empirical,” “constructivist and rational,” “endogenous,” “individualist,” “relatively unbounded and diverse,” “heterogeneous and ambivalent,” and “dynamic.”
39. For lay people too what is “thick” and “thin” in terms of political authority is subjective. For example, a blogger for *The Zimbabwean* (Media Institute of Southern Africa 2011) associates the “thinness” of political authority with the ability of protesters during the “Arab Spring” to challenge entrenched regimes.

40. On the “deepening” of democracy, see, for example, Turan (2015).
41. On the notion of “deep states,” see, for example, Ambinder and Grady (2013).
42. The democratic deficit in the EU includes what Jürgen Neyer (2010) terms the “justice deficit” in the EU. For an example of an analysis of the democratic deficit beyond the case of European integration, see Ferguson and Mansbach (2004, 324–329).
43. Andreas Follesdal and Simon Hix (2006, 534) sum up the state of the art succinctly, stating “there is no single meaning of the ‘democratic deficit.’”
44. Furthermore, Mény (12) says the “problem might be more a question of legitimacy than democracy.”
45. While most of the analysis of the democratic deficit has focused on determining qualities of democracy in the EU, Dorian Jano (2008) attempts to construct a model operationalizing the deficit element. Jano does not, however, examine the metaphorical aspects of the expression democratic “deficit.”
46. Norris supplements her definition of the democratic deficit with a schematic diagram showing the relationship between the “demand side” and “supply side” for democracy.
47. Majone (14–15) writes “the expression ‘democratic deficit’ can also denote a set of problems—technocratic decision-making, lack of transparency, insufficient public participation, excessive use of administrative discretion, inadequate mechanisms of control and *accountability*—that arise whenever important policy-making powers are delegated to bodies operating at arm’s length from government, such as independent central banks and regulatory authorities” (emphasis added).
48. Thus, for example, Jorge Domínguez and Anthony Jones (2007, 3) write that “the construction of a democratic polity is always a work in progress.”
49. Some of the analytical difficulties of theorizing about democratization that are created by the inclination to categorize stages of the democratization process are explored in Przeworski (1986).
50. Earlier, Diamond (1994, 15) defined “consolidation” as “the process by which democracy become so broadly and profoundly legitimate among its citizens that it is very unlikely to break down.”
51. Becker (146) elaborates on what he means by conflict and collaboration by actors advancing their interests using structures of institutional authority: “Political institutions and practices would be studied as venues and modes of political action involving contending and collaborating social forces, with the goal of discovering whether the institutional changes thereby induced enhance or erode the moderate state or the legal or formal equality of citizenship.”

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Theoretical Reflections

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF METAPHORS IN REALISM

Metaphors abound in Realist theory, perhaps because of the conscious efforts of Realists to emphasize that the paradigm rests on a social scientific foundation built of variables, testable hypotheses, and observable and measurable facts. As ironic as it sounds, metaphors are integral to virtually all theoretical endeavors despite the temptation to think of theories as depending on a literal interpretation of material facts. That is, for social scientists especially, to engage in a theoretical exercise is to try to mimic scholars in the physical and natural sciences who deal with data that can be unambiguously observed and quantifiably measured. In many ways, fields such as physics and chemistry are the model even for social scientists not undertaking quantifiable research since disciplines such as these presumably eschew inventions of the human mind in favor of observable material reality. In IR theory, Realists have drawn inspiration from theorizing in the physical and natural sciences so as not to commit the errors of prior philosophical approaches to the study of world affairs. This would seem to suggest that metaphors have no place in a rigorous social science paradigm such as Realism.

Yet, as language scholars have noted, conceptual metaphors not only are inherent in all forms of human cognition, they are eminently in evidence in all manner of scientific inquiry.¹ Metaphors play an important role in theorizing because they give visual form to abstract ideas. They serve a heuristic function by transferring from one domain understanding

about causal relationships to another domain in which causation is not readily understood. Like models, metaphors replicate in miniature the properties of a concept that is understood, which can then serve as a basis for making hypotheses in another area about which knowledge is incomplete, imperfect, or not fully understood. In scientific theorizing, this often involves making a metaphor out of something basic and simple (e.g., something as basic as a geometric shape) and using it to theorize about something far more complex (e.g., the physical properties of atomic elements).

For Realists, especially those seeking to distinguish themselves as more “scientific” in nature than their predecessors, metaphors add an aura of credibility since they play a role in modeling the hypothesized causal logic of IR just as they do in other scientific endeavors. In establishing the narrative plot of IR, it should therefore not be surprising that metaphors are involved in theorizing the origins of actors’ motives. One of the most immediately recognizable metaphors in Realist theory is the time-honored “billiard balls” metaphor.² The billiard balls metaphor models what Realists see as the essential set of relationships among states in the international system.³ The basic elements of the model are well known and can be summarized succinctly. The international system is depicted as an unmovable physical structure in the form of a billiards table, which models the finite geographic boundaries of the planet. States are imagined as billiard balls, the interiors of which are irrelevant in terms of predicting the trajectory of the balls as they careen around the table and collide with other balls on the table. What does have an influence on the interaction of the balls is their weight, size, and mass (not their color, nor other superficial features) as well as their location and current trajectories relative to other balls on the table. This picture is thought by Realists to be a good basis for modeling the causal factors that explain how states interact with each other, that is, their relative power as indicated by their capability to influence the position of other balls on the table. Balls that weigh more, are larger, are moving more swiftly, or that have a location relative to other balls which gives them more force are capable of knocking other balls around. Power, as represented by these measures of force, is what explains the patterns of movement of balls on the table and the direction balls take when they collide with others.⁴

As countless observers have noted, the billiard balls metaphor encapsulates the basic assumptions of Realism and its main theoretical propositions. States are thought of metaphorically as “hard-shelled and impenetrable

territorially sovereign states” (Opello and Rosow 1999, 226), and are said to have “interests [that] are defined exogenously” in a “process [that] is characterized by intergovernmental bargaining and unlimited state interest” (Sjursen 2001, no page number).⁵ This image imputes a structural element to interstate relations.⁶ Since states are assumed to be functionally similar, what differentiate them from each other are their external qualities and their position relative to each other. By external qualities, Realists mean power as expressed in terms of abilities to exert force including such things as size of population, industrial capacity, economic resources, natural resources, and military preparedness. Geography also becomes a measure of power and includes not only natural defenses such as mountain ranges and bodies of water but also proximity to other countries and geographic isolation. The billiard ball metaphor focuses the mind on this set of propositions by picturing states as opaque billiard balls and emphasizing the ways that the balls differ from each other in terms of their size, mass, and location relative to each other and the physical structure of the billiard table itself.

The billiard balls metaphor also has a corollary in the so-called black box metaphor, by which states are conceptualized as unitary actors.⁷ The “black box” metaphor used for visualizing the state in Realist theory is interesting because it represents a simplifying assumption as opposed to a theoretical proposition. That is to say, as most scholars of IR know, Realist predictions are based on the hypothesis that changes in the distribution of power best explain outcomes in relations among states. In order to test this hypothesis, virtually all other aspects of the international system and its constituent parts must be held constant, otherwise they would serve as confounding variables. It must be assumed that states are the only relevant actors in the international system and that they are unitary actors pursuing self-interest in a rational fashion. As simplifying assumptions none of these things are demonstrable facts; they are merely assumed so that the causal influence of changing distributions of power can be tested with regard to their ability to predict outcomes in international affairs.

How then to visualize these concepts assuming they are not sufficiently intelligible as expressed in literal terms? To some extent, the “black box” metaphor responds to this question as an answer in and of itself. That is to say, since that which might represent variability in states apart from their power relative to each other resides inside the state (in the form of domestic politics and foreign policy decision-making), the answer is to seal off this information and make it opaque as seen from the perspective of the international system. The black box metaphor dictates that what occurs

within the state is, if not unknowable, then mostly irrelevant for the purposes of Realist theorizing about the international distribution of power. It is easy to imagine the state as a black box, the contents of which are unseen. There *are* contents to the box, so in that sense the metaphor acknowledges that holding constant things such as rationality and unity of purpose is part of the simplifying assumptions of Realism, not a statement of fact about the composition of the state. But it becomes easy to suspend interest in the content of the state by hiding it behind the opaqueness of a metaphorical “black box.” Once this metaphor and the simplifying assumptions it represents are accepted, they have served their purpose for establishing the essential bases of Realist theory and to some extent can then be forgotten as attention is paid to what really matters for making predictions in the Realist school of thought, that is, the changing distribution of power among states. This is the case for other aspects of Realist theory discussed in the following section.

Metaphors and the Epistemology of Neorealism

Some scholars are particularly attentive to the role of metaphors in developing epistemological perspectives in the study of IR. One prominent example of this is Kenneth Waltz and his elaboration of Neorealist theory. Inasmuch as Waltz’s brand of Neorealism is a common point of departure (as well as object of critique) within IR scholarship, it is instructive to examine the role of metaphors in this particular school of thought. Moreover, Waltz acknowledges that his theory is grounded in a method that begins with abstractions, of which metaphors are a part. While Waltz does not explicitly state that the sources of his theories are metaphorical images, he does stress the need for starting the theoretical exercise with abstract concepts, not literal empirical facts: “To construct a theory we have to abstract from reality, that is, to leave aside most of what we see and experience. Students of international politics have tried to get closer to the reality of international practice and to increase the empirical content of their studies. Natural science, by contrast, has advanced over the millennia by moving away from everyday reality and by fulfilling Conant’s ... aspiration to lower ‘the degree of the empiricism involved in solving problems’” (Waltz 1979, 68). Here we see that Waltz favors an approach that welcomes metaphorical allusions over observable facts at the beginning of the theorizing process.

Two basic metaphorical elements in Waltz's version of neorealism are "system" and "structure," which he defines concurrently: "A system is then defined as a set of interacting units. At one level, a system consists of a structure, and the structure is the systems-level component that makes it possible to think of the units as forming a set as distinct from a mere collection. At another level, the system consists of interacting units" (*ibid.*, 40). The logic Waltz applies makes it clear that he is dealing in the area of metaphors, not literal facts. With regard to structure, for example, Waltz (80) writes: "Structure is not something we see." Furthermore, Waltz (80) cites Meyer Fortes (1949, 56), who describes structure in a way that it is obvious it is metaphorical, not empirical, in nature: "When we describe structure, we are in the realm of grammar and syntax, not of the spoken word. We discern structure in the 'concrete reality' of social events only by virtue of having first established structure by abstraction from 'concrete reality'." Relations among states lack a physical structure and therefore are not literally structural in nature but merely metaphorically so.

Inherent in Waltz's metaphors of system and structure is additional metaphorical imagery based on spatial relations. Specifically, Waltz invokes the metaphor of "levels": "Any approach or theory, if it is rightly termed 'systemic,' must show how the systems *level*, or structure, is distinct from the *level* of interacting units" (Waltz 1979, 40 emphasis added). The term "level" must be understood as metaphorical inasmuch as interactions among international actors do not literally take place on a distinct physical plane from the actors themselves. Waltz reinforces the fact that he is dealing with a spatial metaphor in a diagram that shows "International structure" in a box located above a separate box labeled "Interacting units." Since the international system is not literally "above" states and other international actors, it can only be understood as a metaphorical representation of that which merely appears as in a separate physical place.

The spatial aspect of Waltz's metaphorical treatment of IR also extends to the actors in the metaphorical international "system." Specifically, like many scholars of IR, Waltz envisions an "inside" and an "outside" to states which are, for Waltz, the relevant actors in the international system. In a typical passage, Waltz writes: "Each state arrives at policies and decides on actions according to its own *internal* processes, but its decisions are shaped by the very presence of other states as well as interactions with them. When and how *internal* forces find *external* expression, if they do, cannot be explained in terms of the interacting parties if the situation in

which they act and interact constrains them from some actions, disposes them towards others, and affects the outcomes of their interactions” (ibid., 65 emphasis added).

The ongoing use of spatial metaphors is found in the distinctions Waltz makes between domestic and international politics. In the domestic sphere, Waltz envisions political actors physically situated relative to each other in a vertical fashion. The key term here is “hierarchy”: “Domestic politics is hierarchically ordered. The units—institutions and agencies—*stand vis-à-vis* each other in relations of super- and subordination” (ibid., 81 emphasis added). The terms “hierarchy” and “stand” clearly are metaphors since political actors obviously are not physically above or below one another as these terms would imply if they were taken literally. Rather, Waltz’s imagery gives the impression of a spatial relationship among actors, and this imagery then goes on to inform the theoretical deductions that can be derived. Specifically, since “hierarchy” entails a relationship of super- and subordination, as Waltz states, one would deduce a political system where political authority is exercised in a metaphorical top-down fashion. Were Waltz to use a different metaphor, the super- and subordinate relationships would not be implied, and different theoretical propositions would be advanced. This does not mean that Waltz’s deductions and conclusions are wrong, simply that how he arrives at these conclusions is constrained to a certain extent by the metaphors he chooses for the theoretical project.

On certain basic elements, Waltz’s Neorealism shares metaphorical perspectives with classical Realism, in particular, that the relevant metaphor with which to envision IR is that of “anarchy.” But before Waltz analyzes the particulars of anarchy, he first engages in analysis by analogy, specifically, he makes an analogy between the structure of international politics and the structure of the economic market.⁸ Technically speaking, a metaphor is a specific kind of analogy. Analogies highlight similarities across domains. Typically, analogies are designed to highlight the similarities among dissimilar realms that are nonetheless related in some way. Thus, for example, a simple analogy would be “fingers are to hands as toes are to feet.” Metaphors are analogies in that they highlight similarities across potentially dissimilar realms, but they are specific kinds of analogies that indicate similarities between the *seemingly* dissimilar across unrelated domains. Thus, a simple metaphor would be of the sort “the teacher is the *head* of the class.” The class is not literally a body and the teacher is not, therefore, literally the “head.” Rather, a useful similarity is found between

the seemingly dissimilar realms of a school classroom on the one hand and the unrelated domain of the human body on the other.

This distinction between analogy and metaphor is useful since, while Waltz says that his comparison between international politics and the economic market is an analogy, it is to some extent an analogy of the metaphorical sort. Economic relations involve to a large extent exchanges of tangible commodities. By contrast, much of what constitute international politics involves abstract concepts such as diplomacy. Thus, what is interesting between Waltz's comparison between economics and international politics is not the analogical correspondences involved, but rather the conclusions Waltz derives about international politics through the metaphor of the economic market.

The first lesson Waltz (1979, 91) derives from the market metaphor is that "international-political systems, like economic markets, are formed by the coaction of self-regarding units." Second, Waltz (*ibid.*) concludes that "international-political systems, like economic markets, are individualist in origin, spontaneously generated, and unintended." Thus, "both systems are formed and maintained on a principle of self-help that applies to the units" (*ibid.*). The economic metaphor is important because it is on the basis of this metaphor that Waltz makes his foundational assumption, which eventually leads to his full-blown theory of international politics. Waltz's assumption is that "states seek to ensure their survival" (*ibid.*, 91). This is a perfectly plausible assumption, one which, Waltz rightly points out, he is permitted to make inasmuch "in a microtheory, whether of international politics or of economics, the motivation of the actors is assumed rather than realistically described" (*ibid.*, 91). That is to say, the rules of theorizing allow for *a priori* assumptions to be made.

What is relevant, and therefore open to debate, are the bases of foundational assumptions in any theoretical endeavor. In Waltz's case, those assumptions emerge from the economic market metaphor, which is the inspiration for his theory of international political structures. If Waltz had started with a different metaphor—for example, the metaphor of the family—he likely would have been led to a different set of assumptions about international politics. Members of families typically are not self-regarding and are not self-helping in the way they go about interacting with other family members. That is to say, family members do not approach their relations with other family members on the basis of survival of one family member *against* another. Thus, and this is critical for understanding the force of metaphors, if Waltz were to have chosen the family as a metaphor

rather than the economic market, he would not necessarily assert the *assumption* that “states seek to ensure their survival.” He *might* begin with such an assumption, and it *might* be the right assumption to make. But it would not *necessarily* be the assumption he would start with were he to have arrived at his assumptions via a different inspirational metaphor. But Waltz *does* begin with the metaphor of the economic market, and this leads to his foundational assumption about international politics, an assumption that leads to all of his theoretical deductions, and consequently the whole of the conclusions that he derives, which eventually comprise the Neorealist theory of international politics. Here we see the essential influence of the economic market metaphor on the Neorealist school of thought.

The economic market metaphor also influences assumptions Waltz makes about the relevant actors in international politics. Waltz (*ibid.*, 93–94) concedes that there are and have always been non-state actors in the international system, just as there are actors other than firms in an economic market. However, Waltz says that it is fair to emphasize states because they are the most prevalent actors, just as firms are the most prevalent actors in an economic market. However, if Waltz were to have begun with a metaphor that is more heterogeneous in terms of the actors that comprise it, for example, a university, comprised such as it is of undergraduate students, graduate students, professional students, professors, lecturers, administrators, service staff, researchers, administrative staff, and so forth, he would perhaps be more inclined to apply that metaphor to international politics, in which case he would acknowledge and assign significance to the various types of international actors Waltz already concedes exist.⁹ Again, the metaphor is critical in terms of the assumptions that one begins with in theorizing and the deductions that emanate from it.

As Barry Buzan, Charles Jones, and Richard Little point out in great detail, many of these problems arise because Waltz clings to the notion that he is treating economics as an analogy for international politics rather than a metaphor. Thus, for example, Buzan et al. (1993, 194–195) observe that Waltz’s attempts at analogy underspecify the relationship between anarchy and the balance of power inasmuch as it is unclear whether the state, as a political entity, creates the conditions of “market-like” relations in an unregulated or “anarchic” environment or, in fact, if the state is a creature *of* the market. Instead, in chapter 11 of their book, Buzan, Jones, and Little suggest that treating economics and international politics as metaphors for each other, rather than one as an analogy for the other, allows for a more fruitful exchange

on the relationship between political and economic relationships in establishing the context and constraints among domestic and international political and economic actors.

In fact, Waltz unwittingly writes metaphorically (although as Buzan, Jones, and Little observe, Waltz clings to the assertion that his analyses are based on analogy), and in his utilization of metaphors (and as is common when working with metaphors of any sort), Waltz borrows from related (and not so related) disciplinary fields. In the area of systems, for example, Waltz turns to the field of physics to help imagine aspects of IR. Specifically, Waltz avers that systems exert a type of physical “force” on states: “Systems theories, whether political or economic, are theories that explain how the organization of a realm acts as a constraining and disposing *force* on the interacting units within it. Such theories tell us about the *forces* the units are subject to” (Waltz 1979, 72 emphasis added).¹⁰ As in physics, Waltz believes that once one knows the nature of these forces, one can make predictions about the behavior of the actors on which the forces are exerted.

Waltz’s analysis of systems and structures also contains secondary metaphors. While Waltz relies primarily on the field of physics in describing the structural “forces” of systems, he also likens structures to the effects of organs within the body, the influence of taxation, socialization among individuals, and constraints of the economic market (ibid., 73–77). Among secondary metaphors in *Theory of International Politics* is a rather ironic one. Much has been made, by Waltz and his supporters, of Waltz’s assertion that Neorealism, as a systemic (or as Waltz puts it, non-reductionist) theory, does not start with the same assumptions about human nature that characterize the classical strand of Realist thinking. Yet, on the first page of the chapter entitled “Anarchic Structures and Balances of Power,” Waltz refers to the most essential, Hobbesian metaphor of classical Realism: “Among states, the *state of nature* is a state of war” (ibid., 102). This allusion to the foundational metaphor of classical Realism turns out to be a telling marker of the theoretical foundations of the Neorealist school of thought. Waltz insists that Neorealism is a deductive theory, deriving its conclusions only from the assumptions that inhere from observations about the structural characteristics of the international system. One of those structural characteristics is the oft-mentioned condition of anarchy.

On the one hand, Waltz and other Neorealists (and also many non-Realists) seemingly define anarchy as merely the lack of an overarching governing authority, that is, a mere void. Yet, in invoking the “state of

nature” metaphor in defining anarchy, Waltz inadvertently incorporates classical Realist assumptions into his supposedly systemic theory. Thus, in the same paragraph in which Waltz refers to the “state of nature,” he defines anarchy in a way that, while including the “void” quality of anarchy, also highlights the elements of human nature that are entailed in the “state of nature” image: “Among men as among states, anarchy, or the absence of government, *is associated with the occurrence of violence*” (ibid., 102, emphasis added). This is critical for understanding how the metaphors Waltz uses imbue Neorealism with the same assumptions about human nature as the classical Realist school of thought from which Waltz seeks to distance himself. If anarchy were defined merely as the absence of government—a void—it could be filled up with anything. But because Waltz imagines states to be motivated in ways similar to humans, certain assumptions about human nature have to be made.

Interestingly, in his discussion of anarchy, Waltz begins not with *assumptions* but with *empirical observations*. That is to say, Waltz (102) observes that in human relations “contact without at least occasional conflict is inconceivable.” From this observation, Waltz defines anarchy as a state of nature. Waltz’s next step is to attach to anarchy the role of a structural cause, or independent variable in the chain of events that brings about international outcomes. Ultimately, Waltz will conclude that violence among states is caused by anarchy. But since we have seen that Waltz defines anarchy as involving violence, his theory, which states that anarchy produces violence, is manifestly tautological. Thus, an examination of the covert state of nature metaphor in Waltz’s definition of anarchy demonstrates the utterly circular nature of the entire theoretical project of Neorealism.

Waltz’s assumptions about human nature also influence his treatment of states as he envisions them metaphorically as individuals. Neorealists like Waltz are by no means alone in thinking of states-as-individuals as a simplifying assumption of theory. So on this count there is nothing inherently unique in the state-as-individual metaphor. Rather, it is the set of assumptions that Neorealists make about states-as-individuals that is of interest here. Specifically, Neorealists such as Waltz impute to states the attributes they assume about humans in a state of nature. Thus, for example, in explaining why states are functionally similar self-help units, Waltz writes that “a state *worries* about a division of possible gains that may favor others more than *itself* ... A state also *worries* lest it become dependent on others through cooperative endeavors and exchanges of

goods and services” (ibid., 106 emphasis added). Obviously, states are not individuals but instead the collective expression of citizens and political leaders. As mentioned, the state-as-individual reification can be a useful and simplifying assumption of theory. However, inasmuch as the actions of even totalitarian states are the product of collective decision-making by political officials, it is dangerous to assume that such states’ actions are based on a singular expression of a motivation such as “worry.” The metaphor of the state-as-individual overemphasizes just one aspect of political decision-making and does so in the case of Neorealism such that the state-of-nature assumptions of the theory are given an outsized role.

Kenneth Waltz is by no means the sole source of Neorealism and obviously other scholars contribute to the theoretical project that constitutes the Neorealist school of thought. The purpose of the foregoing discussion is to illustrate how the foundations of Neorealism are firmly established in, and by the conceptual metaphors that are set out by, the works of early Neorealists such as Waltz. In many ways, as a theoretical perspective Neorealism is not so different from other approaches in the physical and natural sciences and the social sciences alike. It is “scientific” in the sense that it tests its propositions through hypothesis testing using empirical evidence in a quasi-experimental manner.¹¹ It is also “scientific” in its reliance on abstract concepts as a starting point just as are the disciplines in the physical and natural sciences. Abstract concepts, frequently of a metaphorical sort, allow assumptions to be made, and those assumptions form the bases for testable hypotheses. Thus, in evaluating the propositions of Neorealism, it is fair to periodically ask what concepts provide the assumptions on which its hypotheses rest. As is often the case with other scientific approaches, metaphors are integral to concept-formation in Neorealism. Whether or not these metaphors are useful is an important question to ask.

METAPHORICAL ASPECTS OF LIBERAL THEORY

As is true for Neorealism, Liberal theory—specifically, the Neoliberal strand—has also focused on the international system as an important metaphor for conceptualizing IR. Following the Neorealist lead, Neoliberal approaches to the international system begin with a prior metaphor, that is, the metaphor of “levels of analysis” in IR theory. The “levels of analysis” metaphor conceptualizes a vertically organized space in which the international system is located at the “top” of political organization, the state occupies a “middle” realm, and individual decision-makers are located at

the “bottom.” Obviously Neorealism and Neoliberalism make divergent assumptions about the motivations of states. Yet, in their approach to the organization of IR, the metaphor of the international system figures prominently. Shah Tarzi (2004, 121) summarizes the similarities and differences between Neorealism and Neoliberalism succinctly: “Generally speaking, international relations analysts, regardless of their paradigmatic persuasion, incorporate various conceptions of an organized international system into their work. The neorealists consider the inequality of resources and power as the basic factor of system organization, while the neoliberals view an international system steadily organized around various rules and institutions.” Hence, despite very real paradigmatic differences, Neorealism and the Neoliberal variant of Liberalism are similar in that they are prone to conceptualize a metaphorical “system” as occupying a spatial position as the “highest” level of analysis in IR.

Yet, differences between Neorealist and Neoliberal conceptions of a metaphorical “system” at the top of a series of levels of analysis remain. As Quddus Snyder (2013, 539) points out, Realist theory typically begins with assumptions about the international system in order to develop a “top-down” approach to the study of IR, while Liberal theory starts with observations about domestic politics in order to develop a “bottom-up” theory of international affairs. Snyder (539–540) suggests that “defining theories in terms of assumptions and content—and not top-down or bottom-up theoretical form—opens the possibility for liberal systemic theory.”

Toward this end Snyder draws on additional metaphors to investigate the role of the international system in the development of a Liberal theory of IR. Specifically, Snyder refers to the mechanical and organic metaphors that have figured prominently in IR theory from the period before IR emerged as a modern academic field. Snyder (540) points out that in the Neorealist theory developed by Kenneth Waltz, Waltz drew on “Durkheim’s concept of mechanical social structure” in arguing that “the international system was segmented” and that “it consisted of autonomous and autarkic units operating in a self-help environment.” By contrast, Snyder (*ibid.*) argues that a Liberal view of system is “more ‘organic’ and integrated in Durkheim’s language. The organic society differs from the mechanical in that the former features a well-developed division of labor.” Thus, in the organic view of system that Snyder borrows for the purposes of developing a Liberal theory of system, “the system’s dominant tendency is integration” (*ibid.*).

While Snyder's review of the Durkheimian origins of Neorealist and Liberal conceptions of system as rooted alternatively in mechanical and organic metaphors of society is designed to locate the distinct theoretical propositions of Neorealist and Liberal approaches to the study of IR, the one thing that Snyder explicitly does not problematize is both paradigms' assumption that the realm of the international system lies "above" the level of the state. The levels of analysis metaphor is left intact leaving the main distinction between Neorealism and Liberalism their origins in mechanical and organic metaphorical views of society, respectively. Yet, unlike the Neorealist approach, Liberal theory leaves theoretical space for the "domestic" qualities of political organization. It is the "organic" conception of politics that opens up the possibility of delving "below" the international system and "inside" the state. As Snyder (547–549) observes, an organic view of system includes the possibility for functional differentiation. Thus, although one can theorize solely at the level of the system, the acknowledgment of functional differentiation of organic units suggests that such differentiation can be studied at "lower" levels of analysis. This then forces Liberal theorists to examine that which lies "below" the international system.

Liberalism and the Metaphor of "Domestic Interests"

Within some versions of Liberal theories of IR, the metaphor of "domestic" interests exerts a powerful influence over the narrative that Liberals advance to explain world affairs.¹² Specifically, the idea that political activity can take place undisturbed by alien threats relies on a metaphorical conceptualization of the state contained within the safety of a house or home. This "inside–outside" view of domestic and foreign policy has been chronicled by R. B. J. Walker (1993) who identifies the very logic of IR as a distinct area of study originating in the separation of the domestic from the international.¹³ Theories of "domestic policy" are thus taken up with the politics of order and rule so as to keep safe that which is inside a sheltered area. Such theories place an emphasis on an anarchic international system which serves as a threat to the safety of the state.¹⁴

As a metaphorical concept, "domestic" has its counterpart in the concept of "foreign," which manifests itself in the study of IR in the notion of foreign policy. If "domestic" means that which lies inside the state, it makes sense that what is "foreign" resides "outside" the state. This is borne out etymologically in an examination of the word "foreign" in the

English language. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that “foreign” derives from the Latin *forās* and *forīs* meaning “outside.”¹⁵ Meaning specifically “dealing with matters concerning other countries,” the word was recorded in the year 1611 and appeared in the form of *forraïne* in the writings of Thomas Coryate (*OED*).¹⁶ Furthermore, changing the linguistic terms involved does not alter their conceptual origins, which are the same across languages. In Spanish, for example, “foreign policy” translates as “política exterior”—“outside policy”—which is the conceptual equivalent of its English counterpart. What matters is not the idiom but the metaphorical ideas of “inside” and “outside,” “domestic” and “foreign,” which are conceptual foundations of IR theory as a scholarly and practical enterprise.

Critics note, however, that the barrier between international and domestic politics is artificial and theoretically suspect. The idealization of a domestic space is supported through political discourse which relies on the metaphor of the image of the nation as a home.¹⁷ Yet, “domestic” politics is a metaphorical location, not an empirical fact. As Felicia Pratto et al. (2014, 127) maintain, international and “domestic” politics often are “intermeshed.” More to the point, Pratto, et al. (129) argue that “an accounting of popular influence on foreign policy is especially important for nations under the influence of ‘core’ nations (the so-called ‘periphery’), because for them, there is no clear distinction between domestic and international politics. For low power nations, foreign policy involves dealing with and being dependent on menacing dominant nations, a situation quite distinct from that of ‘core’ actors.” Pratto et al. thus argue that the ability of the state to isolate itself from the outside world is an ability that resides only with so-called core nations. For those countries in the “periphery,” in which “core” states interfere, the division between “inside” and “outside” barely applies.

When combined with the source of preferences that inform the politics of a state, the metaphor of “domestic” takes on an even more salient meaning for understanding the logic of metaphors of the state, in particular the source of state interests. Specifically, with regard to foreign policy, Liberalism argues that domestic politics is relevant because it reflects the articulation of domestic “interests.” Helen Milner (1997, 33) articulates a view of domestic interests which would seem to be typical in Liberal IR theory: “The *policy* preferences of actors in domestic politics derive from their basic interests. Actors are assumed to have certain fundamental interests, captured by their utility functions, which they attempt to maximize” (emphasis in the original). Consistent with the economic language of

“utility functions” in this definition, Milner (37) sees domestic agents acting in a rational fashion with a rank-ordering of preferences. Milner treats these assumptions as justifiable parts of the theory inasmuch as they reflect a standard view of exogenously derived interests that are inherent in orthodox theories of IR.

As with many seemingly straightforward terms in IR theory, the word “interests” would appear to be a literal expression of basic concepts. People and groups have interests and there is nothing mysterious in saying so. However, two considerations present themselves in evaluating the role that “interests” play in Liberal theories of IR. First, the term could be substituted with any number of other words that ostensibly convey the same meaning. “Interests” to some extent is synonymous with “preferences,” “wants,” “concerns,” “motives,” “partialities,” and “benefit.” Although all of these words comprise in one sense or another synonyms for “interests” (according to most standard thesauri), each one expresses a subtly different meaning. Thus, not only is it relevant that among these synonyms “interests” was elevated above the others to communicate a specific assertion about the causal logic of domestic politics, but if any of the other terms were the standard vocabulary for Liberal conceptions of politics, it would be relevant to examine their origins and implications for the Liberal approach to the study of politics and IR.¹⁸

Second, inasmuch as the idea of “interests” communicates an element in the causal logic of Liberalism, its origins and role as a metaphor are germane for what they reveal about Liberalism’s hypotheses about IR. The English word “interest” derives from a combination of the Latin prefix *-inter*, which of course means “to be between,” and the Germanic suffix *-esse* meaning “to be” (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 940). Yet it is worth noting that *-inter* also has a lesser known meaning as “take part in.” So, one etymological interpretation of “interest” is that it is a metaphor for taking part in one’s own being as illustrated by one definition of “interest,” which is “regard for one’s own benefit or advantage” (*ibid.*).

Indeed, it is on this consideration that it becomes understandable why “interests,” as opposed to any of its other synonyms, has emerged as a means for expressing the assumptions Liberalism makes about politics. Specifically, it is assumed that what individuals want is that which is “for one’s own benefit or advantage” as opposed to wanting things that do not necessarily imply a narrowly construed sense of individual advantage. As Albert Hirschman explains, this narrow meaning of interests is a fairly modern convention. According to Hirschman (1977, 32): “When the

term ‘interest’ in the sense of concerns, aspirations, and advantage gained currency in Western Europe during the late sixteenth century, its meaning was by no means limited to the material aspects of a person’s welfare; rather, it comprised the totality of human aspirations, but denoted an element of reflection and calculation with respect to the manner in which these aspirations were to be pursued.” Furthermore, Hirschman contrasts the modern political and economic conception of interests with “passions,” which have been seen by political philosophers as tamed by interests. To speak of interests as a tamer of passions is to make a metaphor for the advancement and taking part in one’s own being as apart from “the moralizing precepts and rules that had been the mainstay of pre-Machiavellian political philosophy” (ibid., 33).

Expressed linguistically—“interests” combined with “domestic”—the phrase “domestic interests” gives a potent metaphorical element to the logic of Liberal theory. Liberalism starts with the assumption that actors possess preferences which are directed at advancing individual benefit. The individual in question is not a person, but rather a group, to which the benefits that accrue do so within the “house” that is defined by what qualifies as the “domestic” as opposed to international affairs. In sum, the language of Liberalism defines the paradigm as one which hypothesizes that IR is at its origins an affair of self-regarding entities which are enclosed and separated from each other within the metaphorically contained domicile of the state. This language distinguishes Liberalism from Realism, which has a view of states as opaque entities, and it also demonstrates that Liberalism is fundamentally distinct from Feminist theory (discussed later in this chapter), which has a far more agnostic view of the nature of the actors that participate in international affairs.

METAPHORS OF NORMS AND TABOOS IN CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORY

“Norms” as a Metaphor

The concept of a norm in IR is seemingly fairly straightforward. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a norm as it is used in politics, sociology, social psychology, and other related disciplines as “a standard or pattern of social behaviour that is accepted in or expected of a group.” Specific definitions in IR literature vary, but virtually all adhere to this basic standard.

Thus, as a concept in the study of IR, the notion of a norm would appear to have a relatively literal and unremarkable meaning. However, as we shall see, what is “standard” or “patterned” behavior depends on how scholars understand what is meant by acceptable ways of acting. Furthermore, in a surprising and unexpected way, as used throughout much IR scholarship, the concept of a “norm” is remarkably metaphorical in nature.

To begin, the very concept of norms contains what Megan MacKenzie and Mohamed Sesay (2012, 147) call a “story.” This idea of a “story” of norms is a notion in keeping with the broad thesis that metaphors, such as the metaphor of “norms,” serve as a narrative by which the nature of IR is understood. In the case of norms, the narrative is one of what is considered acceptable practice among states and other international actors. As stated earlier, the definition of “norm” as offered in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and other dictionaries presents a norm as something that is part of standard or patterned behavior. This resides, of course, in a mathematical notion of numerical frequency or likelihood, and thus what recurs regularly could be said to constitute a *statistical* norm. However, what is neutral in terms of value judgments—the expected outcome given numerical likelihood, that is to say, the statistical norm—inevitably takes on a value-laden meaning when it is construed as standard behavior. That is to say, what is “normative” becomes the basis for value judgments associated with the acceptability of behavior because it conforms to standard behavior for any given area of human existence. A “normative judgment” is not simply a verdict that something conforms to statistical likelihood but that it adheres to expected and acceptable behavior.

In the case of the aforementioned MacKenzie and Sesay (*ibid.*) the authors argue that “‘the story’ of international norms—or the dominant account of norms—is primarily a white, Western version that largely disregards or glosses over the intense contestations and controls associated with norms.” I take no position on this particular account of the content of international norms, but MacKenzie and Sesay make the important point that norms understood metaphorically are not merely representative of what is “standard” understood in terms of statistical likelihood, but rather reflect acceptable behavior associated with specific value judgments.¹⁹ The authors (*ibid.*) thus question the assumption that norms represent “mutual understanding at a supra-state level,” highlighting the notion that what is “normative” is in fact one of any number of ways of determining “acceptable” behavior. MacKenzie and Sesay’s analysis is

echoed by Charlotte Epstein (2012, 137) who, in addressing the metaphor of “socialization” in IR, questions the assumption that diffusion of international norms represents a process by which states are “bettered” by being socialized in the international community: “Change, in analyses of socialization, appears to be generally for the better; they rarely feature a change that is negative or even neutral.”²⁰ Thus, for Epstein (138), “in the studies of norms through socialization, the line is thus rapidly blurred between the ‘is’ and the ‘ought’ and the descriptive blends into the prescriptive.” The notion of a norm as a statistical standard has become transformed through metaphor into the concept held by IR scholars that norms convey a positive value because they represent what is acceptable and thus desirable behavior.

The base metaphor of norms conceptualized as prescribed behavior also influences how IR scholars think about what norms do and what their role is in IR. Thus, for example, one finds common organic metaphors in the conceptualization of norms and change. Typical of this is the notion of change and norms in terms of the metaphor of “evolution.”²¹ Ann Florini, for instance, conceptualizes changes in international norms in terms of their evolving nature. Changed norms are metaphorically seen as “genetic inheritance,” and selection of norms as “the reproductive mechanism.” Florini’s model contains three elements: “First, genes and norms have similar functions as the instructional units directing the behavior of their respective organisms ... Second, genes and norms are both transmitted from one individual to another through similar processes of *inheritance* ... Third, norms, like genes, are ‘contested’—that is, they are in competition with other norms that carry incompatible instructions” (Florini 1996, 367, emphasis in the original).²² Unlike evolution as it takes place in the natural world, that is, involving environmental shocks that bring about genetic mutation, the metaphorical “evolution” of norms involves a process of conscious behavior designed to bring about a desired end. This is consistent with the base metaphor of norms understood in IR as a set of practices that are desirable and thus understood as regularized behavior that has emerged because it is seen as standard and therefore acceptable.

A related concept to the evolutionary image of norms is what has been referred to as the norm “life cycle,” which Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998, 895) describe as a “three-stage process” involving norm “emergence,” “norm cascades,” and “internalization” or norms.²³ The second of these terms was coined by Cass Sunstein, who envisions norms as part of a process by which societies are formed and change. Specifically,

in social states, “*norm entrepreneurs*—people interested in changing social norms—can ... produce ... *norm bandwagons* and *norm cascades*. Successful law and policy try to take advantage of learning about norms and norm change” (Sunstein 1997, 36, emphasis in the original). The stages of norm emergence and norm cascades are separated by that which Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, 895) call “a threshold or ‘tipping’ point, at which a critical mass of relevant state actors adopt the norm.” As is the case of norms understood in an evolutionary sense, the “life cycle” metaphor is merely suggestive of an organic process but, in fact, implies human volition in the form of norm entrepreneurs who set the cascade in motion. Again, norms are seen in terms of their desirability for regularizing acceptable behavior.

The organic metaphorical imagery inherent in these conceptualizations of norm change is not insignificant for developing theories of norms as Finnemore and Sikkink (*ibid.*) observe: “The pattern is important for researchers to understand because different social processes and logics of action may be involved at different stages in a norm’s ‘life cycle.’ Thus, theoretical debates about the degree to which norm-based behavior is driven by choice or habit, specification issues about the costs of norm-violation or benefits from norm adherence, and related research issues often turn out to hinge on the stage of the norm’s evolution one examines. Change at each stage, we argue, is characterized by different actors, motives, and mechanisms of influence.” As Harald Kleinschmidt (2000, 168) explains, while mechanistic metaphors of change typically assume self-regulating and self-equilibrating processes designed to provide a specific function, organic and biological metaphors imply a dynamic interaction with a body’s natural surroundings.²⁴ While Finnemore and Sikkink’s “tipping point” metaphor superficially sounds like a mechanistic image involving a form of balance, the human element of norm “entrepreneurs” in the “life cycle” of norms, along with the naturalistic image of a “cascade” of change, entails a theory of norms that hypothesizes organic adaptation to environmental surroundings, as the overarch of norm “evolution” would imply.

Furthermore, the process of ascribing qualities to norms is quite similar, if not identical, to how IR scholars imagine the process by which norms themselves operate in world affairs. Finnemore and Sikkink’s (1998, 897) depiction of the emergence stage of norm change is particularly telling: “Norm entrepreneurs are critical for norm emergence because they call attention to issues or even ‘create’ issues by using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes them. Social movement theorists refer

to this reinterpretation or renaming process as ‘framing.’ The construction of cognitive frames is an essential component of norm entrepreneurs’ political strategies, since, when they are successful, the new frames resonate with broader public understandings and are adopted as new ways of talking about and understanding issues.” Just as norm entrepreneurs frame an issue in ways that are designed to create understanding of issues, so too IR scholars have framed the concept of norm change in terms of metaphorical “life cycles” to create an understanding that favors one theoretical approach over another. What is fascinating about the organic nature of metaphors of norms is that it provides insight into the theoretical hunches of IR scholars, namely, that norms in IR are an organic part of social relations. Indeed, when given a choice among organic norms, Finnemore and Sikkink (902) favor those that emphasize socialization, as the choice between the metaphors of “contagion” and “socialization” in the “cascade” stage indicates: “Empirical studies suggest that, at this point, often an international or regional demonstration effect or ‘contagion’ occurs in which international and transnational norm influences become more important than domestic politics for effecting norm change. Contagion, however, is too passive a metaphor; we argue that the primary mechanism for promoting norm cascades is an active process of international socialization intended to induce norm breakers to become norm followers.” The process of socialization involves humans as biological agents which fits neatly into the “evolution” and “life cycle” metaphors which frame theories of normative change.

Despite Finnemore and Sikkink’s inclusion of norm entrepreneurs in the process of spreading norms, Bernd Bucher argues that the metaphors of norm diffusion pointedly minimize actor agency in the process. Bucher (2014, 742) maintains that “insufficient attention is paid to the metaphors describing norm propagation (diffusion, cascade, life cycle, etc.). These metaphors are frequently employed in ways that point to mechanistic and automatized processes of ‘norm diffusion.’” For Bucher (*ibid.*), metaphors of “diffusion,” “cascade,” and “life cycle” insufficiently account for the deliberate way in which norms are used by powerful actors: “These semantics create an ‘illusion of agency’ without accounting for the actual processes through which norms are articulated, propagated, contested, adapted, adopted, or rejected. Norm diffusion research subsequently comes to be closely associated with self-actionist modes of thinking, which focuses research on intrinsic qualities of norms, rather than on socially embedded agency and power relations central to processes of diffusing

norms.” The role of powerful actors in the spread of international norms further begs the question of how norms themselves are understood. Part of the answer lies in a related metaphor, that is, the metaphorical concept of “taboos.”

Metaphor of International “Taboos”

The origins of the current use of the word “taboo” in the English language are, as is true for many words, metaphorical in nature. The English understanding of “taboo” as a ban or inhibition has a wider application in the various Polynesian and Melanesian languages in which it originates. In these tongues, a taboo is used broadly to mean some thing or practice “set apart for or consecrated to a special use or purpose; restricted to the use of a god, a king, priests, or chiefs, while forbidden to general use; prohibited to a particular class (esp. to women), or to a particular person or persons; inviolable, sacred; forbidden, unlawful; also said of persons under a perpetual or temporary prohibition from certain actions, from food, or from contact with others” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). What is implied as a total ban in English is a metaphorical application of an otherwise nuanced term in its native languages and, more importantly, customs.

Prohibitions and bans of the sorts of weapons discussed in terms of taboos are, in fact, enforced either by legally binding treaties or by national legislation restricting governments in the time, manner, and place of their use of the instruments of war. Richard Price (1997) famously traces a genealogy of the chemical weapons taboo as far back as the moral proscription against the use of poison in warfare, which has its origins in antiquity. Yet although an ancient moral aversion to poison can be identified, the emergence of the contemporary chemical weapons “taboo” has more modern origins in the Hague Peace Conferences of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well as subsequent political decisions and institutional arrangements.²⁵ In other words, the chemical weapons “taboo” is a metaphorical way of referring to prohibitions based on political calculation rather than on a direct application of an ancient moral principle.

That the taboo against nuclear weapons is a metaphorical one is acknowledged tacitly by Nina Tannenwald (2007, 3) who uses the term with quotation marks: “This norm [against the first use of nuclear weapons] is essential to explain why nuclear weapons have remained unused even when it might have been militarily advantageous to use them, and in

accounting for their special status as ‘taboo’ weapons.” Placing the word “taboo” within quotation marks would be unnecessary if the word had been used in a literal and straightforward sense. Instead, Tannenwald is using the term metaphorically to indicate that the prohibition on the first use of nuclear weapons resides in an informal custom even though there may also be specific rules limiting their use. As with Price, Tannenwald acknowledges the existence of formal treaties banning nuclear weapons, but these types of formal governance establishing rules for behavior are treated metaphorically as “taboo.”

Moreover, at least one study has found that the “taboo” against the use of nuclear weapons is not held by average Americans (as opposed to political leaders) who “appear to weigh the consequences of using nuclear weapons in the narrow terms of immediate military effectiveness. As a result, the public’s attitudes toward nuclear weapons lack the bright-line nature of a taboo” (Press et al. 2013, 202). When it comes to weapons norms, Thomas Dolan (2013, 59) shows that decision-makers, as well, may “in circumstances experienced as tragic ... violate them without negative psychological consequences.” Such studies suggest that the concept of a “taboo” against certain types of weapons is in fact a metaphorical representation of politically enforceable prohibitions, as durable as they may be.²⁶

As a measure of human judgment, and not as simply statistical likelihood, norms and taboos in IR theory have become an expression of normal.²⁷ Normal can be considered regularized behavior not because it occurs with predictable statistical frequency, but because it adheres to standards of acceptability. Whether having “evolved” or pursued an organic life cycle, or come into regular practice because of socialization, IR scholars understand norms as something states and other international actors seek to establish because they bring about desired ends. The irony is that, understood merely in terms of statistical likelihood, norms could be guides to behavior that have no “normative” value. Conflict, for example, adheres to regularized norms. However, scholars typically do not focus on norms of conflict, having conceptualized norms as “evolving” toward or “socializing” cooperative behavior. This is because cooperation itself is seen as a desirable solution to the essential anarchy *problématique* of world affairs.

WHERE ARE THE METAPHORS IN FEMINIST IR THEORY?

A review of the index in *Metaphors in International Relations Theory* reveals that there are many more references to the paradigms of Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism than there are to Feminist theories of

IR. Scholars (in particular, Feminist scholars) might wonder if Feminist IR theory has yet again been marginalized in a theoretical investigation of the field.²⁸ However, an astute reader of the previous volume will note that most discussions of the use of metaphors in Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism are framed in a critical context. Many of the most well-known and widely disseminated metaphors in the dominant paradigms in IR are fraught with analytical problems that complicate theorizing as much as, if not more than, they facilitate it. The lack of metaphors in Feminist IR theory is somewhat ironic inasmuch as Feminist theory is premised on the notion that gender gives meaning to the material/biological aspects of sex just as metaphors give meaning to the material world.²⁹ Feminist theory is more prone to point out the hidden metaphorical elements of traditional IR theory, for example, the reification of a “patriarchal state” (Steans 1998, chapter 4), than to engage in metaphorical conceptualizations of its own in its analysis of IR.³⁰

A more fundamental issue of the surfeit of metaphors in Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism and the dearth of metaphorical imagery in Feminist IR theory is this: The very scarcity of metaphors in Feminist IR theory is in fact evidence of the marginalization of Feminist theory in IR as a field of inquiry.³¹ As I observe in *Metaphors in International Relations Theory* (Marks 2011, 186–188), metaphors constitute part of the canon of the discipline of IR. As such, they represent a kind of orthodoxy that defines the field and delimits its scope. Marysia Zalewski (2006, 51) affirms this when she observes that “the legitimized methodological tools appear to sponsor feminist failure, as tools and methods which feminists use, and the ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies they insist are credible and important, are not ones that conventional social science as practiced in IR deem acceptable.” This “conventional social science” in IR relies fundamentally on metaphors, which conceptualize problems as well as ways of theorizing those problems. The conventional social science approach grafted onto IR theory also creates a situation in which schools of thought that do not embrace these core metaphors are automatically relegated to the margins of mainstream IR theory.

This is a theme stressed by Feminist IR theory. Jill Steans (2003, 430–431) observes along these lines: “The acceptance of feminist scholarship in IR and judgements about whether feminism has contributed significantly to what is generally accepted as ‘knowledge’ in the field, have been profoundly coloured by consensual understandings of IR as a distinctive discipline held by a community of scholars.” Raluca Soreanu (2010, 381) echoes this sentiment thus: “Disciplines themselves become complicated

machineries of recirculating old content under the protective veil of academic language.” In the case of IR, part of that protective veil are the metaphors of Realist, Liberal, and Constructivist theory, which determine what are “problems” in IR and how they can be “solved.” Thus, for example, the metaphor of “anarchy” constitutes the central *problématique* of IR, while the metaphor of “security” frames how anarchy can be solved.

Metaphors and the Ontology of Feminist IR Theory

One of the aspects of the shortage of metaphors in Feminist IR theory involves the ontological priorities of Feminist theory. Feminist scholarship emphasizes that what constitutes IR includes the everyday acts of everyday people concretized by specific actions that cannot be summed up in the form of large abstractions, which traditional IR theories label metaphorically in terms of conceptual categories such as “systems” and “structures.” Laura Sjoberg and J. Ann Tickner (2011, 2) have commented on the subject matter of IR observing that Feminist theory casts a wider net in specifying the empirical material, which is relevant in the field of IR: “While IR studies issues such as the effect of regime types on states’ propensity for war, competitive power-balancing, and international trade and investment, feminist theories have shown that understanding global politics relies as much on seeing the dynamics of marriages, of sexual relationships, of masculine expectations of men and feminine expectations of women, and of household-level political economies as it does on IR’s ‘traditional’ issues.” This has prompted Tickner (1997, 611) to observe that Feminist approaches “do not fit comfortably with conventional state-centric and structural approaches to IR theorizing, nor with the methodologies usually employed by IR scholars.”

While Tickner does not explicitly cite the metaphorical bases of traditional IR theorizing, I would argue that the metaphors used in much orthodox IR theory does not square with the paradigmatic foundations of Feminist IR theory. Tickner’s reference to the state-centric and structural bases of traditional IR theory highlights how foundational metaphors such as the state-as-individual and the primacy of structure set the stage for much of what is theorized about IR, in particular, the emphasis on unitary state actors in a hypothesized physical edifice of world affairs. Steans (2003, 434) agrees, noting that in Feminist IR theory “the sovereign state could not be taken as an objective reality that [is] ontologically

privileged.”³² Feminist IR theory does not fit easily with analytical categories such as the state that are reduced to neat metaphorical types.

By contrast, in Feminist theory there is an acknowledgment that the performance of discrete instances of authority or resistance is not readily articulated in the form of metaphors that evoke abstract categories of human motivation and/or behavior. The narratives of IR also then are implicated by an ontology which shifts the focus away from metaphorical categories to the individual stories told by people who effect and are affected by the individual acts which are collectively known as “international relations.” Cynthia Enloe’s *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* (1989) is the classic statement along these lines. Unlike other tomes that use metaphors in their titles to suggest creative ways of thinking about IR, the “bananas,” “beaches,” and “bases” in the title of Enloe’s work are literal means and locations by which IR plays out. Specifically, individual humans cause and are affected by the trade in commodities such as bananas, the commerce associated with tourism in places such as those that feature tropical beaches, and the activity that takes place at military bases. These are not mere metaphors for abstract concepts of IR but literal expressions of the way that world affairs is intimately caught up with the lived experiences of everyday people. Thus, for example, Enloe (1989, 2–3) says that “we would like to imagine that going on holiday to Bermuda rather than Grenada is merely a social, even aesthetic matter, not a question of politics.” To this, Enloe answers that it is these sorts of mundane decisions by real people that are the very stuff of IR.

Later reflecting on the contributions of Feminist theory’s emphasis on the everyday acts of individuals, Enloe (2011, 447) remarks: “In asserting that ‘the personal is political,’ feminist analysts were claiming that the kinds of power that were created and wielded—and legitimized—in these seemingly ‘private’ sites were causally connected to the forms of power created, wielded and legitimized in the national and inter-state public spheres—and, moreover, that state and economic elites each knew it, even if they rarely openly admitted it” (emphasis in the original).³³ Thus, in order to get at the true sources of power, Enloe (ibid., 450) would have to eschew a research agenda that was shaped by metaphorical categories and instead focus on the discrete acts of individual persons: “If I were to make feminist sense—that is, more reliable sense—of the international politics of the trade in privatized goods and of states’ stake in that trade, I would have to start giving serious thought to the gendered politics of marriage, the constructions of femininities and masculinities, and the strategies women use to avoid violence.”³⁴

Enloe's research agenda is taken up by scholars such as Marysia Zalewski (1995) who, when asked (as in the title of her article) "Well, What is the Feminist Perspective on Bosnia?" responds that the answer lies not in qualities of metaphorical concepts such as the "balance of power" or the "structure" of the international "system," but in how gender shapes perceptions of armed conflict and in the specification of what combatants are permitted to perpetrate which types of violence against which types of victims and how this is not "simply a nasty side-effect" of war (ibid., 355). This emphasis on everyday acts as opposed to analytical categories shaped by metaphorical frames continues to shape Feminist IR research, but can also influence other research agendas in the discipline. As Xavier Guillaume (2011a, 446) notes: "Within the field of international studies, the everyday can be read as a text that illuminates central practices at the heart of the production of 'international' representations, the reproduction of relations of domination—gendered, economic, social—at the international 'level,' as well as the consumption of 'international' goods, ideas and norms."³⁵ Thus, for example, Valerie Hudson et al. (2012, 17) introduce the concept of what they call "gendered microaggression" which is "composed of all those many choices and acts in the routine of day-to-day existence that harm, subordinate, exploit, and disrespect women."

Chronicling discrete instances of gendered microaggression allows scholars to arrive at conclusions about the totality of organized violence that is perpetrated among states and other international actors but which originates in the routine individual acts of individual humans. Rather than working from a set of metaphorical categories of international actors and practices to specific instances of violent force, Hudson et al. start with evidence of aggression at a micro level and then arrive at conclusions about how such violence can be manifest on a global scale. Looking at the lives of individuals allows for the ability, as Christine Sylvester (1994, 219–220) puts it, to emphasize the "relations" over the "international" in "international relations" (or "relations international" as Sylvester prefers).³⁶

Metaphors and the Epistemologies of Feminist IR Theory

On an epistemological level, too, Feminist IR theory does not necessarily lend itself readily to metaphorical formulations. As Tickner (1997, 615) notes: "Coming out of literatures that are centrally concerned with individuals and social relations, and that are more explicitly normative, feminist perspectives ... demonstrate a preference for more humanistically

oriented methodologies.” Specifically, Feminist IR theory, far more than orthodox theories of IR, employs an epistemology that takes seriously self-referential perspectives prompting Brooke Ackerly et al. (2006, 4) to observe that “the distinctiveness of feminist methodologies inside and outside IR lies in their reflexivity, which encourages the researcher to re-interrogate continually her own scholarship.” Such “talk of self” is intimately implicated in the construction of debate space, in multiple and often puzzling ways that escape the eye” (Soreanu 2010, 382). What it would take for orthodox theories of IR to acknowledge Feminist epistemologies would be to interrogate the metaphors of orthodox IR theory and how they fail to leave open a space for self-referential perspectives.³⁷ V. Spike Peterson (1992, 13) asserts “what feminists contribute to the ... conversation ... about epistemological issues ... is an insistence that gender hierarchy is not coincidental to but in a significant sense constitutive of Western philosophy’s objectivist metaphysics.” Adding gender narratives to IR theory thus breaks this objectivist monopoly by placing the experience of individuals affected by IR at the center of empirical research.³⁸ These experiences are more likely to be told in literal terms than with the metaphorical concepts inherent in orthodox theoretical approaches.

Critical inquiry of dominant IR metaphors thus becomes part of the Feminist project. Just as metaphors make certain categories apparent and relevant, interrogation of these metaphors represents part of the Feminist effort, part of what Soreanu (2010, 382) says occurs when “through an accumulation of (mundane) acts of rupture, *the previously unimaginable becomes imaginable*” (emphasis in the original). Within this strategy, paradigms of IR that might be identified with foundational metaphors are replaced with, as Soreanu (392) opines, schools of thought associated with individual scholars. As part of its stance of “reflexivity,” “most feminist research insists that the inquirer be placed in the same critical plane as the subject matter” (Tickner 2005a, 8). It is not surprising, then, that the sorts of metaphors that abound in traditional IR paradigms are missing in Feminist scholarship, which instead is constituted by contributions by scholars who approach the field in a self-referential way.

The shortage of metaphors in Feminist approaches to the study of IR can also be explained in part by the emphasis a gendered perspective places on narrative over “theory.” “Narratives are essential because they are a primary way by which we make sense of the world around us, produce meanings, articulate intentions, and legitimize actions” (Wibben 2011, 2). Thus, when Annick Wibben assembles an analysis of security studies

from a Feminist perspective, she relies on the narratives individuals offer in their accounts of how they experience what has metaphorically been identified as “international security.”³⁹ Wibben (100) writes: “Feminist security narratives, based on personal narratives, challenge conventional meanings for security not just because the referent of security is different (i.e., because there is a deepening of the agenda) but because narratives have the ability to capture a variety of concerns and events.” Rather than reducing IR to a set of metaphorical analytical categories such as “systems,” “structures,” and “states,” a gendered narrative approach “starts from women’s experiences of everyday life, [and therefore] has to accommodate the varied contexts of women’s lives while also remaining attuned to the contextual nature of ‘normality’” (ibid., 1–2).

This is not to say that all feminist approaches share the same methodologies, but epistemologically, in Feminist approaches typically there is an emphasis on empiricism that eschews reliance on abstract metaphorical frames.⁴⁰ For Tickner (2005a, 4), part of what characterizes Feminist IR theory is that it has the “goal of designing research that is useful” to individuals, that is to say, not preoccupied with abstract theory that answers no useful questions about how IR affects individuals’ lives. Thus, for example, Mary Caprioli (2000, 2003, 2004) counsels a Feminist process that uses quantitative methods and emphasizes collection of empirical data which broadens the research agenda of IR scholarship by including facts about the role of gender so as to expand what is thought of as comprising IR. In another twist on feminist theory, Sunju Park-Kang (2014) proposes that fiction writing, which reconstructs historical events, can be used to obtain a new perspective on understanding instances of IR.

These approaches, which prioritize the collection of empirical facts, whether gathered as personal narratives, via quantitative means, or even through constructing fictional narratives, rely less on metaphorical categories and more on the examination of the conditions by which IR can be understood. In these approaches, the state, for instance, is not a metaphorical individual with narrowly defined parameters of security, but the expression of a collective political will that comprises a variety of ways in which individuals are concerned for physical, economic, social, and cultural safety. Likewise, the empirical facts of IR do not so much suggest a metaphorical “structure” as they do individual experiences of which gendered identity is a contributing factor. Thus, as J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg (2011, 22) write, “while social science IR strives for objectivity and universality, feminist IR assumes contingency and subjectivity.” In

much of Feminist IR theory metaphors are constraining factors because they create abstract theoretical categories that do not fully encompass the empirical facts which comprise the totality of international affairs. A similar view is expressed by Mathias Albert and Barry Buzan (2013, 127–133) who argue that with classification of IR into metaphorical “systems,” “levels,” and “sectors,” IR theory overlooks the existence of a “social whole” in which IR is just one part.

Reflections on Metaphors in Feminist IR Theory

In sum, Feminist theory calls out for what Gillian Youngs (2004, 87) deems an “ontological revisionism” that challenges the primacy of precisely those conceptual categories that are privileged by the dominant metaphors of IR. A review of Feminist approaches to the study of IR is important for understanding the relative lack of metaphors in Feminist IR theory. It is the very existence of metaphors in mainstream IR theory and their absence in Feminist paradigms that help us understand the place of Feminist schools of thought in the wider IR field. Mainstream IR thought, including the metaphors that form its foundation, constitutes the discursive community of mainstream IR scholars. Counterposed to this community are critical theorists, including IR scholars, who are recognizable precisely because their ontological and epistemological perspectives do not share with mainstream IR theory its main assumptions. Thus, for example, Feminist scholars such as Laurel Weldon (2006, 67) who advocate for a “standpoint epistemology” understand that “standpoint epistemology implies both the existence of a scientific community and the creation of sub-communities or counter-publics of marginalized people.” In other words, by taking account of the experiences of individuals ignored by mainstream IR thought, Feminist approaches are identifiable precisely because such individuals are not included in what is problematized by metaphors in mainstream IR theory.

In some ways, Feminist IR theory has created an alternate discourse of IR theory that departs from the standard vocabulary of metaphors found in other schools of thought.⁴¹ Research agendas prioritized by the dominance of abstract metaphorical concepts such as “systems,” “structures,” and states seen as “individuals” are challenged by Feminist approaches that emphasize a different empirical focus on how gender shapes discrete acts by a variety of actors including, but not limited to, individuals whose so-called private acts do not fit neatly within traditional theoretical perspectives.

The epistemological and methodological strategies of Feminist IR scholarship also do not follow the approaches that are prioritized by traditional schools of thought. Research on metaphorical “systems” and “structures” emphasizes positivist strategies to gauge the causal impact of shifts in “power” or the articulation of interests wielded by actors that are integral to such metaphorical categories. Feminist scholarship that investigates the contributions of individuals, either within their narratives or aggregated using quantitative tools (as Caprioli 2000, 2003, 2004 suggests), is overlooked when the emphasis is on events that fall within the metaphorical categories set forth by “mainstream” theories in IR. It is not so much that my previous work on metaphors (Marks 2011) marginalizes Feminist theory, but that Feminist theory itself is marginalized by those metaphors themselves, leading Feminist scholars such as Judith Squires and Jutta Weldes to examine, as suggested in the title of their 2007 piece, how Feminist IR theory can move “beyond being marginal.” I would argue that one answer to this question is to continue to critically examine the metaphors that to date determine the ontological and epistemological bases of the field.

While Feminist theory has so far largely eschewed reliance on metaphors for the purposes of theorizing the nature and practice of IR, there are exceptions which may foretell a shift in Feminist theorizing that makes greater use of metaphorical concepts than in the past. For example, the pervasive practice of treating the state metaphorically as a person is given a gendered twist by Jennifer Heeg Maruska (2010) who highlights situations in which the state-as-person can be “hypermasculine.” More forcefully, Laura Sjoberg has advocated for adopting the long-standing metaphor of “structure” as a tool in Feminist theory. Sjoberg (2012, 3) argues that although Feminist theory to date has largely rejected the notion of structure (and with it, theorizing at distinct metaphorical “levels of analysis” including “third image” theorizing at the highest level of analysis), Feminist scholars should realize that “there is a structure to the international system and that structure cannot be understood without gender analysis.”⁴² In acknowledging the existence of “structure,” Sjoberg has fully embraced some of the basic premises of Waltzian Neorealist theory. In particular, Sjoberg (ibid., 11) embraces a “‘third image’ approach [which] asserts that gender of, within, and among states reflects and reproduces the gendered nature of the international system structure, rather than being an incidental property of units.” This international structure entails hierarchies incorporating gender among other things. Thus, “gender hierarchy is a key part of the structure of the international system” (Sjoberg 2013, 102).⁴³

In making this leap to graft a structural approach onto Feminist theory, Sjoberg appears to accept the implications of treating structure as a metaphor. In particular, as I have argued previously (Marks 2011, 43), the metaphor of “structure” in IR theory typically imputes qualities of physical construction to what otherwise might be seen as ideational phenomena. Sjoberg’s concept of structure does not deviate from this common practice of seeing structure metaphorically in terms of qualities associated with physical construction. Sjoberg (2013, 15) describes gendered structure as follows:

1. State identity having gendered *components* (unit function); 2. States *positions*, allowed behaviors, *locations in physical space*, and *power* being *distributed* on the basis of perceived gender characteristics, and advantage, meaning, control, and actions between states to be *distributed* on the basis of association with masculinity and femininity (unit capability *distribution*); and 3. Inter-state interaction being premised on the gender *hierarchy* between states (*production* of political processes for unit interaction) (emphasis added).

In this account, gender analysis succumbs to the metaphorical image of structure that emphasizes the types of constraints which are implied by seeing IR in terms of a physical edifice.

Whereas prior Feminist theory takes as its starting point the lived experiences of individual human beings imbued with gendered meaning, Sjoberg’s structural gendered approach prioritizes and privileges precisely those constraining forces that are associated with a metaphorical view of structure which sees IR in terms of physical forces acting upon individual actors. Sjoberg’s effort is to make “third image” theorizing more consistent with a theoretical approach premised on gendered meaning. But by adopting the third image view of structure as metaphorically involving physical construction and constraints, Sjoberg has unwittingly imposed upon gendered analysis the emphasis of traditional theorizing on and prioritizing of constraints associated with paradigms that operate at the metaphorical “systemic” “level of analysis.” Taken further, Sjoberg’s project may not bring gendered theorizing to third-level systemic analysis, but might impose on gendered theory the metaphorical priorities of systemic analysis understood in terms of structure seen as physical construction.

In light of Sjoberg’s observations, Feminist IR theory may be at a turning point in its relationship to metaphors as ways to conceptualize

IR. For the most part, Feminist ontology and epistemology have rejected abstract categories in favor of an empirical perspective which prioritizes the contributions of individuals to world affairs and which emphasizes research agendas highlighting individual experiences and narratives. Shifting from these approaches may lead to a sort of mainstreaming of Feminist theory in the sense that it adopts the abstract concepts of orthodox IR paradigms resting as they are on metaphorical frames. By accepting the categories of “systems,” “structures,” and other conceptual metaphors that provide IR theories with ontological perspectives and epistemological tools, Feminist theory may be able to present critical perspectives using the same conceptual metaphors as those paradigms which are the targets of Feminist critique. On the other hand, one must wonder if by embracing the foundational conceptual metaphors of orthodox paradigms, Feminist theory gives up some of its ability to present a critical interrogation of traditional IR thought. That Feminist theorists may have to make this choice further highlights the central role that metaphors play in defining IR as a disciplinary field.

METAPHORS AND PARADIGMATIC FRAMING

As the foregoing discussion illustrates, conceptual metaphors are essential features in distinguishing the major paradigms in the study of IR. Metaphors do more than simply decorate the language of scholarly inquiry. Metaphors provide the basic concepts from which paradigms derive their theoretical propositions. Equally, the relative lack of metaphors in some theoretical approaches, for example, Feminist theory, highlights the way these approaches put more emphasis on empirical analysis than on abstract concepts as starting points for explaining political outcomes. For this reason, the relative presence or absence of metaphors in any theoretical school of thought provides a guide for what sorts of ontological assumptions and epistemological perspectives frame the analyses found in these approaches.

While paradigmatic differences are necessary to distinguish fundamental disagreements about how best to explain IR, these differences at times unnecessarily suggest an incompatibility of theoretical schools of thought. Competing conceptual metaphors, as framing devices for rival paradigms, contribute to this perception. In recent years, there has been a great deal of attention given to the need for eclecticism in theories of IR.⁴⁴ Theoretical eclecticism might be better encouraged if scholars were less inclined to view paradigms as presenting fundamentally incompatible views on the

basis of the core conceptual metaphors that serve as framing devices and which seemingly divide approaches from each other.

Among the ways that eclecticism can be fostered is by eschewing metaphors that encourage a static view of IR and embracing metaphors that highlight the temporal qualities of change. For example, as I write about in my previous book (Marks 2011, 36–44), typical uses of “structure” as a metaphor conceptualize IR in mechanistic terms of constructed and static edifices. By contrast, there are ways of conceiving of structure in temporal terms that emphasize qualities of change. Thus, for example, Peter Katzenstein (2000, 353) defines “structures” as “slow moving processes.” Katzenstein’s formulation encourages thinking of structure not as a fixed quality of IR that can be identified with regard to such metaphorical qualities as “polarity,” but as dynamic interactions by which the characteristic aspects of IR are continuously changed.

Obviously not even theoretical eclecticism can erase or overcome the metaphorical concepts that delineate distinct explanatory frameworks in the study of IR any more than such eclecticism could accomplish the same role in other academic disciplines or, for that matter, transcend the metaphors that distinguish one academic discipline from another. Conceptual metaphors are integral to human cognition and are found in all aspects of the human experience including fields of scholarly inquiry. In this sense, what is necessary is acknowledging the role conceptual metaphors play in framing theoretical narratives and exercising vigilance that, given their essential role, metaphors are properly interrogated with regard to how they privilege certain assumptions while marginalizing or excluding others. Stefanie Fishel (2017), for example, does an excellent job of questioning the role of state agency in IR by investigating new metaphorical ways of imagining the place of human beings in the natural world. It is also important to exercise caution when treating metaphorical concepts potentially as substitutes for the empirical subject matter which they represent. Conceptual metaphors reflect ways of representing physical experiences through thought. Not surprisingly, there are very real analytical problems and potential logical fallacies in the use of metaphorical concepts in any field.

METAPHORS AND THE DIVISION OF THE “INTERNATIONAL” FROM “FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS”

Just as metaphors help scholars “see” certain aspects of IR, they often lead them to overlook others. Thus, for example, through the metaphor of states-as-individuals (see Marks 2011, 47–51), states are seen as “agents”

of IR. Much IR theory thus focuses on concepts associated with states-as-individual agents. By contrast, the human beings who are involved in the actual undertaking of the actions of states and other international actors—diplomats, bureaucrats, elected officials, functionaries of international organizations, and so forth—largely are relegated to the study of “foreign policy analysis,” itself a distinct academic discipline.

The implication for IR theory is that schools of thought that accept the state-as-individual assumption enjoy the status of “paradigms” in the study of what is variously referred to as IR, international politics, world politics, and so on. By contrast, approaches that focus on individual human agents, that is, theories put to use in “foreign policy analysis,” are not elevated to the status of a “paradigm” on par with theories of IR.⁴⁵ Hence, in the annual survey of IR scholars conducted by researchers at the College of William and Mary (Maliniak et al. 2012, 12, 27, 47), theories of individual decision-making are not included in the list of major IR paradigms but are instead presumably relegated to the realm of the so-called foreign policy analysis.⁴⁶ By the same token, the International Studies Association (ISA) publishes three journals that emphasize the overarching paradigms in the study of IR (*International Studies Quarterly*, *International Studies Review*, and *International Studies Perspectives*), while separating out the study of “foreign policy analysis” into its own eponymously titled journal. The articles that appear in *Foreign Policy Analysis* employ distinct theoretical approaches that typically are not found in the ISA’s other official journals.⁴⁷

The division of scholarship into paradigms in the study of IR and theories of foreign policy analysis is the inevitable result of the distinction imposed by treating states metaphorically as individuals versus human beings treated as literal individuals. Ironically, novice students initiating their study of IR are far more aware of the blurring between literal human individuals and metaphorical states-as-individuals than are many established scholars as illustrated ironically through students’ erroneous grammar. In written essays in introductory IR courses it is common for students to use the third-person plural when referring to states. A typical sentence might be written something along the lines of, “France sought European integration at the same time *they* were relinquishing *their* African colonies.” Students know that countries are comprised of individual decision-makers even if they are not accustomed to using the convention of using the third-person singular when referring to corporate actors. This is quite possibly because undergraduate students in introductory courses in particular have

not been initiated (indoctrinated?) into a scholarly tradition that treats corporate actors as singular entities for the purposes of tracing out causal or constitutive theories of IR. Of course, corporate actors are by definition singular entities, but they are also comprised of individuals whose decisions collectively constitute the deliberations and actions of the collective. This is a distinction that has been debated ferociously by IR scholars (e.g., Ashley 1984; Wendt 1999, 2004, 2005; Neumann 2004; Wight 2004; Lomas 2005; Schiff 2008; Luoma-aho 2009); however, the result of the debate frequently has been that scholars have been forced to take sides regarding whether the state-as-individual is a metaphor or if it is a literal fact. The reality is that it can be both, since states can behave as singular units or they can behave in ways reflective of the diversity of positions taken by individuals within them.

The division of scholarly research and into theories of IR and foreign policy analysis is also the inevitable result of thinking about the subject matter at hand in terms of metaphorical “levels of analysis.” I have taken up other aspects of the levels of analysis metaphor in my previous work (Marks 2011, 58–64). What I did not explore was how the levels of analysis metaphor create categories in theorizing the nature of IR itself. The codification of the division between IR theory and foreign policy analysis quite possibly took place in J. David Singer’s seminal 1961 article on the levels of analysis problem. In that piece, Singer identifies two levels of analysis in the study of IR: the level of the international system, and the level of the “national state.” The level of the individual, while now common in the enumeration of levels of analysis in IR, is not included in Singer’s typology.⁴⁸ Singer entertains the possibility of theorizing at the level of the individual but is cautious because doing so would hamper prediction and the ability to formulate generalizable propositions. Singer (1961, 79) notes, however, that scholars have in fact mapped out a strategy for developing theories at the individual level, citing the contributions of Richard Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burrin Sapin in their 1954 volume *Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics*. However, Singer is concerned that theories at the individual level lack parsimony. Singer (ibid.) refers approvingly to a review of the Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin volume by Herbert McClosky (1956, 291), who says the following about decision-making theories: “Until a greater measure of theory is introduced into the proposal and the relations among variables are specified more concretely, [a decision-making model] is likely to remain little more than a setting-out of categories and, like any taxonomy, fairly limited in its utility.”

More tellingly, in leaving out the individual level of analysis, Singer seems to concur with latter-day theorists who see the difference between theories of IR and foreign policy analysis as a choice to reify the state as a metaphorical individual instead of viewing it as a political institution composed of human agents. Singer (1961, 89) writes: “Those of us who think of social forces as operative regardless of the actor’s awareness, who believe that explanation need not include all of the steps in a causal chain, who are dubious of the practicality of gathering phenomenal data, or who visualize the nation as a distinct entity apart from its individual members, will tend to reject the phenomenological approach.” The phenomenological approach is one that treats individuals as discrete agents, which Singer finds too unwieldy for the purposes of assembling a parsimonious theory of cause and effect in order to explain IR.

Herein lies the key point—Singer’s taxonomy of levels of analysis which divides the field into a study of IR on the one hand and foreign policy analysis on the other. This division is part and parcel of the reification of the state as a metaphorical individual. Singer (88–89) says as much: “In other words, *people* are capable of experiences, images, and expectations, while institutional abstractions are not, except in the metaphorical sense” (emphasis in the original). Importantly, the classification system by which IR theory is divided into levels of analysis, together with the reification of the state-as-individual, is part of the same process by which metaphors separate out individual human decision-makers in policymaking roles from the state conceived of as an individual. This decision represents the key ontological move that creates the division between IR theory and foreign policy analysis. Metaphors therefore play an essential role in defining fields of inquiry, what needs to be understood, and how it is to be studied. While Singer’s examination of levels of analysis was not the first to tackle this topic, and although dozens of investigations of the concept have ensued, his emphasis on the systemic and state levels of analysis as representative of IR theory, with the individual level relegated to secondary status, has had a profound impact on the field, perhaps felt most deeply in the ongoing division between theories of IR on the one hand and foreign policy analysis on the other.⁴⁹

*Where Are the Metaphors in Theories of Foreign Policy
Decision-Making?*

Inasmuch as theories of foreign policy decision-making are marginalized and treated apart from theoretical paradigms in the study of IR, they share

a common trait with Feminist IR theory. Specifically, metaphors are seemingly absent in theories of foreign policy decision-making.⁵⁰ While foreign policy *leaders* are inclined to deploy linguistic metaphors for the purposes of framing an issue, for example, the image of “falling dominos” in American discourse during the Vietnam War (Shimko 1994), *theories* of foreign policy decision-making are largely devoid of the sorts of metaphorical images that are common in other paradigms in the study of IR. The relative lack of metaphors in theories of foreign policy decision-making suggests the following question: Does this shortage of metaphors imply that there is no paradigm incorporating theories of foreign policy decision-making because there are no conceptual metaphors that would inform a coherent theoretical logic? As I have elaborated in this book and my previous volume, the main paradigmatic approaches in the study of IR are characterized by the analytical categories and causal arguments that are framed by core conceptual metaphors. In many cases, these paradigms can be distinguished from each other on the basis of those conceptual metaphors. Thus, for example, the metaphor of shifting “distributions” of power frames Realist hypotheses about changed relations among states, while the metaphor of “evolving” norms signifies a concept within the Constructivist school of thought. Conceptual metaphors both denote an internal coherence among different strands of thinking within paradigms and differentiate each of the paradigms from the others.

Although Feminist theory demonstrates a lack of a consistent and systematic set of conceptual metaphors that unify individual strands of thought within the paradigm, it nonetheless represents a distinct and coherent theoretical approach in the study of IR because of its emphasis on other fundamental analytical concepts. Can the same be said of theories of foreign policy decision-making? On the one hand, what characterizes theories of foreign policy decision-making as distinct from other approaches in IR is their treatment as constants those factors that other paradigms treat as variables in IR. Specifically, theories of foreign policy decision-making make simplifying assumptions about prevailing structures at the systemic and state levels of analysis for the purpose of asking what changed outcomes would occur as a function of changes in the decision-making dynamics of individuals and decision-making groups such as government organizations, agencies, and bureaucracies. Scholars who practice these approaches hypothesize that variations in the rationality and non-rationality of decision-making will have an appreciable impact on outcomes, all things being equal at the systemic and state levels of analysis. What also characterizes theories of foreign policy decision-making is the nature of the generalizability of their claims.

Theoretical propositions about cause and effect are generalizable only to the extent that there are similarities in circumstances from case to case. Since there are far more decision-making dynamics among foreign policymakers than there are variations in the structural conditions of the international system or the governments of states, the ability to generalize across cases is less comprehensive than it is in paradigms which theorize at the systemic or state levels of analysis.

Given the limits on generalizability that are intrinsic to theories of foreign policy decision-making, the coherence of these theories into a unified paradigm depends on the existence of analytical concepts which frame the causal logic of these approaches. In Feminist theory, these analytical concepts take the form of ontological claims about what constitutes the substance of IR, namely, an expanded notion of politics (beyond that which is claimed by competing IR paradigms) informed by gender, corresponding epistemological understandings that go beyond traditional approaches, and a wider set of methodological tools so as to fully capture the wider range of subjects that are suggested by Feminist ontologies and epistemologies. Is the relative lack of conceptual metaphors in theories of foreign policy decision-making evidence that these theories do not cohere into an identifiable paradigmatic approach? The current state of the field would seem to suggest yes. The biannual survey conducted by the Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations asks IR scholars to indicate what portion of teaching and research they estimate is devoted to the major paradigms in the study of IR. Paradigms included for selection in the survey are Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, Marxism, Feminism, the English School, non-paradigmatic, and “other” (Maliniak et al. 2012, 12, 27, 47). This classification would seem to indicate that for the purposes of delineating the major theoretical schools of thought in IR, theories of foreign policy decision-making are not included.

More importantly, while there are a small number of prominent metaphors in the study of foreign policy decision-making, for example, the concept of deterrence examined with the metaphorical frame of “brinkmanship” (Schelling 1966), these metaphors are for the most part limited in scope. They apply not to core concepts and analytical puzzles that lead to the essential causal logic of the main IR paradigms, but rather to limited situational circumstances. The hypotheses that are applicable to these situations and the predictions that emanate from them are unique to the circumstances of these situations and tend not to apply to other decision-making contexts. Thus, it is not so much the absence of metaphors in the

study of foreign policy decision-making as it is the limits on their generalizability that leads scholars not to recognize theories of decision-making as a comprehensive paradigm on a par with other IR schools of thought. Once again we see that an examination of metaphors reveals something about the nature of IR theory, in this case, the delineation of what is included and excluded from the study of “international relations.” Conceptual metaphors with limited scope such as “brinkmanship” denote the contours of theories of foreign policy decision-making, but limited ability to generalize from them to the core concepts of “international relations” helps explain why scholars classify these theories differently from the main paradigms in IR theory.

METAPHORS AND THE MARGINALIZATION OF PEOPLE IN IR THEORY

Also overlooked by the metaphorical lenses of IR theory are the actions of everyday people.⁵¹ Whether it is IR or foreign policy analysis, divided as they are by metaphorical levels of analysis, what qualifies as the subject of research and analysis are the actions of what are deemed to be international and/or narrowly defined political actors. The denomination of political actors occurs by virtue of being included in the categories created by conceptual metaphors which define the field. Excluded by the categories of IR and foreign policy analysis is the great mass of humanity not occupying positions of political authority, tasked with foreign policy decision-making, or serving as functionaries to implement these decisions.⁵² Although, as I discussed above, Feminist theory does take up the role of humans individually and collectively as agents in the practice of global relations, the Feminist paradigm alone among IR schools of thought seriously entertains the proposition that everyday people are active participants in the conduct of world affairs.⁵³ One could argue that analyses of non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations and transnational activist networks incorporate the study of individuals who are not part of the upper echelons of states’ foreign policy apparatuses. However, even these analyses miss the involvement of the vast majority of human beings whose actions affect global affairs and who are affected by what goes on around the world.

The overlooking of everyday people in IR theory (aside from Feminist theory) is a function of several conceptual metaphors that determine the parameters of the field. In the first place, there is no level of analysis that

incorporates the actions of individuals aside from those individuals who are in positions of policymaking authority. Levels of analysis typically are arrayed from “big” to “small,” with the “largest” level of analysis, that of the international “system,” located on the “top” and the smallest level, that of the individual, situated on the “bottom.” “Below” the level of the individual, there is no space for *individuals*, that is, the collected individuals who make up the mass of humanity typically not considered relevant in the practice or study of IR.⁵⁴ Perhaps because the many individuals who comprise the majority of the world’s population are “larger” than the discrete individuals who are in policymaking positions, there is no “place” for them in the levels of analysis that are layered vertically from “big” to “small.”

The reification of states and other corporate actors that gives them “personhood” in IR is another metaphorical concept that redirects IR theory away from the acts of everyday individuals toward more abstract metaphorical concepts.⁵⁵ Alexander Wendt (1999, 13–14) has suggested “bracketing” levels of analysis in ways that permit for theorizing about the state seen as an individual or person.⁵⁶ The net result of such endeavors, however, is to exclude the role of hidden human individuals and the effects that international politics has on them. The consequences of this theoretical conceptualization of the state (as opposed to actual human beings) as having personhood on the practice of politics can be frightening. As Andreas Musolff (2010) eloquently argues, throughout history the state has been conceived metaphorically as having a corporeal existence, most notably in the notion of the “body politic.” Once endowed with this existence, the body politic can then be imagined as subject to disease and infection. Musolff powerfully explains how throughout history political efforts to cleanse the body politic of metaphorical disease, infection, and parasitic infestation have ignored the lives of living people, culminating horrifically in the most extreme example of efforts to maintain the health of the body politic, that is, the Holocaust. The Holocaust, as Musolff notes, demonstrates how political conceptions of the state as an individual served to render real human beings expendable in the name of preserving the health of the body politic.⁵⁷ Scholars of IR should take note that to the extent IR as a field of study is confined to the actions of a limited range of international actors, IR theory leaves out the vast majority of the world’s population who both influence world affairs by their actions and whose lives are shaped by the actors at the center of IR theory, namely states and other political institutions.

Feminist theory notwithstanding, IR theory mostly leaves out the personal when examining the political. The focus on metaphorical concepts, begs the question, as Christine Sylvester (2016, 258) puts it, “must IR remain abstract in the future?” This volume and the one that precedes it (Marks 2011) tell the story of IR narratives that center on conceptual themes as frames of reference. IR as an academic discipline may involve the humanities and social sciences, but as a scholarly field it pointedly excludes the human and the social. The reason behind this is the influence of metaphors as the primary tool of analysis. These metaphors largely go unnoticed, although their importance in delineating the content and scope of IR analysis cannot be overstated.

NOTES

1. For examinations of the role of metaphors in scientific inquiry, see, for example, Black (1962), Brown (2003).
2. The “billiard ball” metaphor in fact is not unlike elementary metaphors found in physics. The image of states interacting on a billiard table resembles physical relationships such as those visualized with the aid of “orbital” metaphors used to study the structures and properties of atoms and subatomic particles.
3. The “billiard ball” metaphor to describe power politics was first advanced by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*. See Terence Ball’s (1975, 215ff) discussion of the Hobbesian metaphor. For a detailed explication of the billiard ball metaphor, see Burton (1972, 28–32). See also Deibert (1997, 167–169).
4. The conception of “power” in IR theory lends itself to any number of metaphors. Power can also be metaphorically “soft” or “hard” (Nye 1990a, b, 2004) and it can be metaphorically “tamed” (Katzenstein 1997), just to name two of the many metaphorical ways in which power has been conceived.
5. See also Roggeveen (2001, especially 30).
6. The “billiard ball” metaphor can be compared to the similar-sounding albeit theoretically opposed “‘egg-box’ conception of international society” whereby “the sovereign states are the eggs, the box is international society and the purpose of the box is to ‘separate and cushion, not to act’” (Wheeler 1996, 126). See also Vincent (1986, 123), Jackson (1990, 267).
7. The “black box” metaphor not only treats the state as a unitary actor, it also privileges the state as an unproblematic realm mediating between the presumed anarchy of IR and the relative tranquility of domestic politics. See Walker (1990, 17–18).

8. Waltz's use of economic metaphors is found elsewhere in the study of politics. For an analysis of the pervasiveness of economic metaphors in political science, see Ashcraft (1977).
9. Ironically, since Waltz recognizes that the international system is comprised of a diversity of actors, if he were to use international politics as a metaphor for the economic market, and not vice versa, he would likely assume that the economic market is comprised of more than just firms in terms of relevant actors.
10. Waltz acknowledges his debt to physics: "A political structure is akin to a field of forces in physics: Interactions within a field have properties different from those they would have if they occurred outside of it, and as the field affects the objects, so the objects affect the field" (Waltz 1979, 73).
11. I say "quasi-experimental" since Neorealism relies most heavily on historical case studies as its "laboratory" rather than on experimenting on human subjects, which would be both practically challenging and ethically problematic.
12. For a fuller elaboration of the significance of the metaphor of "domestic" politics in IR theory, see (Marks 2011, 46–47).
13. Peer Schouten (2013) affirms Walker and notes additionally that the concept of levels of analysis in IR theory posits the state as a social contract which shields humans from the state of nature among individuals and anarchy among states. See also Marks (2004).
14. The inside–outside distinction which privileges the state as a source of protection also creates similar binary distinctions such as the contrast between the state and the metaphor of "warlords," which are associated with chaos and anarchy. On the metaphors of state and warlord, see Goetze (2016).
15. The first appearance of the word in English was in the years 1292 and 1297 in the forms of *foreyns* and *forene*, respectively.
16. The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites Coryate's book *Coryat's Crudities* (Coryate 1611) published in London in 1611 and quotes Coryate: "The Obseruations of my trauels;.I hope..will be very delectable to euery Reader that loueth to heare of forraine affaires."
17. On the metaphorical rhetoric of homes and homelands, see Confino (1993), Shelef (2016).
18. Of the terms that are synonyms with "interests," the one that is used most often in Liberal discussions of domestic politics probably would be domestic "preferences."
19. MacKenzie and Sesay (147) elaborate on their claim about norms betraying the values of those with the power to disseminate them: "The value laden discussions of norms as signals of 'appropriateness' and 'community and collective understandings' should be viewed as practical sirens warning

- of imperialism and beg several—seemingly obvious—questions: Appropriate for whom? Who’s [sic] collective? What community?”
20. On the relationship between socialization, norms, and the variable role of hegemonic actors, see Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990), Bower (2015), Lantis (2015).
 21. I explore the base metaphor of “evolution” at greater length in Marks (2011, 71–72).
 22. On evolutionary metaphors and international norms, see also Nadelmann (1990) and Patrick (2001).
 23. On norm life cycles, see also Krook and True (2012). On norm cascades, see also Fisk and Ramos (2014). The end of a norm life cycle has been imagined metaphorically with the image of norm “degeneration.” See Panke and Petersohn (2012).
 24. For a biological approach to the study of evolution in IR, see Falger (2001).
 25. As Price (1997, 43) notes: “The legacy of the initial manifestation of the chemical weapons taboo...is a coming together of a genealogical appropriation of the poison taboo and a rereading of an institutionalized prohibition formally produced for other reasons.”
 26. For the relationship between terrorism and taboos, see Jackson (2015).
 27. On “normality” in IR, see, for example, Lawson and Tannaka (2011).
 28. The suspicion that mainstream theories of IR marginalize Feminist approaches is taken up in Steans (2003). My purpose in the discussion that follows is not to perpetuate this marginalization, but to point out how metaphors in orthodox theories of IR contribute to this marginalization and to suggest how an interrogation of metaphors in mainstream IR theory can both highlight why Feminist theory has been relegated to the margins and provide an avenue for providing Feminist theory a more prominent place in theories of IR.
 29. Thus, for example, just as Jill Steans (1998, 46) points out that “International Relations is a *gendered* discourse” (emphasis in the original), she might also agree that this gendered discourse is part of a larger discourse imbued with metaphors that reflect a gendered view.
 30. I am aware, as V. Spike Peterson (2004, 36) reminds us, that Feminist IR theory is not monolithic in its approach to the study of IR. However, Peterson also observes that there are unifying features of Feminist IR theory, in particular, an emphasis on gender. It is these unifying features that I argue below resist the tendency toward reliance on metaphorical frames that are otherwise common in much of traditional IR theory.
 31. Even the concept of a metaphorically spatial “marginalization” of Feminist theory in IR is problematic for situating Feminist schools of thought

- within the larger discipline of IR. See Steans (2003, 428–431), Soreanu (2010, 392–393).
32. For similar analyses, see Grant (1991), Peterson (1992).
 33. Enloe's agenda is echoed by other Feminist scholars. For example, J. Ann Tickner (2005b, 2185) writes: "Feminists in IR are concerned with the linkages between the everyday lived experiences of women and the constitution and exercise of political and economic power at the state and global levels." For an empirical example, see Bianchi and Ludbrook (2016). See also Enloe's reflections on her own work in Enloe (2016).
 34. Treating the experiences of individuals seriously does not preclude the ability of Feminist approaches to theorize about large-scale process of IR. Thus, for example, Tickner (2001, 47) writes that "when we treat individuals as the objects of security, we open up the possibility of talking about a transcendental human community with common global concerns and allow engagement with the broadest global threats."
 35. For more on the study of the everyday in IR, see the forum on this topic in the December 2011 issue of *International Political Sociology*: Crane-Seeber (2011), Enloe (2011), Guillaume (2011a, b), Salter (2011), Seabrooke (2011). See also D'Costa (2006), Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Tekoah (2016).
 36. The importance of the impacts of everyday people on IR and vice versa, and their significance for Feminist theory, is highlighted poignantly by Rai (2016).
 37. Among those pieces of information that become accessible through self-referential modes of research are those that pertain to emotion and its role in IR research. See the articles in the forum on "Emotion and the Feminist IR Researcher" in the December 2011 issue of *International Studies Review*: MacKenzie (2011), Marshall (2011), Parashar (2011), Saeidi and Turcotte (2011), Sjoberg (2011), Sylvester (2011).
 38. Moving away from objectivism means acknowledging the subjective experiences of individuals affected by IR, not embracing Relativism as a theoretical approach. See Sylvester (2002, 313–314).
 39. On the construction of "international security" as a metaphorical frame, see Chilton (1996), Marks (2011, chapter 6).
 40. Thus, J. Ann Tickner (2006, 21) notes that "feminists claim no single standard of methodological correctness or 'feminist way' to do research." For overviews of Feminist approaches, see, for example, Sylvester (1994, 2002), Steans (1998), Tickner (2001, 2005a, b).
 41. Raluca Soreanu and David Hudson (2008) point out that the sociology of Feminist IR theory indicates a citation map wherein Feminist scholars cite a unique set of literatures, which then comprise the Feminist discourse of IR theory.

42. Sjoberg is not necessarily the first scholar applying Feminist theory to structural analyses of IR. For example, while pioneering Feminist theorist J. Ann Tickner (2005a, 6) prioritizes the role of individuals in world affairs, her work does nonetheless employ the metaphorical language of structural analysis, arguing, for example, that “feminist ontologies are based on social relations that are constituted by historically unequal political, economic, and social *structures*” (emphasis added). See also Sjoberg (2013, 2014).
43. Although Sjoberg adopts a structural approach to incorporating Feminist theory into IR, she adheres to many Feminist tenets, including the assertion that elements of IR, especially war, are “lived and experienced” by individuals, where gender plays a role (Sjoberg 2013, 252). See also Sjoberg (2014).
44. On eclecticism, see Sil and Katzenstein (2010), Parsons (2015).
45. For a good summary on the divide between IR theory and foreign policy analysis, see Kaarbo (2015, esp. 189–195).
46. In the William and Mary survey, the main IR paradigms listed are Constructivism, English School, Feminism, Liberalism, Marxism, and Realism (Maliniak et al. 2012, 12, 27, 47). Also listed are “Non-paradigmatic” and “Other” which would allow scholars responding to the survey to include theories of decision-making if they so choose. However, “non-paradigmatic” implies no paradigm whatsoever (which would exclude decision-making theories as a coherent paradigmatic approach), while “other” might include decision-making theories although it could include other approaches as well. The point is that survey respondents are not given a choice of decision-making theories which would seem to indicate that the authors of the survey do not consider it a paradigm in the study of IR on par with other theoretical schools of thought. Rather, decision-making theories comprise approaches in the study of foreign policy analysis.
47. The ISA describes *Foreign Policy Analysis* as “a peer-reviewed outlet for the highest quality academic research into the processes, outcomes and theories of foreign policy.” The association’s other three flagship journals have a different mandate, that is, to emphasize “international studies,” which presumably is distinct from foreign policy analysis. The ISA also publishes *International Political Sociology* described as “interdisciplinary journal responding to the diversification of both scholarly interests and regional concerns in contemporary international studies” and co-publishes *International Interactions* described as “an interdisciplinary journal publishing original empirical, analytic, and/or theoretical research in the general field of international relations.” Source: <http://www.isanet.org/pubs/journals.html>.

48. Singer (1961, 78) notes that Waltz (1959) includes the individual level of analysis in his classic *Man, the State and War*. Meanwhile, Rosenau (1966) lists as many of five levels of analysis of which the level of the individual is but one. Scholars have identified varying numbers of levels of analysis and typically include the individual level in their system of classification.
49. Without explicitly addressing the divide between IR theory and foreign policy analysis, Charlotte Epstein (2011) suggests a discourse-based analysis of subjects and subjectivities, which allows scholars to theorize across levels of analysis by distinguishing the discourse of states from the discourse of individual agents of the state.
50. By this I do not mean that metaphors are absent in the foreign policy pronouncements of politicians and political leaders. In fact, as has been well-documented, individuals in charge of foreign policy decision-making are especially prone to using metaphors to frame issues particularly for propagandistic purposes but also simply to present an issue to the public at large. On the use of metaphors in the discourse of foreign policy leaders, see, for example, Andrews (1979), Ivie (1980, 1982, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2004), Milliken (1996), Beer and De Landsheer (2004), Slingerland et al. (2007), Flanik (2011), Oppermann and Spencer (2013).
51. For a brief but eloquent call for the inclusion of the quotidian in the study of IR, see Rai (2016). On the need to broaden the scope of IR, see also Dyvik et al. (2017).
52. The study of human beings is often confused with the study of human *nature* in IR theory. On the latter, see Jacobi and Freyberg-Inan (2012).
53. For examples of the study of the everyday that does not derive from Feminist theory, see Kessler and Guillaume (2002), Hobson and Seabrooke (2007), Shim (2016).
54. One could argue that the domestic or state level of analysis leaves room for everyday individuals who express themselves collectively in the form of interest groups or social movements. However, these groups typically are treated as the same sort of corporate actors as states themselves and therefore are given a metaphorical personhood that is abstracted from the actions of people in their individual acts. The same could be said of mass public opinion, which is treated as the aggregated sum of collected expressions, not the effects of people engaged in individual behaviors.
55. On the state seen metaphorically as an individual, see Marks (2011, 47–51), Musolff (2016).
56. On the state as an individual or person, see also Wendt (2004, 2005).
57. “The victims [of the Holocaust] were treated as if they were *agents of disease* and *parasites* that threatened the *German national body’s health* and therefore had to be annihilated” (Musolff 2010, 2, emphasis in the original). See also Musolff (2016).

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The Role of Metaphors in International Relations Theory

In my previous work on metaphors in IR theory (Marks 2011) I observed that the analytical categories by which empirical facts are understood originate in metaphorical concepts. The accumulation of conceptual metaphors in IR also provides the basis for the narratives around which theories of IR are constructed. By narratives I do not mean that IR scholars tell fictional stories.¹ In the study of any disciplinary field, determination of what concepts are thought to be important, and how they are problematized, is not based on an arbitrary identification of objective facts. Instead, the ontological bases of academic inquiry are told through a series of concepts comprising an analytical whole. Scholars must tell each other what matters, that is, construct a narrative, since facts do not present themselves in an unambiguous fashion to a group of individuals each of whom may understand facts in different ways. Moreover, as Richard Ned Lebow (2014) has suggested, since linearly causal arguments are of dubious value in social realms where human agency is at play, explanations in IR are conveyed in part through narratives that, as Lebow puts it, “construct causation.”²

The narratives of IR theory, as with the narratives in any academic discipline, constitute the language of the discipline’s ontological scope. These narratives include metaphors as well as myths. As Berit Bliesemann de Guevara (2016, 19) forcefully observes, as is true for metaphors, “myths are one of the structuring elements of broader discourses which construct political problems and legitimate policy solutions.”³ Bliesemann de Guevara further notes (19) that “where narrative-focused approaches to

the study of myth are used, such as in many interpretive policy analysis works, they have contributed powerful insights into the cultural and social constitution of politics.” Franziska Müller (2016, 111) concurs, arguing that “IR can be conceptualised as a kind of ‘storytelling,’ structured by certain narratives, tropes, protagonists, scripts, and tensions” of which myth-production is one. Along with myths, metaphors are part of IR’s larger process of storytelling. As noted, by narrative and strorytelling what is not meant is what might be commonly understood as fiction or what Müller (107) refers to as “false beliefs” or “wrong consciousness.” Rather, attentiveness to narratives, myths, metaphors, and other discursive elements of IR theory is part of an interpretive move which demands that attention be paid to how IR theory is constructed. As I have suggested in this volume and my earlier works, conceptual metaphors are integral to the understanding of the ontological bases of IR. However, there are still some factors that must be taken into consideration to complete the analysis of metaphors in IR theory.

METAPHORS-AS-ANALOGIES VERSUS CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS

Differences exist in how metaphors make their way into theorizing about IR just as they do in other fields of inquiry. One difference is between metaphors as overt contrivances deliberately crafted to help visualize a theoretical or empirical problem, and implied metaphors that are contained in the language of theorizing but perhaps are not necessarily explicitly intended by theorists. This distinction is an example of the difference language scholars have identified between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors discussed in Chap. 1.⁴ Many of the early metaphors in the study of IR fall into the category of deliberate metaphors purposefully intended to create an awareness or understanding of that which is being studied. In this sense, these metaphors are only one step removed from analogies, a related yet subtly distinct method for making the world intelligible. Analogies take two related domains of understanding and make a direct comparison between them so as to highlight their similarities. An analogy might take the form of, for example, “the fluctuations of sound frequencies are like waves on the ocean.” Metaphors take two seemingly unrelated domains and highlight a key similarity which is then grafted from the source domain onto the target domain as a way of understanding an

abstract quality of the target domain, as in “waves of democratization.”⁵ Analogies thus operate in a similar fashion as models in that they are mental replicas of two concepts with the purpose of using one concept to make the other intelligible. Metaphors rely on the qualities of language to stimulate the same mental connections as analogies, but instead of using analogical models they draw on the brain’s ability to translate experiences via words into cognitive connections.

The history of metaphors in IR theory to some extent represents an alternation between metaphors resembling analogical models and metaphors that rely solely on references to conceptual mappings. Many of the early metaphors in the study of IR resembled analogies in that they were deliberate linguistic models.⁶ The imagining of a balance of power in biological or mechanistic terms is a good example of metaphors that emanate from analogical reasoning. It is possible that theoretical concepts unfolded in this fashion, given the project undertaken by early scholars. The mandate was to provide to rulers knowledge of the world that would then become useful for policymaking. Just as military strategists might present political rulers with scale models of the battlefield on which war plans could be plotted, early scholars of IR could present to political leaders metaphors of how IR worked so that these leaders could make an analogy between, say, a machine and relations among states (or other “international” actors) so as to better calculate diplomacy and other foreign policy plans with the aim of making the “machine” of the balance of power work to their advantage.⁷

As the study of IR moved from statecraft to a more detached academic endeavor, metaphors implied in language have become more common. What this means is that instead of metaphors derived from analogical reasoning, basic concepts in the study of IR are thought of metaphorically in an implied fashion by borrowing imagery from the language of unrelated realms. Examples of these include the contextual metaphors of “anarchy,” “system,” and “structure.” These metaphors are seen as simply establishing the setting in which IR take place, not necessarily analogies on which the specific details of IR replicate corresponding features from nature or the man-made world.

The transition from metaphors-as-analogies to conceptual metaphors was well suited to the Behavioralist Revolution in the twentieth century, which was based on a desire by scholars to graft scientific and positivist methods onto the social sciences. As counterintuitive as it may sound, scientific reasoning often rests on conceptual metaphors as a way of

imagining the material world. Most theorizing begins with assumptions based on observations made in a related realm to that which is being explained. These assumptions generate hypotheses which are then tested by way of experiments (or in the social sciences quasi-experiments) so as to yield theoretical propositions, which then provide the bases for additional testing and on which predictions are made. As historians of science have pointed out (e.g., Leatherdale 1974; Hallyn 2000; Brown 2003), without metaphorical language to frame this process, the scientific method could not yield new understandings.

To illustrate this point we can walk through the theoretical process of a scientific theory to see how metaphors play a role. A good example of metaphors in scientific theorizing can be found in the science of climate change.⁸ Climatologists begin with observations of a related realm, namely, the atmosphere of a greenhouse. This observation generates the first metaphor: it is assumed that the earth is like a greenhouse. From this assumption a hypothesis is generated that builds on the metaphorical language: if “greenhouse” gasses increase, the temperature of the earth’s atmosphere will increase as well. To test this scientists can conduct a quasi-experiment, taking samples of ice from glaciers and correlating glacial accretion or retreat with the amount of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. From there a theory can be generated that as carbon dioxide levels increase, so does the earth’s temperature and the attendant changes this brings. Leaving aside the validity of the theory, the hypotheses, tests, and theoretical propositions of anthropogenic climate change depend on scholars accepting the logic inherent in the metaphorical language of the earth-as-greenhouse image.

For social scientists of the Behavioralist Revolution, the acceptance of conceptual metaphors is not a lapse into the lack of rigor of normative social inquiry, but rather an explicit embrace of the scientific method. Self-consciously methodologically explicit schools of thought such as Neorealism were formulated in ways in which metaphors provide a naming mechanism for the various components of the theory. For example, Neorealists delineate the scope of their theory by specifying that it operates at the “systemic” “level of analysis.” Both “systemic” and “level of analysis” are metaphors—the former casts relations among international actors as akin to the functions of a self-contained set of operations, while the latter imputes a spatial element to identifying the parameters of international politics relative to other sets of political relations. Neorealism also hypothesizes that changes in the “distribution” of power help scholars

make predictions about changes in relations among states. Obviously power is an abstract concept, but to speak of it metaphorically as something that can be “distributed” implies that power can be quantified and measured. These and other metaphors are woven into the theoretical propositions of Neorealism just as metaphors are part of scientific reasoning as the aforementioned “greenhouse” metaphor for climate change demonstrates. Neorealists and other Behavioralists rely less on analogical thinking than they do on a scientific method which incorporates metaphors as an element in the heuristic process just as metaphors are a normal part of everyday, routine human cognition.

There are major exceptions, however, to the conceptual metaphors trend of the Behaviorist Revolution, the most obvious of which is the field of game theory in IR scholarship. Of course, game theory is not unique to the study of IR and is integral to any number of social sciences as well as mathematics from which it originated. It is perhaps the origin of game theory in mathematics that makes it “safe” for Behavioralists despite its overt reliance on contrived metaphorical analogies utilized for the purposes of generating theoretical insights.⁹ Virtually all of the games that comprise game theory involve elaborate stories which presumably provide analogies to problems encountered by strategically oriented agents. These agents need not even be humans as the use of game theory in mathematics and natural sciences such as biology and medical studies demonstrates (again, this makes the metaphorical stories of game theory “safe” for Behaviorist social scientists intent on replicating the scientific method since game theory is also used extensively in the “hard” sciences). As is the case for metaphorical analogies used in early theories of IR (e.g., the balance of power as machine), each game in game theory provides a model of that which it helps elucidate. What happens in miniature in the model then provides a basis for explanation and prediction in the problem under investigation.

Any number of the games used in game theory illustrate the analogical nature of the game theoretic approach in the study of IR. A brief example, the game of Chicken, will suffice to demonstrate (more examples are found in the chapter on game theory in Marks 2011). The story behind the Chicken game is well known and straightforward: Two teenagers dare each other to a test of courage to demonstrate their bravery. The teens face each other behind the wheel of their respective automobiles and line up on the center line of a deserted stretch of road. A group of fellow teens assemble as audience to serve as witnesses for testing which driver is more

courageous. The teens drive toward each other at high speed. If one teen veers off to the side of the road to avoid a head-on collision, the teen who continues down the center is deemed the braver of the two and the one who veers off to avoid the crash is the “chicken.” If they both veer off, they survive the contest, but each suffers a diminished reputation for bravery. If both teens stay on the center line, they engage in a head-on collision; neither one wins, but neither of the two has lost reputation—they have both simply demonstrated that they would rather die than live their life as a coward when compared to the other.

As virtually all scholars of IR know, Chicken is presented in game theory as an analogy for nuclear deterrence. Since the consequence of mutual defection is mutual annihilation, the point of the game is to model strategies for deterrence so that each actor can survive a confrontation with a semblance of reputation intact. Game theorists experiment with strategies of cooperation that they hope will allow states engaged in deterrence to successfully employ a deterrent threat so that the stakes of the game never lead any actor to tempt fate by undertaking preemptive nuclear attacks in the hopes of emerging victorious in the battle. The similarity between this sort of modeling and the analogical metaphors of early IR theory is in evidence here. Scholars in both eras use metaphors-as-analogies to generate foreign policy strategies that might be of use to political leaders.

Analogical metaphors, as opposed to conceptual metaphors, vividly illustrate the real-world implications of theoretical models and highlight practical applications of theoretical conclusions. For example, with reference to the metaphor of “collapsed states,” William Zartman (1995, 267) asserts that “we study how states collapsed in order to put them back together.” The metaphor of “collapsed” states suggests that something has gone wrong with a specific form of political authority (the state) that must be fixed. Implied in this formulation is the notion that the state is preferred over alternative forms of political organization.

The return to overt metaphors-as-analogies also characterizes newer theoretical paradigms, most notably, the Constructivist approach. This is not terribly surprising since, as a relatively newer approach in the study of IR, Constructivism needs to highlight its basic theoretical propositions. It can do this by making analogies between how IR is conceptualized in Constructivism and the actual set of relations among international actors themselves. This was my aim in my earlier book *The Prison as Metaphor: Re-Imagining International Relations* (Marks 2004). In that volume I detail a fairly elaborate analogical metaphor in which relations among

prison inmates is used as a device to conceptualize IR.¹⁰ As I explain in the book, one of the main theoretical propositions of Constructivism is that the world is constituted as a socially constructed realm in which rules and norms shape actors' identities and prescribe and proscribe roles and behaviors. One way to illustrate this assertion and trace out predictions that follow from it is to examine an analogous area of socially constructed reality. The area I chose for this (which by no means is the only one available for this purpose) is the realm of prison inmate relations. Although at first glance it seems counterintuitive that inmate relations could be governed by anything other than the rules enforced by prison officials, studies by sociologists and criminologists reveal that the daily life of prison inmates is formed by the rules established among prisoners themselves. Furthermore, the socially constructed world of inmates is not fixed. Rather, it changes over time as inmates re-negotiate the terms of their society on an ongoing basis. The point is that, as a metaphor for IR, the prison offers a good opportunity to test the Constructivist proposition that socially constructed meanings have a real and appreciable effect on the actions of actors inhabiting that world. Lessons from the prison can be applied to relations among international actors to see if and how social meanings are translated into actors' conceptions of appropriate behavior.

Over the course of the history of the study of IR, scholars have availed themselves both of overt metaphors-as-analogies and conceptual metaphors. Metaphors-as-analogies often are used heuristically to highlight new thinking or to advance new theoretical propositions. Conceptual metaphors typically reflect efforts to incorporate scientific methods into the study of IR by creating implicit or explicit hypotheses or models. In many ways there is a dialectic between these two uses of metaphors, with conceptual metaphors serving to elaborate the theoretical principles of established schools of thought and metaphors-as-analogies acting as theoretical innovations which challenge mainstream ways of thinking. Scholars seeking to contest established theories suggest metaphors based on analogies to generate new knowledge, which, once accepted, becomes the metaphorical language of prevailing theoretical paradigms. This alternation of metaphorical uses thus can give insight into the current state of affairs in IR theory; if the dominant approach to metaphors is to incorporate them conceptually into theories, the field is likely in a period of stasis, but if the prevailing use of metaphors is to advance them overtly based on analogical imagery, the field is likely in a period of change.

METAPHORS AND CATEGORIES

One of the things metaphors do in IR theory (as they do in other disciplines) is create analytical categories. Entire research agendas can be formed around these categories. For example, in 1990, Joseph Nye coined the term “soft power,” in which the tactile metaphor of “soft” (contrasted with the metaphor of “hard”) defined an entirely new concept of power that was heretofore unspecified (Nye 1990a, b, 2004). A recent search of books that focus on analyses of soft power at a popular online retailer yields no fewer than 35 titles published in recent years, not to mention numerous articles in scholarly journals on the same topic.¹¹ With the turn of a phrase, Nye inspired a cottage industry dedicated to an analytical category that reflects a metaphorical way of conceiving of certain dynamics of influence in international affairs. States have always used the instruments and strategies Nye identified in his initial work in this area, but before he conceptualized these tools as “soft power” they were merely thought of by scholars to be part of the repertoire of states’ foreign policy practices. The metaphorical concept of “soft power,” now enshrined in IR theory by the label attached to it, has become an analytical category in its own right. Soft power is seen as worthy of study as a distinct aspect of IR, whereas before the label was attached to it, what is now known as “soft power” included policies that were thought of as simply part of IR as previously conceived.

Categories, of course, can have a useful function in IR or any other discipline. However, it is helpful to distinguish categories that are analytically useful from those that exist as categories for the sake of categories.¹² Evolutionary biologists have long relied on the metaphorical categories of Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, and Species to group together organisms with similar physical characteristics. The metaphors of “Kingdom,” “Class,” “Order,” and “Family” in particular focus the mind on seemingly obvious anatomical similarities or commonalities that imply an evolutionary connection. We now know, however, through genetic research that some organisms previously grouped together because of physical similarities are not as related to each other on the genetic level as previously thought. The metaphorical categories biologists used to classify organisms, from which inferences were drawn, were influenced by the propensity to think about evolutionary connections conceptually with metaphors providing the bases for those concepts.

Similarly, both political leaders and scholars alike have relied on metaphorical categories such as the “nation-state” to group together disparate

groups of actors, often with few commonalities. For political leaders, the “nation-state” was a convenient fiction designed to convince people that a group of individuals comprised a cohesive and unified whole—the “nation”—fused together with political authority in the form of the “state.” This was a useful tool of historical propaganda to try and create a shared sense of identity subject to centralized political rule. Presently, anthropologists, sociologists, and scholars in related fields more commonly view nations as groups of individuals with shared self-identified traits which distinguish them from others. By this standard, the category of “nation-state” exists only metaphorically as a group of disparate peoples *imagined* as one by means of the conceptual term. This category of “nation-state,” so useful to leaders trying to consolidate political authority over disparate groups of people, found its way into political science where scholars accepted the concept as a term of convenience to identify the political units distinguished in terms of the territorial limits of formal governance associated with the state. “Nation-states” exist not as literal statements of the overlap between cultural identity (nation) and political authority (state) but as metaphorical concepts. This category of the metaphorical “nation-state,” while now in a process of obsolescence, nonetheless shaped IR scholarship for many years.

And yet, despite the fact that “nation-state” has become a somewhat antiquated term in the study of IR, the concept of a “nation” as a metaphorical group of people with shared traits continues to inform both political science at large and the field of IR. A nation is by nature a subjectively identified entity inasmuch as nations typically determine for themselves what qualifies as the unifying characteristics of those people comprising the nation. This does not stop scholars from reifying the concept so that it takes on the appearance of objective fact. The reification of nations then leads to a problematizing of political situations when nations lose their cohesiveness to the point they become what any number of scholars have characterized as metaphorical “divided” nations, that is, nations that presumably possess an inherent unity which for whatever reason has come asunder.¹³ Nations can change in their composition because of organic shifts in self-identification, armed conflict, demographic shifts, or migration, among other things. The metaphor of a “divided” nation reifies a category of “nation” which groups of individuals define for themselves on a subjective basis in the first place.

In the same vein, many scholars find very useful the analytical distinctions between the categories of war, terrorism, and violent crime. All three

phenomena involve the application of violence, but they do so for different purposes and in different ways. War involves the use of wide-scale violence by armed combatants pursuing a political purpose over an extended period of time to force opponents to succumb to a desired end. Terrorism involves sporadic violence by individuals not necessarily associated with coherent political units nor political aims using violence to terrorize a target audience in the hopes it will bring about a desired end. Violent crime involves individuals acting to achieve their own ends without any benefit accruing to a wider group of people aside from those associated with the criminal acts.¹⁴ Clearly there are overlaps among these three categories. States waging war against each other can fuel their war efforts by engaging in criminal acts. State-sponsored terrorism can also be coupled with the instruments of war. Organized criminal syndicates can terrorize specified audiences so as to consolidate their control of criminal activities. However, the important thing is that we would not recognize overlapping violent activity if we did not have distinct analytical categories to begin with. The purpose of these analytical categories is to specify actors, data, evidence, and a causal logic associated with competing theoretical explanations which seek to account for actions and outcomes associated with these categories. Without categories there would be nothing coherent to explain and no empirical basis by which to evaluate the merits of rival theoretical schools of thought.¹⁵

The distinction that is to be made is between categories which are analytically useful and (metaphorical) categories for the sake of categories. It is fair to ask, for example, what is the usefulness of making the distinction between democratic “transition” and democratic “consolidation” as unique analytical categories? As I discuss in Chap. 3, democratic transition and democratic consolidation are controversial subjects in the theoretical literature on democratization inasmuch as the line between the two is not analytically clear. Scholars of democratization are not in agreement about when a country crosses the line from “transition” to “consolidation” in terms of the governmental institutions and practices which would distinguish one condition from the other. These conditions are also unclear as to how they can be distinguished from “normal” democracies that exist simply as such, not as ends along a continuum from transition to consolidation and beyond. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the categories of “transition” and “consolidation” mask the fluid state of what might be thought of as politics as usual. Even in “normal” democracies (i.e., those that have moved into democratic normality beyond even “consolidation”) there is argument and dispute. No democracy is ever enshrined

in that condition without the potential for some form of change (even to a non-democratic form of government).

Rather, the categories of “transition” and “consolidation” are given to us by the propensity to metaphorically conceive of something unique unto itself. It may be helpful to think of a spectrum from democratic “transition” to “consolidation” as a way of organizing one’s thoughts, but that does not mean the categories are useful for identifying actors, data, evidence, and competing sets of causal logic, for example, through the categories of war, terrorism, and violent crime. For the purposes of theoretical analysis, the categories of democratic “transition” and “consolidation” may not be useful aside from helping scholars begin to think about the changing nature of politics in which change is multiform and/or constant. At that point, it may be more useful to devise other ways of explaining political change than ones that rely on the metaphorical categories of transition and consolidation, which may end up being categories simply for categories’ sake. The same could be said of the categories in IR theory that are premised on metaphorical ways of conceptualizing the political world.

Some of the categories that enter the field of IR have their origin in their etymology, yet their application to concrete issues is somewhat arbitrary. It is common, for example, to refer to an incident in IR as a “crisis.” However, what qualifies as a crisis and what does not is not necessarily self-evident. Readily identifiable events during October 1962 have become known as the “Cuban Missile *Crisis*” as have events 11 years later, which are now known collectively as the “Energy *Crisis*.” By contrast, there are any number of points of high tension in IR that have never been tagged with the moniker of “crisis.”¹⁶ The contemporary meaning of the term “crisis” derives metaphorically from previous uses of the word. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “crisis” in its current use in English as “a vitally important or decisive stage in the progress of anything; a turning-point; also, a state of affairs in which a decisive change for better or worse is imminent; now applied esp. to times of difficulty, insecurity, and suspense in politics or commerce.” The first recorded use of the word in this sense in the English language is in 1659. Prior to and somewhat contemporaneous with this linguistic shift, “crisis” in English meant a “judgment” or “decision.” Indeed, the English word “crisis” comes from the Greek *κρίνειν*, meaning “to decide.” In other words, as a concept, “crisis” in its current use as a turning point, especially in times of “difficulty, insecurity, and suspense,” emerged as a metaphor for a period when a vitally important decision had to be made.

We can then see that as a concept in the study of IR there is some arbitrariness to those times of “difficulty, insecurity, and suspense” in which decisions have to be made, which qualify or do not qualify as “crises.” All crises require that decisions be made, but not all decisions qualify as crises. The difference depends on whether or not scholars deem the times at which decisions have to be made as constituting periods of “difficulty, insecurity, and suspense.” A crisis is not a literal statement of fact but an etymologically rooted conceptual metaphor that reflects scholars’ arbitrary assessment of categories of foreign policy decision-making.

At the very least, it is worthwhile to contemplate how metaphors such as the one associated with the concept of a “crisis” create potentially arbitrary categories which inform scholarly analysis. At a conference I attended shortly after the publication of my previous book (Marks 2011), a scholar informed me that he does not deal in metaphors, but rather he deals in “concepts.” This seems a somewhat odd thing to say since as cognitive linguists have determined through the conceptual theory of metaphors, concepts come about precisely through metaphorical perception. The human mind is cognitively predisposed to conceive of things through the process of understanding metaphorical relationships between two or more sets of facts. In this sense all metaphors are useful in making sense of the world, but there is a difference between basic cognition and metaphorical categories put to analytical use. David Armitage (2013, 21–22) writes that intellectual history is full of spatial metaphors such as “‘localism’ and ‘provincialism’ as determinants of an idea’s position in a theoretical ‘field’.” Yet these metaphors are “shorthand indications that ideas lack material determinants and that they need to be placed into contexts construed almost entirely as temporal and linguistic not physical or spatial” (ibid., 22). Armitage’s point is well taken since all categories in IR theory are the product of conceptual metaphors which represent a cognitive organization of empirical facts.¹⁷

METAPHORS IN THE COMMUNITY OF IR SCHOLARS

In my previous work on the subject of metaphors in IR theory, I summarized the scholarly literature on current thinking about the nature of metaphors. To review, cognitive linguists now believe that metaphors serve as a primary way in which humans conceptualize the world and represent the physical experiences of people individually and collectively. Conceptual metaphors are a main way in which lived experiences are manifest in thought.

These conceptual metaphors can be inferred by the language humans use to convey these thoughts. Language scholars frequently denote conceptual metaphors in small capital letters to distinguish them from linguistic metaphors, which are the discursive vehicles for conceptual metaphors. Thus, for example, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 58) can take linguistic formulations of how people experience the passage of time, for example, “time flies,” and represent them as a conceptual metaphor expressed as “TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT.” Conceptual metaphors such as the passage of time can be discerned by scholars through the dissection of linguistic metaphors that convey them.

I have chosen not to use the convention of small capital letters in denoting conceptual metaphors in IR theory, not only because I am a political scientist and not a language scholar, but also for this simple reason: My goal has been not so much to *identify*, but to *interrogate* the metaphors used within the community of IR scholars. Furthermore, conceptual metaphors in IR theory often are used alongside the linguistic metaphors that convey them. To put it another way, conceptual metaphors in IR theory hide in plain sight. They are often one and the same, with the scholarly discourse used to convey ideas about the world. This is a principle asserted by Sabine Maasen (2000, 209) who argues that conceptual metaphors need not lurk below the surface of academic discourses: “Metaphors do not rule discourse ‘from below’ in a somewhat mysterious fashion. Rather, metaphors perform their task on the surface of discourses.”¹⁸

A specific example will serve to demonstrate this point. In IR theory, alliances are understood as binding commitments. One could express this as a conceptual metaphor using the notation system of language scholars, so that it is conveyed as ALLIANCES ARE BINDING. But what would be the point? The word “alliance” as it is used in the English language has its roots in the Latin *alligāre*, which means “to bind to.” The etymology of the word gives us its present meaning as a conceptual metaphor, that is, “ALLIANCES ARE BINDING.” The very notion of alliances in IR theory is the concept of a binding relationship. The conceptual metaphor and its linguistic representation are one and the same.

What then *does* become an interesting question is this: What experiences of world affairs lead scholars to conceptualize IR in certain metaphorical ways? The question is not why, for example, are alliances binding (how could they be otherwise, given the conceptual metaphor they represent)? Rather, the question is why are the binding relationships of states (alliances) as constraints on their actions an important area of study for IR

scholars? With regard to the alliance metaphor as an example, there is a sense that binding alliances are a problem for states. This sense that alliances pose problems for international politics has manifested itself, for example, in depictions of the alliance system as a cause of World War I and theories of alliances imagined as metaphorical “chain gangs,” which can drag countries into conflicts they would otherwise seek to avoid.¹⁹ In these instances, scholars start with the assumption that binding relationships among states are problematic and then conceptualize these relationships using the concept of alliances to express this proposition. What we discern from an interrogation of the alliance metaphor is the notion that alliances are problematic and therefore a theoretical puzzle to be solved.²⁰

It is not entirely lost on scholars of IR that metaphors play a large role shaping the way they think about both the ontological bases of their research and their own epistemological perspectives. In a highly insightful essay, Nicholas Onuf traces out a variety of metaphors that inform Constructivist theoretical endeavors. Onuf (2016, 115–116) begins by noting that Constructivists often think about their work in directional terms, reflecting on the path forward and the speed by which Constructivist thought progresses.²¹ Onuf (116) then notes that, following theories of cognitive linguistics, metaphors represent conceptual thinking, that is to say, “the journey starts in people’s heads. Here, a different set of metaphors works better—metaphors having to do with work, activities (acts related by reference to some end), or operations. These metaphors link faculties, powers or, in the parlance of the day, cognitive modules to skills and practices.” Continuing with his reflection on metaphorical thinking in Constructivism, Onuf (116) avers that Constructivists conceive of the ontological bases of theory as “stuff” “that is either small, granular, and slippery or large, shapeless, and gassy, but in both instances hard to grasp. Either way, we grant materiality to appearances. Either choice has political implications, as does going ahead, however slowly, with the construction of moderate-sized dry goods.” In the end, Onuf (128–130) argues that these metaphors help Constructivists see that they face a choice as they move “ahead”; they can turn down the path, which pursues the study of the “small” stuff of individual behavior, they can turn in the direction of the path that emphasizes the “large” stuff of global processes, or they can stay the course on and focus on the “moderate-sized dry goods” that “furnish” Constructivist theory.²²

Onuf’s introspection is welcome and suggests that more theoretical interrogations of this kind are needed in the field. Scholarship on IR would

benefit from an examination of the experiences of IR scholars, individually and collectively, that lead them to conceptualize IR in certain ways. Metaphors can have such an influence over people's thinking that psychotherapists have learned how to elicit metaphors in their patients' thoughts in order to uncover how those metaphors shape and influence their patients' behavior (Kopp 1995; Pearce 1996). Having said that, I am not suggesting a psychoanalysis of IR theory as much as I am advocating for a sustained interrogation of conceptual metaphors in IR theory along the lines of what I have exercised in my previous work (Marks 2011) as well as the present one. It may be facile, yet worthwhile, to point out that the facts of IR, or any other discipline for that matter, do not present themselves unambiguously to scholars. They are interpreted by scholars as metaphorical concepts, just as IR scholars interpret anything and everything they encounter as conceptual metaphors, or so cognitive linguists say.²³

Assuming this is true, scholars cannot simply take metaphors in IR theory for granted. They must acknowledge them as the collective experiences of a community of scholars who comprehend the facts of IR in certain ways. Part of this is reflective of the individual experiences of scholars, and part of this is reflective of the community of scholars who collectively come to agreement about the categories and causal patterns of international affairs. Jim George (1994, 192) argues that the "great texts" or dominant readings that comprise the collected knowledge of the community of IR scholars need not be dismissed, but he argues it should be recognized that "they are, indeed, *readings*—that they can be read in different ways and that their status is derived not from any correspondence with an essential (real) meaning but from a discursive strategy intrinsically connected to the dominant form of (sociohistorical) knowledge and power" (emphasis in the original).²⁴

Thus, I would suggest, analytical categories in IR theory reflect the dominant experiences of IR scholars.²⁵ For example, a category such as democratization is conceptualized metaphorically as involving forward movement from one political form to another. This may reflect scholars' own experiences of political change over time as involving "progress" inasmuch as most contemporary academics describe their own political beliefs in terms of what is collectively referred to as "progressive" politics.²⁶ Brian Rathbun (2012) has found that there is in fact a correlation between the epistemological and paradigmatic choices IR scholars make and their political ideologies.²⁷ It would not be surprising, then, if conceptual metaphors serve as the link scholars make between how they view politics and

the theoretical perspectives they bring to bear on the objects of their study. In essence, the categories and propositions about causation are subject to change, but in their present form (depending on what present time is under consideration), they are as much part of the study of IR as are the empirical facts of IR themselves.

On the other hand, it is fair to ask if there is a danger in seeing metaphors everywhere in IR theory simply on the basis of linguistic expressions that take metaphorical form. Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphor has been critically examined in recent years with some critics arguing that it is non-falsifiable inasmuch as it relies on discerning conceptual thinking from metaphors used in language. That is to say, there are any number of interpretations of linguistic representation, not all of which lead back to ideas conceived of in metaphorical ways. Thus, in applying Lakoff and Johnson's thesis, researchers may be simply interpreting language in unwarranted ways. As John Vervaeke and John Kennedy (1996, 276) note, "we should be very cautious in going from patterns we find in language to the proper level of ascription of beliefs within individuals."²⁸ As an antidote to the potential circularity of Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory, Gregory Murphy (1996, 179) suggests a "structural similarity" view of metaphors, whereby two related ideas are seen in comparison, but neither is a metaphor for the other: "On this view, there is no strong form of metaphoric representation—all concepts are directly represented." The purpose of critiques of conceptual metaphor theory is to make sure that the role of metaphor in linguistic expression is not overstated.

Another critique that might also be leveled is that the majority of what is examined in this book focuses primarily on metaphors in IR theory as found in the United States. In fact, understandings about IR and world politics in theoretical traditions in other countries also highlight metaphorical concepts. Many of the conceptual metaphors in other scholarly literatures are similar to those found in IR scholarship in the United States, for example, the notion of the state as a "container" (Charteris-Black 2006) or the concept of national identities framed metaphorically in terms of the "national body" (Wodak et al. 2009). Other works, however, highlight metaphorical concepts that are unique to particular empirical problems or analytical questions, for example, European analyses of borders in the context of European integration (Šarić et al. 2010; Silaški and Đurović 2014). Moreover, even where there is some overlap between IR scholarship and the United States and other countries, seemingly subtle differences can

lead scholars to pursue different explanatory paths. For instance, in the aforementioned concept of the state possessing a body, much US scholarship emphasizes the notion of the state as a person (e.g., Wendt 2004). However, in Europe, the metaphor of the national body involves themes of family and familial relationships (A'Beckett 2012; Šarić 2015), suggesting that theories of IR emphasize a more diverse set of interactions than the state-to-state perspective suggested by some analyses that follow the logic of dominant scholarship in the United States. Differing still from European perspectives on the metaphor of the body politic, Takashi Shogimen (2008) observes that in Japan the body metaphor in politics emphasizes curative and healing forces, suggesting theories of government actions in preventing conflict as opposed to keeping out “disease,” which is more common in European political thought (see Musolff 2010).

The point is that just as metaphors delineate important conceptual categories in IR theory in the United States, they also bring attention to the fact that there is a certain parochialism in US scholarship inasmuch as those conceptual categories are not necessarily prevalent in scholarly discourse in other countries. Such parochialism in US IR theory has been commented on by numerous scholars in recent years, for example, Thomas Biersteker (2009), who challenges scholars to critically examine the unwarranted hegemony of American IR scholarship.²⁹ Given space limitations, this book necessarily is confined in its scope and therefore admits to focusing primarily on metaphorical concepts as they prevail in the context of scholarship in the United States. At the same time, the book acknowledges how metaphors shape academic inquiry in other scholarly communities and adopts a position of modesty that insights garnered by utilizing a more global approach could yield broader analytical insights about the role metaphors play in IR theory.

In short, critical views of the theory of conceptual metaphor are well taken, particularly with regard to the propensity to emphasize metaphors in IR theory. Throughout this book, metaphorical concepts in IR theory have been discerned often on the basis of linguistic metaphors that are common in the scholarly discourse. An astute reader of a preliminary version of this book asked why such one-word lexical items such as “development” and “advanced” (discussed in the context of relations between regions of unequal wealth in Chap. 2) are treated as metaphors, with their metaphoricity taken for granted in a sort of commonsensical way. This is a fair question since linguists (as opposed to political scientists and other scholars of IR) would apply more finely tuned methodological

tools to identify and classify metaphorical concepts. In the case of “development” and “advanced,” the point made in Chap. 2 is that they are examples of linguistic metaphors that cohere into a larger conceptual metaphor in IR theory, which sees the unequal global distribution of wealth in terms of spatial placement that is not necessarily coincident with geographic location. Countries that are “less developed” or are not as “advanced” as countries with more material wealth are thought of as occupying a place “behind” wealthier nations. Many of the other metaphors that are used to theorize the situation of poorer countries discussed in Chap. 2, such as the metaphors of the “third world,” “dependency,” and the global “periphery,” constitute additional lexical terms that make up the master metaphor framing the topic of unequal wealth. Linguists might represent this conceptual metaphor as *POVERTY IS FALLING BEHIND*. Of course, the primary focus of this book is to understand how metaphors in IR lead to certain theoretical conclusions, and therefore methods employed in the field of linguistics are not fully deployed such that the imperatives of language theory are subordinated to some extent to the exigencies of theories of IR. The broader point is that while there is a danger of overstating the case in terms of the prevalence of metaphors in IR theory, the risk is worth taking if it yields theoretical insights. Still, it is worthwhile to maintain a critical perspective, particularly where the individual interpretations of scholars are involved, which is the subject of the next section.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

A fair question the reader may ask at this point is, if virtually all metaphors are fraught with potential analytical pitfalls, can they all be faulted along with the scholars who promulgate them? This is an especially poignant question in light of the fact that I devoted an entire book to developing an elaborate metaphor for the purpose of theorizing about IR. Specifically, in my book *The Prison as Metaphor: Re-Imagining International Relations* (2004) I suggest that a useful re-thinking about conceptions of IR could be had by imagining IR and its inhabitants as a metaphorical prison. At first blush, it would be hard to think of any two realms as dissimilar as that of IR and the prison. Although most theories of IR posit world affairs as existing in a climate of “anarchy,” they nonetheless see relations among states, even if they are conducted under conditions of anarchy, as governed by civilized rules of politics and diplomacy. By contrast, most people imagine the prison to be a world of constant violence, chaos, and danger.

Yet, by definition, metaphors highlight the similar in the seemingly dissimilar. So for the prison metaphor to work, as is true for any metaphor, the juxtaposition of two domains must immediately bring to mind contrasts, which is what comparing the prison and IR does.

The similarity between the dissimilar realms of the prison and international politics that makes the former work as a metaphor for imagining the latter is that both realms typically are thought of as places in which anarchy structures actors' identities, relationships, and behaviors. Just as global relations take place in a seemingly anarchic void brought about by the lack of a true world government, so too are prison inmates thought to be anarchic brutes whose interactions reflect the lack of civilized rules of conduct. Yet, ironically, both actors in the international system and inmates in prison find ways of constructing rules that govern their behavior.

Just as interesting, the prison metaphor forces a reexamination of the assumptions that underpin many orthodox theories of IR. Many theories begin with assumptions about actors' interests that are based on observations of related areas of human interactions. Whether it is humans in a "state of nature" or "economic man" in the market, the templates of traditional theories of IR provide the foundation for assumptions about states and other international actors in world affairs. The prison metaphor is notable in that an examination of real-world prison inmates reveals a variety of interests that change over time as the socially constructed world of inmate relations evolves. Studies by sociologists and criminologists reveal that the identities, interests, and behaviors of prison inmates are not at all fixed. Changes in the social world of inmate relations over time alter inmates' conceptions of themselves and others, leading to new interests and altered inmate interactions. Among the chief lessons revealed by the prison metaphor is that actors with seemingly fixed identities, interests, and behaviors are subject to ongoing reconstitution of their world. In many ways, actors and relations in international affairs follow a similar path.

Finally, the prison metaphor tells us something about how domestic politics is situated relative to the presumed unchanging and dangerous worlds of the prison and international politics. Here, the "levels of analysis" metaphor enters the picture. The levels of analysis metaphor typically imagines international politics as a distinct realm separated from the governed realm of domestic politics. Ironically, the same assumption is applied to conceptions of the prison, which typically is thought of as an area of human affairs that is not only set apart from civilized society but also completely ungovernable save for the strict oversight of prison authorities who barely can control the "brutes" who dwell within the penitentiary walls.

It is this notion of domestic politics as distinctly civilized and governable that often provides the basis for the logic of state sovereignty. The state is privileged in its sovereign status because it serves as an intermediate “level” lying “between” dangers “above” and “below.” On the domestic level, the sovereign state represents a divide between civil society and the criminal world. The role of sovereignty is to maintain the legitimacy of societal norms and values. Free society is legitimized as it is contrasted with a separate world of criminal transgressors “below.” The metaphor of the prison shows us that at the “below” level, the prison is seen as a place apart from civil society.

With regard to international politics “above,” the presumably sovereign state serves a similar role as buffer between the safety of domestic society and the reputedly dangerous realm outside the state’s borders. Just as civil society is legitimized in contrast to the criminal element in prison, it is also given legitimacy because it can be contrasted with an anarchic and violent international system. The prison metaphor is useful because it highlights the similarity in the seeming dissimilarity of inmates and states. Both are set apart from civil society because state sovereignty in many ways depends on this separation from the danger of international politics and the prison world. State sovereignty as a historical invention makes sense if the state serves some purpose to protect citizens from dangers from within and without. The prison metaphor highlights the role of sovereignty and the conceptualization of global anarchy as a dangerous and alien realm.

How does the prison metaphor work and in what ways does it aid in thinking about IR without falling into the traps encountered by other metaphors? First, the purpose of the metaphor is to prompt reflection on the theoretical project of IR. It was not my purpose in elaborating the metaphor to replace or supplant existing metaphors with a superior metaphorical device for theorizing. Rather, my goal was to highlight how metaphors suggest certain ways of thinking about IR and to do so in a self-conscious fashion. Second, the metaphor invites a re-thinking about certain categories of phenomena in the study of IR, for example, the aforementioned reexamination of the concept of sovereignty and its role in delineating the parameters of what constitutes legitimate actors in world affairs. Third, the metaphor serves as a heuristic device for developing the theoretical propositions of a specific paradigm in the study of IR, namely, the Constructivist approach. Theories such as Realism and Liberalism have well-known metaphors that highlight key principles in

these paradigms' analytical approaches. Metaphors such as billiard balls (Realism) and economic markets (Liberalism) provide a basis for elaborating these theories' theoretical propositions. Constructivism to date has lacked metaphors of this nature, so the prison metaphor to some extent fills this void. The prison metaphor's contribution to Constructivist theory is to allude to the social construction of reality by using inmate culture as a model for international affairs. Prison inmates live in a dynamic world in which the language of prison life and the meanings inmates attach to their circumstances lead to changing conceptions of identity, relationships, and behavior. This is an apt metaphor for how international actors constantly re-make their reality by re-negotiating the reality of their existence.

This does not mean that the prison metaphor is the be all and end all of metaphorical thinking about IR. My intent in developing the prison metaphor was not to invent a new metaphor to replace all the existing ones in the study of IR, but rather to demonstrate how a new metaphor can act as an investigative device which prompts a reexamination of the propositions of existing theories and new thinking about how to conceptualize and theorize world affairs. One of the potential problems with metaphors in any academic exercise is that they can become reified and stale. The prison metaphor is meant to be malleable and subject to multiple interpretations, and in that sense it is a metaphor itself for IR, which constantly undergoes dynamic change.

If, in the realm of possibilities, one metaphor is as good as another in identifying concepts in IR, then by the above logic, the decision to use one metaphor or another necessarily involves some choice, whether consciously or unconsciously, to use that metaphor in creating a theory of IR. Calling unequal economic relations a matter of "core-periphery" versus "North-South," for example, is a decision to name a concept with a metaphorical image. The same could be said of the decision to choose one way of interpreting a metaphor from competing interpretations of the same metaphorical image. This is the case, for example, of the decisions scholars have made to opt for one or another interpretation of the metaphor of the, or an, international "system." Does this mean that objective, detached, impartial, and unbiased theorizing about IR is impossible? The inescapable conclusion is that the facts of IR do not present themselves unambiguously. Scholars have to make calculations about what to call something and, just as is true for naming a child, what to call or name something is a choice.

Once a concept has been labeled, in virtually every case with a metaphor, the implications of that labeling reflect the metaphors that are chosen. For example, George Lakoff and Mark Turner (1989, 62) use the example of the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY to point out how, once the metaphor has been accepted, it structures thinking about life in a way that would be different had some other metaphor been evoked: “Part of the power of such a metaphor is its ability to *create* structure in our understanding of life. Life, after all, *need* not be viewed as a journey. It *need* not be viewed as having a path, destinations, or impediments to travel, or vehicles” (emphasis in the original). However, once the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY is embraced, it dictates subsequent inferences about the nature of life: “For the same reasons that schemas and metaphors give us power to conceptualize and reason, so they have power over us. Anything that we rely on constantly, unconsciously, and automatically is so much part of us that it cannot be easily resisted” (ibid., 63). As the preceding chapters have shown, the theoretical propositions that emanate from metaphors have implications for the conclusions that are drawn. Calling something a “global village” or a “democratic deficit” leads to propositions and conclusions that are different than if it had been called something else. This may not be a value judgment, but it is a *thought* judgment.

Furthermore, metaphors in IR reflect scholars’ assumptions about how the world works.³⁰ Imagining the world metaphorically as “agents” and “structures,” for example, reflects one set of starting assumptions as a guide for imagining the world. Proposing a different metaphorical frame, however, shakes up scholars’ theoretical propositions, as does Stefanie Fishel (2017), who does precisely that when she suggests thinking about IR metaphorically in terms microbes and how bodies and politics occupy multiple places in the biosphere and the natural world. How scholars think about the world before they have arrived at theoretical conclusions is part of how they approach the subject from the start. This is an observation that has been amplified in particular by Feminist theories of IR. With specific reference to the billiard ball and web metaphors, for example, Sandra Whitworth (1994, 4) writes that “uncovering the ideas about sexual difference which inform different international activities...is a far cry from either billiard-balls or cobwebs.” This is because a full accounting of IR requires critical self-reflection concerning which metaphors inform the theoretical project of IR.

WHAT SHOULD (METAPHORS IN) IR THEORY LOOK LIKE?

Since the publication of *Metaphors in International Relations Theory*, the most frequent question I am asked is what role should metaphors in IR theory play? The book has been read by some people as an instruction manual for how to employ metaphors in theorizing about IR. Contrary to this view, I take no particular position about how metaphors *should* be used in IR theory aside from the suggestion that when they *are* used scholars be conscious about how they are utilizing them. As Theodore Brown (2003) has observed, metaphors can serve a variety of roles in science. Among other things, they can provide a heuristic function by suggesting new ways of thinking about a problem, they can suggest ways to model a concept, and they can supply a vocabulary to lay out a hypothesis about cause and effect. Metaphors serve similar functions in the social sciences, although, as I point out in *Metaphors in International Relations Theory*, ironically IR scholars often rely on metaphors more unconsciously than researchers do in the physical and natural sciences. That is to say, in the so-called hard sciences, metaphors frequently are invoked more explicitly to suggest ways of conceptualizing a problem than they are in IR theory. By contrast with the physical and natural sciences, in IR theory, metaphorical ways of conceptualizing an issue often become reified as empirical problems themselves. Therefore, my main suggestion for utilizing metaphors in IR theory is that they be used wisely.

More importantly, reflection on metaphors in IR theory prompts thinking about what IR theory itself should look like. In many ways this is a back-to-basics moment. As J. David Singer (1961, 91) pointed out many years ago, a good theory should be able to describe, explain, and predict. In recent years, however, a gap has opened in IR scholarship between researchers who are concerned with accounting for observed empirical outcomes on the one hand and scholars who are preoccupied with abstract concepts of meta-theory on the other. Using Singer's categories as a guide, the former—empirical researchers—could be called “descriptivists,” and the latter—abstract theorists—might be named “explanationists.” For Singer, scholars working at the domestic “level of analysis,” if they were not careful, might drift too far in the direction of description of individual cases without the ability to derive generalizable explanations. By contrast, Singer warned that scholars who operate too far toward the international level of analysis might be able to do little more than proffer explanations that have

no empirical referents. My view of “descriptivists” and “explanationists” rests on a different set of theoretical pitfalls. “Descriptivists,” taken up primarily with empirical facts, risk losing the ability to see generalizable patterns. “Explanationists,” focused primarily on abstract theory—often framed with the explicit use of metaphors—face the danger of not being able to account for empirical facts. Both camps then lack the ability to undertake that which Singer presumably thought would be most useful to scholars, practitioners, and lay people alike, namely, the ability to make *predictions* about the future course of international affairs.

Many of the seminal events in world affairs were not widely predicted by scholars of IR. Is this what most people want from specialists in IR, that is, the ability to predict future events? If so, what would assist in making such predictions? As Singer so presciently noted, prediction is aided by the proper mix of description and explanation. A simple generalizable theory of IR is one that specifies certain conditions that are variable in their intensity as they recur across time and space. An example of such a theory frequently advanced by Realist IR scholars takes the form of “bipolar distributions of power are more stable than multipolar distributions of power.” The problem with this type of theory is that it is premised on reified metaphors (“bipolar,” “distribution,” “stable”) that are not tied to empirical referents except in an *ex post facto* and therefore non-falsifiable manner. The solution to this problem is to define key terms more descriptively using literal terms to substitute for metaphors such as “polarity” and “stable.” The problem here is that of the descriptivists, that is, empirical information is used to define analytical terms which can result in a mere re-statement of the facts which is tautological and of little use in making predictions.

The goal for scholars then is to arrive at analytical categories that can be identified in ways which do not reduce them to vague and reified metaphorical abstractions but are subject to variability such that they are not unique to specific empirical situations. Such theories would then be able to specify conditions that could be predicted in the future based on the accumulation of historical facts. It is not my purpose to suggest or develop specific theories of one or more aspects of IR, but merely to remind scholars of what makes their theories useful to themselves, to policymakers, and to the world at large.

BEYOND METAPHORS IN IR THEORY

In my previous volume on metaphors in IR theory, I concluded that the pervasiveness of metaphors reveals the difficulty of achieving what typically passes as “objectivity” in IR schools of thought. This, it turns out, is not such a novel or revolutionary suggestion. Commenting on measurement in political science, Andreas Schedler (2012, 26) opines that “non-judgmental measurement is unreachable...Rules are never fully determinate and never fully transparent.” Schedler (33) thus concludes that “to the extent that we need to rely on judgmental elements in the collection of political data (be it for epistemic, theoretical, or practical reason), we should recognize that fact, rather than deny it.” Metaphors in IR theory are part of the instruments of judgment scholars bring to bear on identifying facts and creating analytical categories. Facts do not present themselves unambiguously. Moreover, analytical categories are conceptual tools that rest on the metaphorical concepts scholars find convenient or useful. Interpreting facts metaphorically and relying on metaphorical concepts to create analytical categories are processes that inherently involve the application not of objectivity as it is typically understood, but involve the exercise of judgment.³¹

What might be useful here would be a return to Morton Kaplan’s notion of Pragmatism (capitalized as a theoretical perspective). As summarized by Inanna Hamati-Ataya (2012, 292), Pragmatism presents the possibility to “transcend some of the main antagonisms that lie between the respective ‘extremities’ of positivism and post-positivism.” Pragmatism does this by offering an alternative to “the positivist view of *truth as correspondence*” on the one hand, and “the post-positivist view of truth as *intersubjective agreement*” (ibid., emphasis in the original) on the other. Specifically, Pragmatism acknowledges that “the process of interpretation is...embedded in a *pre-existing cognitive structure* that is constituted by our neuro-physiological apparatus, and the mental, collective structures of our understanding as they exist at a particular time in history” (ibid., 293, emphasis in the original). This view is remarkably similar to current thinking about the role of metaphors in academic inquiry, that is, metaphors serve as cognitive frames by which reality is comprehended. Hamati-Ataya (294) argues that from the Pragmatist perspective “knowing is a *situational* process that depends upon the nature of the *instruments* and *framework* of perception and interpretation” (emphasis in the original). Indeed, to illustrate this, Hamati-Ataya (297) cites Kaplan’s (1992) discussion of

the nature of reality highlighted with the example of light which has both “wave-like” and “particle-like” behavior, two distinctly metaphorical ways of cognitively apprehending, and hence conceptualizing, aspects of the physical universe.

The Pragmatist approach to the study of IR thus offers another way in which metaphors can be acknowledged as integral to how scholars approach the subject matter of their investigation. Keeping in mind that the metaphorical concepts used to study IR are every bit as much cognitive frames—much as are “wave-like” and “particle-like” ways of conceptualizing light—these concepts then become useful to the extent that they provide a common reference point for empirical research. The goal is not to uncover “reality” as positivists might understand it in terms of “truth as correspondence” or “intersubjective agreement” as post-positivists might see it, but rather to promote agreement on what concepts provide a basis for comparative analysis which Hamati-Ataya (297) views as “the only way to accumulate knowledge without either reducing the object to its *experientially determined manifestations*, or reifying the conceptual framework that is constructed to make sense of it” (emphasis in the original; Hamati-Ataya cites Kaplan 1992). Empirical research is premised on the acceptance that what is studied is neither perfectly knowable reality nor shared meanings, but cognitive frames manifested as meaningful metaphorical concepts.

The future of research in IR thus requires the exercise of judgment in being aware of the role of metaphors in creating concepts, interrogating these metaphors to determine their conceptual utility, acknowledging the empirical categories that are suggested by conceptual metaphors, deciding which categories correspond to observed facts, and collecting empirical data in ways that further a better understanding of world affairs so as not simply to reinforce existing metaphorical frames. The failure to predict global changes at the end of the Cold War resides in part in the inability to imagine facts in ways that did not conform to prevailing metaphorical concepts and the categories of empirical information that followed. For example, metaphors such as “balances of power” reinforced categories of international actors, principally states, leading scholars to overlook, downplay, or under-theorize non-state actors as agents of change. Thinking of the world in terms of metaphorical “systems” and “structures” also obscured actions taking place that were not theorized as “systemic” or integral parts of the “structural” makeup of world affairs. It is not surprising that many scholars missed empirical cues presaging changes in global relations in

the era immediately prior to, during, and following the end of the Cold War, given the limited conceptual frameworks with which to identify relevant facts.

With this in mind, scholars would do well to look beyond metaphors in IR theory. This is not necessarily a call for a neoempiricist method which prioritizes description over analytical theory. As noted earlier, J. David Singer's 1961 analysis of theoretical models that provide utility for scholars was a call for approaches that contain a balance between description and explanation so that the predictions which follow are neither so broad as to ignore proximate change nor so specific as to descend into a mere description of facts. Moving beyond metaphors in IR means creating categories which summarize observable facts so that those categories can be used to discern patterns and detect change. Metaphors should not create categories for categories' sake, divorced from a literal description of observable facts. Theories of IR should study something aside from the metaphorical concepts themselves.

This book and the volume that precedes it represent one step in the process of interrogating metaphors as theoretical concepts. If scholars are to move beyond metaphors in IR theory, they must be self-aware about the concepts that both shape and constrain thinking about world affairs. Even after two forays into the field, there remain additional metaphorical concepts that frame IR theory. Self-awareness about the concepts that guide theory and research should be part of scholars' research agenda. As exhaustive as this book and its predecessor were, metaphors are ever present in the field of IR. Toward this end, there is still additional work to be done in identifying, evaluating, and revisiting metaphors in IR theory.

NOTES

1. Recent scholarship, however, *does* suggest that much can be learned by advancing alternate narratives for what is taken as accepted knowledge. These alternate narratives can emerge through writing fictional accounts of events in IR. See Park-Kang (2014). On alternative narratives in the representation of issues in international affairs, see also Singh (2014).
2. Lebow (2014, 5–6) writes that inefficient causation “rests on the premise that many, if not most, international events of interest are best described as instances of what philosophers call singular causation. We can construct causal narratives about these outcomes, but they cannot be explained or predicted by reference to prior generalizations or narratives...Singular cau-

- sation understands cause as the glue that holds a story together; it is something akin to a plot line in a novel.” For a specific example of how narrative complicates theorizing, see Spencer (2014).
3. Bliesemann de Guevara employs a definition of political myths suggested by Chiara Bottici (2007, 14), who defines a myth as the “work on a common narrative by which members of a social group (or society) provide significance to their...experience and deeds.” On myths in IR, see also Cooke (2016), Dany and Freistein (2016), Loriaux and Lynch (2016), Münch (2016). On the relationship between myth and metaphor, see Kermode (1966), Denham (1990), Christensen and Cornelissen (2015).
 4. On distinguishing metaphors used deliberately from those that are constitutive of thought, see Steen (2013).
 5. The reason why “the fluctuations of sound frequencies are like waves on the ocean” is an analogy while “waves of democratization” is a metaphor is that in the former the comparison is between two sets of physical forces that take similar form while in the latter the relationship highlighted is between an abstract idea (democracy) and an unrelated physical force (cyclical movement). “Fluctuations” and “waves” are related realms; one can make an analogy between the up and down movements of fluctuations and waves. Democracy and cyclical movement are unrelated realms; however, a key similarity between them—the recurrent nature of political activity and the up and down movements in waves—can be highlighted by using waves as a metaphor for political democracy.
 6. On early theories of IR that draw on metaphorical imagery, see Kleinschmidt (2000).
 7. For more on the balance of power in the development of statecraft, see Little (2007).
 8. The discussion that follows draws on the work of Brown (2003).
 9. Richard Ashcraft (1977) offers a somewhat different take on Behavioralism and metaphors, arguing that the rational choice aspect of Behavioralist pursuits is designed to infuse the study of politics with metaphors borrowed from economic rationality. The goal for Behavioralists, Ashcraft argues, is to maintain the hegemony of a view of liberal democracy rooted in the dynamics of the capitalist system.
 10. A similar effort to use a domestic analogy to re-think anarchy is set forth by Zaheer Kazmi (2012), who draws on theories of anarchy to propose a re-conceptualization of IR as constituted by practices of “polite anarchy.”
 11. https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_i_1_10?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=soft+power&prefix=soft+power%2Cpopular%2C263&crd=12S1LFE06KMPS.
 12. At the extreme end, one could fairly ask if conceptual metaphors in the social sciences (or even the physical and natural sciences) lead to inadver-

tent or even deliberate academic fraud because such conceptual metaphors create categories into which researchers try to fit evidence and/or data. When researchers strive to find evidence that fits into the categories created by conceptual metaphors, what has been found is not entirely free of confirmation bias.

13. For a sample of works on “divided” nations, see, for example, Henderson et al. (1974), Woodward (1976), Doyle (2002), Rowse and Goot (2007), Fulbrook (2009), Goldin (2013), Mabry et.al. (2013).
14. In this definition of crime, it is not necessary that other people understand the personal gain a criminal is pursuing, for example, in the case of a person motivated by mental illness.
15. This point is made by Blagden (2016) when discussing the relationship between deductive and inductive theorizing in IR.
16. Some examples of points of tension that scholars do not typically refer to as “crises” include the period of imminent hostilities between Argentina and Chile over control of islands and waterways in the Beagle Channel in 1978 and the mass wave of humans that fled Haiti in 1991 after the military coup against President Jean Bertrand Aristide.
17. Metaphors are an interesting thing in terms of how they make people think about a particular issue in different ways. A group of editors (Crocker et al. 1999) conceived of international mediation in a “complex” world as a process of “herding cats,” while the same editors (Crocker et al. 2007) later conceptualize a “divided” world metaphorically in terms of “leashing the dogs of war.” Dogs provide a metaphor for war and aggression, while cats, difficult to control as a group, provide a potential basis for cooperation. These are suggestive linguistic metaphors only, to be sure, but it is intriguing how scholars continue to rely on them to theorize about IR.
18. Maasen (211) continues: “Metaphors are sites and media of knowledge transfer.”
19. On the “chain gang” metaphor, see Christensen and Snyder (1990), Tierney (2011).
20. From a policy standpoint, ambiguity in the concept of “alliances” can have serious implications for relations among states. In one example that was provided by a foreign policy expert in Poland, deterioration in relations between the United States and Poland in the early 2010s reflected in at least small part different understandings between Americans and Poles regarding what is meant by an “ally.” “Part of the problem...was that the terms ‘partner’ and ‘ally’ were used interchangeably in describing the countries’ relationship. But they are not the same thing, he said: An ally offers international support and sheds blood in a crisis, while a partner shares in the profits” (Lyman 2014, no page number).

21. Onuf cites Adler (2002, 2012) regarding the metaphorical nature of Constructivism's journey forward.
22. Onuf (130) appears to favor the middle path: "A fully realized constructivism—one that is fully articulated as a framework and thus a moderate-sized dry good—has many uses and (switching metaphors yet again) somewhere to go, but only when it joins up with micro-physics or global sociology (either works) and negotiates the space between them (both senses of negotiate, both metaphors)."
23. Similarly, the methods scholars devise for studying IR and other disciplines emanate in part from metaphorical conceptions of how the world works. For example, Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel (2015) observe that the method of process tracing in part grows out of metaphors of causation that then become analytic tools. Theodore Brown (2003) has found likewise in his study of metaphors in science.
24. On the importance of scholars reflecting on the subjectivity of knowledge production, see Müller (2016).
25. That IR scholars base their theories on the experiences they encounter in their own lives helps account for the plurality of theoretical approaches in the field. On theoretical plurality in IR, see Van der Ree (2014).
26. The biannual survey conducted by the Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations indicates that IR scholars regularly describe their own political beliefs along the left side of the political spectrum, that is, in the range of what is often described as "progressive." In the 2011 survey, for example, on social issues, among all scholars who responded to the survey, 17% describe themselves as "very left/liberal," 36% as "left/liberal," and 20% as "slightly left/liberal" for a total of 73% on the left end of the political spectrum (just over 8% describe themselves on the right on social issues with 19% in the middle). On economic issues, 12% describe themselves as "very left/liberal," 28% as "left/liberal," and 23% as "slightly left/liberal" for a total of 63% on the left end of the political spectrum (16% describe themselves on the right on economic issues with 20% in the middle; figures were rounded by the investigators and therefore do not add up to 100%) (Maliniak et al. 2012, 39–40).
27. It must be noted that in no way does Rathbun imply that scholars' political ideologies bias them in one way or another toward certain findings. Rather, Rathbun suggests that there is evidence to support the hypothesis that scholars' political ideologies lead them to find plausible the propositions of certain epistemological and paradigmatic perspectives in the study of IR. For a more explicit discussion of the normative aspects of theorizing about IR, see Price (2008) as well as a forum in the journal *International Theory*, Erskine (2012), Price (2012a, b), Rengger (2012), Snyder and Vinjamuri (2012).

28. For critical interpretations of conceptual metaphor theory, see also Croft (1998), Vervaeke and Kennedy (2004).
29. For additional comments on IR scholarship outside of a US context, see Crawford and Jarvis (2001), Tickner and Wæver (2009).
30. For a critique of the role of metaphors in the social sciences in general, see Shapiro (1985).
31. In this sense, acknowledging the role of metaphors in IR theory is part of the interpretivist turn in IR. For a summary of interpretivist methods in IR, see Lynch (2014).

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