Alternative Worldviews

Appendixes

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Preface

The National Security Strategy of the United States indicates that the United States is engaged in a new era of great-power competition not only in the military and economic spheres but also in the realms of information, ideas, and ideology. This ideational dimension of competition, however, has received much less attention in studies of international affairs than security and economic issues. These appendixes examine ideological competition among the United States, China, Russia, and various nonstate actors and suggests ways in which observers and decision-makers can better understand the likely trajectory of this competition. The main report can be found at www.rand.org/t/RR2982.

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Abbreviations

AfD   Alternative for Germany

AIIB   Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

BRI   Belt and Road Initiative

CCD   Community of Common Destiny

CCP   Chinese Communist Party

CICA   Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia

EFDD   Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy

EU   European Union

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO   nongovernmental organization

TAN   transnational advocacy network

UKIP   United Kingdom Independence Party

UN   United Nations

WTO   World Trade Organization

China and Russia in the Contemporary Ideological Competition

A full inventory of global ideas about the current international order and potential alternatives is likely impossible and, in any case, is well beyond the scope of these appendixes and the associated report. Instead, we focus on a few actors likely to be key to the evolution of the international order over the next two decades. We selected two state actors, China and Russia, because of their power, ambition, and very different approaches to ideological competition with the United States. We discuss two groups of nonstate actors in Appendix B.

China

China's rise increases Beijing's ability to shape the world in its image. This effort is being driven by not only realist power dynamics but also the ideas and concepts offered by the Chinese leadership and policy elite to woo the global community. As Chinese national interests—especially economic investments and citizens working abroad—expand beyond Asia, Beijing increasingly aims to protect and secure them with military force.[1] This is most evident in its eschewing decades of opposition to foreign bases to build a so-called logistics facility in Djibouti that stations People's Liberation Army troops right next to U.S. forces.[2]

Yet China is also aware of the potential for its rise to create a risk of war with the United States or spark conflict with other regional countries. This has led China to embrace many rhetorical formulations to assuage such concerns, such as its pledge for "peaceful development" and its rejection of the "Thucydides trap," the realpolitik notion that dominant powers attack rising powers when they pose a threat to the current order.[3] One important way to avoid conflict and peacefully supplant the United States as the leading global power is through the power of ideas, which is the focus of this report.

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[1] Jonas Parello-Plesner and Mathieu Duchâtel, *China's Strong Arm: Protecting Citizens and Assets Abroad*, London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, Routledge, 2015.

[2] Erica Downs, Jeffrey Becker, and Patrick deGategno, *China's Military Support Facility in Djibouti: The Economic and Security Dimensions of China's First Overseas Base,* Arlington, Va.: CNA, July 2017.

[3] Graham Allison defines the phrase *Thucydides trap* as a rising power causing fear in an established power, which escalates toward war. Chinese President Xi Jinping rejected this concept explicitly in September 2015 during a visit to the United States, but it remains a frequent topic of discussion by Chinese diplomats. See Xi Jinping, "Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People's Republic of China at the Welcoming Dinner Hosted by Local Governments and Friendly Organizations in the United States," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 22, 2015; Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017; Edward Wong, "China's Global Message: We Are Tough but Not Threatening," *New York Times*, October 2, 2019.

Overview of China's Regional and Global Vision

China seeks to secure what it perceives as its rightful place in Asia, with requisite influence over regional affairs and a diminished U.S. role in the region. Chinese President Xi Jinping has described his vision for China as "the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."[4] This is based on achieving "two centenary goals," which are "building a moderately prosperous society" by the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s founding in 2021 and "building a modern socialist country" by the 100th anniversary of the founding of the modern People's Republic of China in 2049. In essence, this is the CCP's promise to continue delivering economic growth to its citizens, but it also portends China's ambitions to be a "global leader in terms of composite national strength and international influence" by 2049, backed up by a "world-class military."[5] Xi's speech at the 19th Party Congress in October 2017 provides the most authoritative explanation of China's foreign policy goals and global vision. In the international arena, China wants to balance support for its domestic economic growth by "[creating] a favorable external environment for [its] development" while also protecting its growing security interests, because China will never "give up its legitimate rights and interests."[6] Globally, Xi pledged that China would pursue a "fundamental foreign policy goal of preserving world peace and promoting common development." In all, this presents the image of a China much in keeping with long-standing themes of "peaceful development," but also contains hints at grander ambitions for China that might undermine its ability to rise peacefully.

This stands in stark contrast to the shifting U.S. view about the nature of China's rise and the implications of that rise for U.S. policy going forward. Both the 2017 *National Security Strategy* and 2018 *National Defense Strategy* proposed by President Donald Trump's administration frame China as working to reshape the international order in its favor by all means possible at the cost of U.S. "power, influence and interests," in part by spreading its "authoritarian model" and ideology.[7] This follows more than a decade of academic debate between (1) offensive realists who argue that structural factors mark China's fate as a regional, and perhaps eventually global, rival to the United States and the current international order; and (2) liberal internationalists who argue that a rising China can be integrated into a reformed version of the current international order.[8] Both schools of thought have traditionally overlooked the role of China's ideology and ideas in China's trajectory and the implications of that ideology and those ideas for U.S.-China relations.

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[4]   "Xi Jinping Pledges 'Great Renewal of Chinese Nation,'" Xinhua, November 29, 2012 ; Xi Jinping, *The Chinese Dream of the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation*, Beijing, China: Foreign Language Press, 2014b.

[5]   "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," Xinhua, October 18, 2017. For recent analysis of China's long-term ambitions, see Timothy R. Heath, "China's Endgame: The Path Towards Global Leadership," *Lawfare*, webpage, January 5, 2018a; Timothy R. Heath, "China Prepares for an International Order After U.S. Leadership," *Lawfare*, webpage, August 1, 2018b.

[6]   "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," 2017.

[7]   U.S. Department of Defense, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C., December 2017; U.S. Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C., January 2018.

[8]   John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014; John J. Mearsheimer, "Say Goodbye to Taiwan," *National Interest*, February 25, 2014; G. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the Liberal World Order," speech delivered at Chatham House, London, United Kingdom (UK), May 7, 2013.

In recent years, the view from Washington has leaned much more toward the realpolitik interpretation of China's rise, and the debate over China policy has focused on how to compete with China's growing ambitions and power. This is best embodied by Kurt Campbell and Ely Ratner, former senior officials in the administration of President Barack Obama, who wrote in February 2018 that "the record is increasingly clear that Washington once again put too much faith in its power to shape China's trajectory . . . [N]either carrots nor sticks have swayed China as predicted."[9] Others, such as Aaron Friedberg, a professor at Princeton University, have emphasized the ideological aspect of the competition and noted that "China's rulers clearly believe the ideological realm to be a crucially important domain of competition . . . offering China's mixture of market-driven economics and authoritarian politics."[10] Friedberg's solution is that the United States needs to acknowledge the ideological challenge posed by China to Western liberal democracies, highlight the incompatibility of these systems, and motivate others to oppose the Chinese system.[11]

Interests and Motivations

Chinese ideas represent a complex mixture of traditional and nationalist thought, Marxist-Leninist ideology inherited from the era of Mao Zedong, and more recent—sometimes contorted—efforts to reconcile these various sources of legitimacy with the requirements of managing an economy founded on a complex fusion of capitalist and socialist principles.

The Marxist-Leninist Backdrop to Contemporary Chinese Ideology

It is important to understand and assess the impact of the CCP's ideology on Chinese policies. The Chinese constitution defines China as a "socialist society . . . [u]nder the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of [Jiang Zemin's] Three Represents, [Hu Jintao's] Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in a New Era."[12] Xi Jinping personally has fully embraced the importance of the CCP's ideological underpinnings, hailing "the importance of Marxism as a guiding ideology" and praising it as "totally correct" for China.[13]

The CCP has always localized these foreign concepts, giving it flexibility to interpret what Marxism-Leninism actually means for China. This leads many foreign analysts to adopt a cynical view of the CCP's rhetorical embrace of these ideas, arguing that this reflects a utilitarian approach to intellectually expedient justifications of desired policy decisions. Observers who are skeptical of the guiding role of CCP's ideology point to former premier Zhao Ziyang's

[9]   Kurt Campbell and Ely Ratner, "The China Reckoning: How Beijing Defied American Expectations," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2018. For a wider discussion and Chinese response, see Wang Jisi, J. Stapleton Roy, Aaron Friedberg, Thomas Christensen, Patricia Kim, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., Eric Li, Kurt M. Campbell, and Ely Ratner, "Did America Get China Wrong?" *Foreign Affairs*, June 14, 2018.

[10]   Aaron Friedberg, "Competing with China," *Survival*, Vol. 60, No. 3, June–July 2018.

[11]   For other views of U.S.-China ideological competition, see Jessica Chen Weiss, "A World Safe for Autocracy? China's Rise and the Future of Global Politics," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2019; Center for Strategic and International Studies, "Are the United States and China in an Ideological Competition?" webpage, October 21, 2019.

[12]   National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, Constitution of the People's Republic of China (2018 Amendment), Beijing, March 11, 2018.

[13]   "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," October 18, 2017; Christian Shepard, "No Regrets: Xi Says Marxism Still 'Totally Correct' for China," Reuters, May 4, 2018.

explanation for why he embraced previously taboo tenets of capitalism, such as private businesses and market competition. Zhao maintained that China, after pursuing over 20 years of socialist economic policies under Mao, was in the "initial stage of socialism."[14] Zhao recounted that "the phrase was intended to indicate that although we were still in the initial stage, we had already established a socialist system and should be able to create an advanced socialist spiritual civilization while building the material civilization." This transformation would occur, as Deng famously said, by "[letting] some people get rich first."[15]

Chinese leaders' rhetorical attention to Marxism's core concerns—workers and equality—now appear much more motivated by the practical social challenges China faces today than a fervent ideological belief. Xi's 19th Party Congress speech made no pledges for workers' rights or empowerment. Indeed, the CCP only allows one official national union: This union is generally considered to be business-friendly and certainly against organizing labor movements (in this case, the CCP's Leninist commitment to rule supersedes its Marxist commitment to workers).[16] Recently, the CCP has cracked down on young Marxists who were supporting factory workers trying to unionize.[17]

Chinese leaders have talked more about the need to reduce income inequality in China. In 2007, then-premier Wen Jiabao acknowledged that China's economic growth was "unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable," and in his 2017 speech, Xi vowed to end poverty by 2020.[18] This is a reflection of reality—China is assumed to experience hundreds of thousands of local protests each year about local economic conditions and unresolved workers' issues, and the tens of millions of poor laborers who flock to major cities in search of work present challenges to the CCP's desire for social stability.[19] Lastly, the Chinese elite surely is not interested in personally guaranteeing social equality—members of China's parliament are collectively worth at least a combined $650 billion, Wen's family was later found to be worth at least $2.7 billion, Xi's family is worth at least $200 million, and purged CCP senior officials have been officially accused of taking tens of millions of dollars in bribes. These are probably all low estimates.[20]

Although the Marxist ideological commitments of China's leadership are very much a matter of debate, the leadership's commitment to Leninism is clear.[21] Leninism's influence can

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[14] Zhao Ziyang, *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang*, New York: Simon and Shuster, 2009.

[15] Deng Xiaoping, "There Is No Fundamental Contradiction Between Socialism and the Market Economy [社会主义和市场经济不存在根本矛盾]," speech to Party cadres on October 23, 1985, in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3, [邓小平文选], Beijing, China: People's Press, 1993, p. 155.

[16] On China's labor union, see "China's Labour Law Is No Use to Those Who Need It Most," *Economist*, August 17, 2017.

[17] Yuan Yang, "Inside China's Crackdown on Young Marxists," *Financial Times*, February 14, 2019.

[18] Wen on growth: "Wen Confident in Maintaining Economic Growth," *China Daily*, March 3, 2007; Javier C. Hernandez, "Xi Jinping Vows No Poverty in China by 2020. That Could Be Hard," *New York Times*, October 31, 2017.

[19] On protests, see "Why Protests Are So Common in China," *Economist*, October 4, 2018.

[20] On family wealth, see Sui-Lee Wee, "China's Parliament Is a Growing Billionaires' Club," *New York Times*, March 1, 2018; David Barboza, "Billions in Hidden Riches for Family of Chinese Leader," *New York Times*, October 25, 2012; "Xi Jinping Millionaire Relations Reveal Fortunes of Elite," Bloomberg, June 29, 2012; Jun Mai, "Man Who Ran World's Largest Army Charged with Taking US$12.3 Million Worth of Bribes," *South China Morning Post*, April 4, 2016.

[21] Kerry Brown and Una Aleksandra Bērziņa-Čerenkova, "Ideology in the Era of Xi Jinping," *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 3, September 2018; Nick Frisch, "The Bolsheviks in Beijing: What the Chinese Communist Party

be seen in the CCP's singular focus on maintaining power and its willingness to use the language of ideas to advance its interests and goals through any means necessary. John Garnaut, a former advisor to the Australian government on China, asserts, "Mao knew Marxist Leninist dogma was absolutely crucial to his enterprise . . . Mao's discursive advantage was Marxist-Leninist ideology. Language was not just a tool of moral judgment. It was an instrument for shaping acceptable behaviour and a weapon for distinguishing enemies and friends."[22] Garnaut argues that "[t]he key point about Communist Party ideology—the unbroken thread that runs from Lenin through Stalin, Mao and Xi—is that the party is and always has defined itself as being in perpetual struggle with the 'hostile' forces of Western liberalism" as a way to avoid "the calcification and putrefaction that has destroyed every previous dynasty, dictatorship and empire."[23] From this point of view, Xi accepts Marxism because it is the ideological construct he inherited as part of his birthright into the CCP elite's second-generation ruling class; however, he is driven by Leninism because it provides exactly the necessary ideological framing to continue the CCP's rule over China.[24]

Subscribing to such a total worldview, Marxism-Leninism certainly plays a role in Chinese foreign behavior, though there is debate over the extent. Friedberg argues, "It is impossible to make sense of the ambitions, fears, strategy and tactics of China's present regime without reference to its authoritarian, illiberal character and distinctive, Leninist roots."[25] Yet he mostly focused on the CCP's domestic strategy, citing "militant nationalism, its cultivation of historic claims and grievances against foreign powers" as a way to "[mobilize] popular support and [bolster] regime legitimacy." Although the CCP has abandoned many of Marx's specific policies, it has retained Marxism's utility as a theory based on the "scientific truth" of "dialectical and historical materialism," offering a framework for interpreting China's current conditions and the CCP's goals.[26] This drives a deterministic view of the world based on economic and larger natural laws that can foster immense self-confidence in the CCP's assessments of global trends—the fading power of the United States following the 2008–2009 financial crisis, for example.[27]

China's Ideas on World Affairs

Despite what might appear to outsiders as drab speeches, empty slogans, and awkward translations, China is indeed in the business of ideas. Referred to as *tifa*, China's ideas are thoroughly vetted internally before they are unveiled to the public, with broader theoretical and practical thinking behind each one.[28] The best-known *tifa* to international observers is "peaceful

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Learned from Lenin," *Foreign Affairs*, October 18, 2017. Some even ignore Marxism-Leninism altogether. See Jeffrey Bader, *How Xi Jinping Sees the World . . . and Why,* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, Asia Working Group Paper No. 2, February 2016.

[22] John Garnaut, "Engineers of the Soul: Ideology in Xi Jinping's China," *Sinocism*, blog post, January 16, 2019.

[23] Garnaut, 2019.

[24] Evan Osnos, "Born Red," *New Yorker*, March 30, 2015.

[25] Friedberg, 2018.

[26] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," October 18, 2017; "Marx's Theory Still Shines with Truth: Xi," Xinhua, May 4, 2018.

[27] Rush Doshi, ""Hu's to Blame for China's Foreign Assertiveness?" Brookings Institution, blog post, January 22, 2019.

[28] Qian Gang, "Watchwords: The Life of the Party," *China Media Project*, September 10, 2012.

development," intended to present the image of a peaceful country and reassure other states that China's rise will not negatively affect their interests.[29] This appendix and other associated appendixes focus on China's ideas as they might appeal to others in three domains: global governance and international affairs, domestic governance, and economic policy.

Xi's 19th Congress was a high-water mark for China's desire to inject its ideas into global discourse. Xi proclaimed that China would "foster a new type of international relations" and "foster new thinking on . . . security."[30] These ideas will have real-world impact, because China will "take a new approach to developing state-to-state relations."[31] He explicitly acknowledged that "we will develop socialist ideology that has the ability to unite and the power to inspire the people to embrace shared ideals, convictions, values, and moral standards," and "increase the public appeal." Looking forward, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is intended to "build a new platform for international cooperation to create new drivers of shared development," and China will "keep contributing Chinese wisdom and strength to global governance." This marked one of several statements by Xi that have come closer to acknowledging he thinks China has a unique model to offer the world.

China's belief that time is on its side shapes its approach to realizing its ambitions, because realpolitik trends are running in China's favor for reducing U.S. influence around the world. This allows Beijing to leverage long-term positive ideational projects, compared with Russia's short-term negative projects (described in the next section). In his speech at the 19th Party Congress, Xi touted the "trends of global multi-polarity," said that "changes in the global governance system and the international order are speeding up," and noted "relative international forces are becoming more balanced," all references to relative U.S. decline.[32] This clearly demonstrates that the ideas put forth by Xi, detailed below, should be taken seriously.

At its core, China's governing ideology centers on development, compared with the Western liberal focus on freedom. In the international realm, this means China's offers of development through trade, investment, and loans should override countries' security concerns about territorial disputes and other Chinese activities threatening their sovereignty. For domestic governance, Chinese leaders claim to guide the country for the good of all people toward the cause of development and national security, subsuming individual effort and concerns under the needs of the country. In the economic domain, state-led planning and state-owned enterprises take precedence over the power of private businesses, and even those must reserve a role for CCP guidance. These ideas can appeal to those with a strong sense of community and those who prioritize development over other concerns, which includes many in the developing world.

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[29]   Bonnie Glaser and Evan Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy-Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of "Peaceful Rise"," *China Quarterly*, Vol. 190, June 2007.

[30]   "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," October 18, 2017.

[31]   For analysis, see Peter Mattis, "Out with the New, In with the Old: Interpreting China's 'New Type of International Relations,'" Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief*, April 25, 2013.

[32]   "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," October 18, 2017.

Global Governance and International Affairs

The core concept of China's approach to the international order under Xi is the *community of common destiny* (CCD).[33] This is described as "an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity"—all buzzwords that are difficult to unpack simply.[34] According to Nadège Rolland, senior fellow for political and security affairs at the National Bureau for Asian Research, this community "reflects Beijing's aspirations for a future world order, different from the existing one and more in line with its own interests and status" and "its increasing confidence that it can compete at the global level with other great powers not only in material terms, but also in the realm of ideas."[35] The term predates Xi: at that time, it was framed as a way to bring countries closer together despite political differences, but it is now the framing narrative for China's worldview. The term has been applied to many of China's foreign relationships, including with neighbors such as Pakistan, regional organizations such as the Association for Southeast Asian Nations, and now the entire world. At its heart, the CCD "purports to offer a better way than the Western[-led order] for organizing the world" and "[offers] a new model of global governance that is 'more just and reasonable.'"[36] This aligns with China's "peaceful development" rhetoric and desire to avoid the wars often associated with hegemonic transitions, because "China will continue to expand its power and influence while trying to reduce outside resistance, using the narrative of an inclusive community which everyone is welcome to join because it supposedly transcends individual countries' narrow interests."[37]

In this model, Beijing offers development without political and ideological requirements, in contrast to the Western-led order. This Chinese alternative is built on a "new type of international relations" based on "mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation," and reflects "major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics."[38] Liza Tobin, a U.S. government China analyst, clarifies CCD's potential implications for the United States:

> A global network of partnerships centered on China would replace the U.S. system of treaty alliances, the international community would regard Beijing's authoritarian governance model as a superior alternative to Western electoral democracy, and the world would credit

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[33] CCD is officially translated as the *community with a shared future*, but this obscures its real meaning. For analysis of CCD, see Nadège Rolland, "Beijing's Vision for a Reshaped International Order," Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief*, Vol. 18, No. 3, February 26, 2018; William Callahan, "China's 'Asia Dream:' The Belt Road Initiative and the New Regional Order," *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 3, May 2016; Zhang Denghua, "The Concept of 'Community of Common Destiny' in China's Diplomacy: Meaning, Motives and Implications," *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, May 2018; Stephen N. Smith, "Community of Common Destiny: China's 'New Assertiveness' and the Changing Asian Order," *International Journal*, Vol. 73, No. 3, September 2018; Liza Tobin, "Xi's Vision for Transforming Global Governance: A Strategic Challenge for Washington and Its Allies," *Texas National Security Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, November 2018. For other analyses of China's global governance ambitions, see François Godement, "Global Values: China's Promotion of New Global Values," in Ashley J. Tellis, Alison Szalwinski, and Michael Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2019: China's Expanding Strategic Ambitions*, Seattle, Wash.: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2019; Melanie Hart and Blaine Johnson, *Mapping China's Global Governance Ambitions*, Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, February 28, 2019.

[34] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," October 18, 2017.

[35] Rolland, 2018.

[36] Rolland, 2018.

[37] Rolland, 2018.

[38] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," October 18, 2017.

the Communist Party of China for developing a new path to peace, prosperity, and modernity that other countries can follow.[39]

Clearly, China's CCD ambitions should be taken seriously.

Another important idea that Xi espouses is the *new security concept*, defined in his 19th Party Congress speech as "new thinking on common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security" and a desire to form "partnerships, not alliances."[40] According to David Cohen, then-editor of *China Brief* at the Jamestown Foundation, it "appears to be an effort to redefine the idea of security on terms that cast China as a regional security provider and the United States as an over-assertive outsider that threatens to undermine regional security."[41] The core idea focuses on redefining security in terms of human development instead of national security and territorial integrity. At his speech unveiling the concept in 2014, Xi said that "development is the greatest form of security," and as Cohen explains, "if security is development," China's status "as the largest trading partner of most countries in the region and a major contribution to infrastructure investment" makes China "also the main provider of Asian security—killing two birds with one stone."[42] Seen through this lens, the South China Sea conflict is not a story of China threatening countries over territorial disputes; instead, the threat is created by "an 'old' or 'zero-sum' understanding of security that encourages China's neighbors to focus on these disputes rather than the positive story of economic growth and integration."[43] As a *People's Daily* article explains, "American and Chinese 'Asian Security Concepts' will continue to collide—but which one is more conducive to the well-being of the people of Asia, more to the benefit of regional development and more favorable to shared prosperity, history will decide."[44] This security concept likely provides the vision of "universal security" promised in the CCD. One senior Chinese official has argued that the CCD "cooperative security" is better than the West's "collective security," which follows a zero-sum security approach.[45] The concept, of course, evokes broader and long-standing debates about the extent to which cooperative security can replace more-traditional approaches (such as alliance systems) without an *other* that would bind countries together.[46] Rolland summarizes Chinese thinking on the role of China's alternative security model by saying that the "CCD is a network of strong strategic partnerships that resemble an alliance system while denying being one."[47]

One key traditional Chinese idea that might provide cultural justification for a more aggressive Chinese approach to international relations and global governance is the concept of *Tianxia*, or "all under heaven." *Tianxia* places China at the moral and power center of an

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[39] Tobin, 2018.

[40] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," October 18, 2017.

[41] David Cohen, "'A Clash of Security Concepts': China's Effort to Redefine Security," Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief*, Vol. 14, No. 11, June 4, 2014.

[42] Xi Jinping, "New Asian Security Concept for New Progress in Security Cooperation," speech delivered at the Fourth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, May 21, 2014a.

[43] Cohen, 2014.

[44] Quoted in Cohen, 2014.

[45] Rolland, 2018.

[46] Rolland, 2018.

[47] Rolland, 2018.

international order that seeks to overcome political and implicitly cultural differences through conversion—namely Sinofication. This international order is led by a political elite class that harkens back to Confucianism's emphasis on hierarchy-creating order and Leninism's idea of the vanguard party. According to William Callahan, a professor at the London School of Economics, *Tianxia* "blurs the conceptual boundaries between empire and globalism, nationalism and cosmopolitanism" and ultimately "presents a new hegemony where imperial China's hierarchical governance is updated for the twenty-first century."[48] The underpinning of this idea was dynastic China's worldview and tributary system of relations with other countries, but it was resurrected in the mid-1990s and has gained renewed interest as a serious modern proposal since the mid-2000s. The core proposal is a rejection of the Westphalian concept of sovereign states as the primary actor in global affairs and rejection of the notion that national interests drive international relations. Instead, *Tianxia* is presented as a "new world concept" that represents "a truly global perspective" above "competing national interests," where there is no national versus foreign, domestic versus external, or us versus them distinction, so that "world unity thus leads to world peace and world harmony." Callahan summarizes *Tianxia* as "a hierarchical system that values order over freedom, ethics over law, and elite governance over democracy and human rights."[49]

Tianxia's legacy can be seen in recent pronouncements. The Chinese cultural superiority implicit in the concept was evident in Xi's pledge at the 19th Party Congress that the nation will offer "Chinese wisdom" to the world. Echoes of the CCD are evident in the writings of senior Chinese officials, such as State Councilor and former Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, who argued that the "CCD reflects how China is now 'confident and capable of making greater contributions to the world' by offering a 'new model' of regional cooperation and global governance, informed by 'Chinese wisdom.'"[50] Lastly, the idea that "it is for the people of Asia to run the affairs of Asia," as Xi claimed in 2014, again suggests China is placing itself in the center of regional and global affairs.[51]

These different visions for the world—the CCD and *Tianxia*—reflect fundamentally divergent but simultaneously prominent strands of Chinese strategic thinking today. According to former U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, "One values partnership and increased integration in global security structures. The other leans toward unilateral action and refuses to acknowledge global norms when they are seen to inhibit China's interests."[52] Although Carter believes this second strand is "growing ascendant among China's leaders," it is unclear exactly where Xi and others fall on this spectrum today, and their views might evolve over time. What is clear is that one strand (CCD) is much more compatible with the current international order

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[48] William Callahan, "Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-Hegemonic or a New Hegemony?" *International Studies Review,* Vol. 10, No. 4, December 2008, p. 749.

[49] Callahan, p. 749.

[50] Rolland, 2018.

[51] Xi, 2014a.

[52] Ash Carter, *Reflections on American Grand Strategy in Asia*, Harvard University Belfer Center for International Affairs, Special Report, October 2018. For other overviews of Chinese schools of thought, see David Kelly, *Seven Chinas: A Policy Framework*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Project on Chinese Business and Political Economy, No. 3, February 2018; Sabine Mokry, *Decoding Chinese Concepts for the Global Order*, Mercator Institute for China Studies, *China Monitor*, October 4, 2018.

than the other, *Tianxia*, and that this struggle within the Communist Party will define much of China's approach to the world in the coming decades.

Domestic Governance

There are indications that interest is growing in Beijing to develop and spread a "China model" of domestic governance to other countries, even though China has previously downplayed the notion that its domestic governance system could serve as a model for other countries.[53] In his 19th Party Congress speech, Xi said, "socialism with Chinese characteristics . . . [blazes] a new trail for other developing countries to achieve modernization [. . . and] offers a new option for other countries and nations who want to speed up their development while preserving their independence; and it offers Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving the problems facing mankind."[54] Indeed, the CCP is increasingly training foreign officials from a wide variety of countries on, as one Chinese institution put it, "China's governance and economic development model."[55]As early as 2016, Xi coined the term "China solution" and said, "the CCP and the Chinese people . . . are fully confident in offering a China solution to humanity's search for better social systems."[56] While Xi did not explicitly detail how this could apply to other countries, his description of China's 14-point approach to socialism with Chinese characteristics provides a useful roadmap for an export version of a potential "China model."[57]

The CCP's conceptualization of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" envisions the CCP as the elite vanguard leading China toward economic development and a stronger country. Xi's first tenet was "ensuring party leadership over all work," with the promise to "[pursue] development with ensuring stability." Second was "a people-approach," namely, "serving the public good and exercising power in the interests of the people [. . . and their] aspirations to live a better life."[58] These two tenets reflect the fundamental theory of China's governance since Deng Xiaoping: the people accept that the CCP leads the country as a Leninist vanguard party, and, in return, the CCP will deliver sufficient economic growth to improve people's lives. Xi also asserted that "the people run the country," namely a "system of party-led multi-party cooperation and political consultation" for a "socialist consultative democracy." Other important tenets include "law-based governance" under a party-led "socialist rule of law" and "strict self-governance;" a "holistic approach to national security" defined as "[putting] national

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[53] Xi denied interest in exporting China's system in December 2017, but U.S. analysts reject this as insincere because it was said at a conference bringing together political parties from around the world. See Michael Martina, "President Xi Says China Will Not Export Its Political System," Reuters, December 1, 2017; Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2019. For a pre-Xi discussion of exporting the Chinese system, see Joseph Fewsmith, "Debating 'the China Model,'" *China Leadership Monitor*, No. 35, Summer 2011.

[54] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," 2017.

[55] He Huifung, "In a Remote Corner of China, Beijing Is Trying to Export Its Model by Training Foreign Officials the Chinese Way," *South China Morning Post*, July 14, 2018; Elizabeth Economy, "Yes, Virginia, China Is Exporting Its Model," Council on Foreign Relations, *Asia Unbound*, December 11, 2019.

[56] Xi Jinping, "Speech at a Ceremony Marking the 95th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China," July 1, 2016, *Qiushi Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Issue 29, last updated December 20, 2016. For early analysis, see David Kelly, "The 'China Solution': Beijing Responds to Trump," Lowy Institute, *The Interpreter*, February 17, 2017.

[57] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," 2017.

[58] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," 2017.

interests first" and "safeguarding political security as a fundamental task;" "Party leadership over the military," and cultural independence.[59]

It is easy to imagine the appeal of these governing principles to an authoritarian-inclined leader stuck in a weak democratic system, such as Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In essence, the China model would be a strong political party that guarantees its right to rule through its leading status in both law and politics, plus control of the military through political loyalty rather than state authority. From a Chinese perspective, the CCP embodies a higher connection to the national interest and is charged with overseeing or guiding the state. The "democratic" nature of the system comes from its efforts to serve the people and represent their interests, including through consultation with minor political parties. China's heavy-handed surveillance and repression can also be justified by focusing on "holistic national security" that places social stability above individual freedom, and concepts such as "cyber sovereignty" that leverage Western conceptions of sovereignty to deflect criticism of actions within China's borders.[60] The fact that other countries have not explicitly called out their version of this governing philosophy as the China model does not mean it will not carry narrative currency and attract greater support in the future. Indeed, the fact that China's principles are far from unique—Vladimir Putin's continued rule in Russia is one example—means China already has a head start in promoting this framework as an alternative domestic governance model. The challenge will be actually delivering on these policies in a sustainable and stable way as China has done for 30 years, which will likely be difficult to replicate at global scale.

Economic Policy

China's state-led economic model—one that embraces global trade but exerts great control over such trade flows—presents a mercantilist alternative to Western-led capitalism and liberal globalization. China, according to Xi's speech at the 19th Party Congress, should allow both state-owned enterprises and private business to drive economic growth; specifically, to "consolidate and develop the public sector" while the state "[guides] the development of the nonpublic sector," allowing "the market [to play] the decisive role in resource allocation" under the "socialist market economy."[61] Despite early pledges of further economic reforms in favor of the private sector, Xi has doubled down on state-driven economic planning, evident in its Made in China 2025 industrial plan. Looking abroad, he told the 19th Party Congress that China "must actively participate in and promote economic globalization [and] develop an open economy of higher standards." As awareness of environmental issues and people's desire for a healthy life has deepened in China and the world, Xi touted "eco-friendly growth models" for "sustainable development" to conserve the environment.[62]

While China's approach might appear unique on the surface—indeed, Xi has said China must "[apply] a new vision of development"—in reality, China's economic model is better considered at the far end of the spectrum for state intervention that is practiced by many coun-

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[59] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," 2017.

[60] Adam Segal, "Year in Review: Chinese Cyber Sovereignty in Action," Council on Foreign Relations, blog post, January 8, 2018; Elliott Zaagman, "Cyber Sovereignty and the PRC's Vision for Global Internet Governance," Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief*, June 5, 2018.

[61] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," 2017.

[62] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," 2017.

tries.[63] Other Asian economies with strong growth during periods when their governments fell short of full democracy—Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea—all relied on some version of export-led growth and heavy government intervention in targeted industries, and even incurred trade disputes with the United States.[64] In Europe, for example, Airbus is owned in part by the French, German, and Spanish governments and has occasionally been the subject of politically influenced decisionmaking.[65] Even in the United States, the U.S. Postal Service is a government corporation owned and operated by the federal government for the benefit of the public, a state-owned enterprise in all but name.[66] The most important distinction in China's case is the sheer size of its economy and the scope of the state's intervention in the economy, but this, again, means that China's economic system already has some built-in resonance around the world.[67]

The reasons that a large state role in the economy is appealing can be both strategic and corrupt. Beyond the historical success of a state-led approach in Asia and elsewhere, governing elites in developing countries might also believe that in an era of rapid economic dislocation—in which automation is the most important driving trend—pure market forces might not be the best way to allocate national resources to get ahead of or even keep up with these technological changes, especially when developed economies have a head start and mass unemployment would threaten social stability. More selfishly, a state role in the economy allows elites to funnel money to projects that benefit them politically or personally.

One important question is how exportable and sustainable a China model would be for other countries. China's success has been achieved in part through predatory practices; the administration of President Trump has publicly stated that "much of [China's] growth has been achieved in significant part through aggressive acts, policies, and practices that fall outside global norms and rules."[68] Moreover, Chinese companies' advantage in an age of automation and machine learning is based on hoarding technology and data. If other countries attempt to steal technology, maintain their data sovereignty, and adopt exploitative trade practices, that would replicate current U.S.-China tensions and competition within China's own bloc. A related question is how much appeal a China model would have for governments facing several critical and growing challenges (e.g., immigration and automation) that China has, so far, not experienced or demonstrated an ability to address.

Ability to Implement its Ideas

China's current geographic focus for its ideological projects are the countries on its periphery in Asia and other developing countries, the two areas specifically mentioned in Xi's 19th Party

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[63] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," 2017.

[64] Ezra Vogel, *The Four Little Dragons: The Spread of Industrialization in East Asia,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.

[65] Sarah Gordon, "Airbus—The European Model," *Financial Times*, May 23, 2014.

[66] Kevin Kosar, *Federal Government Corporations: An Overview*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RL30365, last updated June 8, 2011.

[67] Li Yuan, "Private Businesses Built Modern China. Now the Government Is Pushing Back," *New York Times*, October 3, 2018; Alexandra Stevenson, "China's Communists Rewrite the Rules for Foreign Businesses," *New York Times*, April 13, 2018.

[68] White House Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, *How China's Economic Aggression Threatens the Technologies and Intellectual Property of the United States and the World*, June 2018.

Congress speech. China has a long history of promoting its ideology in Asia and developing countries. As Lin Biao, Mao Zedong's then–appointed successor and Minister of Defense, wrote in 1965: "The socialist countries should regard it as their internationalist duty to support the people's revolutionary struggles in Asia, Africa and Latin America . . . Mao Tse-tung's thought is a common asset of the revolutionary people of the whole world. This is the great international significance of the thought of Mao Tse-tung."[69] The ideas discussed in the previous section are not just theories for future implementation; they are already in motion. At the 19th Party Congress, Xi said, "China champions the development of a community with a shared future for mankind and has encouraged the evolution of the global governance system. With this we have seen a further rise in China's international influence, ability to

Figure A.1
China's Belt and Road Initiative
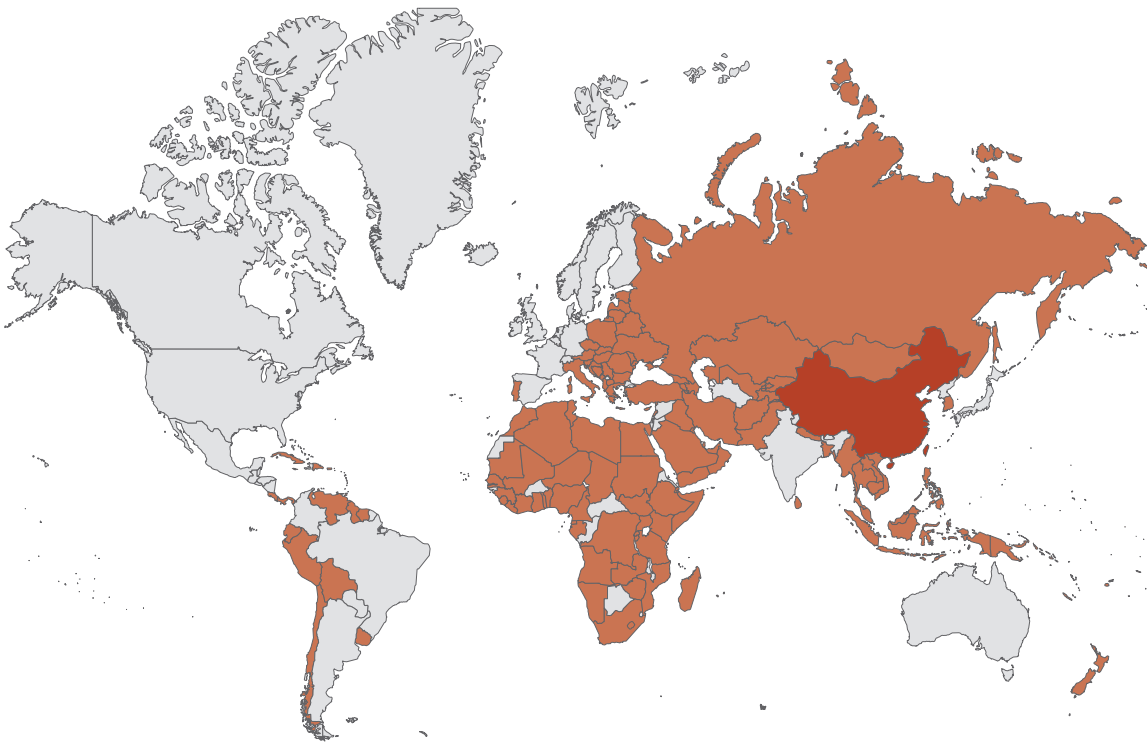
SOURCE: "List of Countries That Have Signed Cooperation Documents with China for the Belt and Road Initiative," China Belt and Road Portal, last updated October 2019.

NOTE: This map depicts the list of countries that have joined BRI as claimed by China, though Western news organizations often cite lower numbers, such as the Economist's April 2018 count of 71 countries. See "What's In It for the Belt-and-Road Countries?" *Economist*, April 19, 2018.

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[69] Lin Biao, "Long Live the Victory of People's War!" *Foreign Languages Press*, September 3, 1965; George T. Yu, "Africa in Chinese Foreign Policy," *Asian Survey,* Vol. 28, No. 8, August 1988; Julia Lovell, "The Cultural Revolution and Its Legacies in International Perspective," *China Quarterly*, Vol. 227, September 2016.

inspire, and power to shape; and China has made great new contributions to global peace and development."[70]

As Xi's signature foreign policy enterprise, it is no coincidence that the BRI (partially mapped in Figure A.1) is already being positioned as the platform for realizing China's ideational projects, especially the CCD. Xi explained that the BRI would "build a new platform for international cooperation to create new drivers of shared development."[71] According to Rolland, "whereas BRI provides physical connectivity, the CCD represents the intangible bonds that would tie the region together around China."[72] The hope is that deepened economic relations with Beijing through the BRI leads to economic dependence on China, and this economic dependence in turn leads to "greater political and security cooperation with China . . . to protect the fruits of their economic interactions" and that this real or perceived sense of community "will pave the way for China to emerge as a regional and global leader."[73] Indeed, at the first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in May 2017, Xi said of China that "we should build an open platform" using the BRI to "build a broad community of shared interests," closely mirroring CCD rhetoric.[74] He added that China hopes the BRI will support "a new type of international relations" and "a new model of win-win cooperation," not "geopolitical maneuvering" based on outdated security concepts like alliances.[75] Xi's effort to link a wide variety of Chinese ideational projects to the BRI reflects its central role in Chinese foreign policy moving forward, not just for concrete economic and diplomatic activities but also for ideological propagation.

Another institutional platform for China's ideas is the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) (map of membership in Figure A.2). At CICA's May 2014 meeting, Xi unveiled his "new security concept," remarking that "China proposes that we make CICA a security dialogue and cooperation platform that covers the whole of Asia, and, on that basis, explore the establishment of a regional security cooperation architecture," including a "defense consultation mechanism of member states."[76] Xi linked this "new security concept" to the CCD and the "Asian Dream," reinforcing the interwoven nature of these ideational projects.[77]

One component of China's economic diplomacy that has attracted much attention in recent years is the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) (map of membership in Figure A.3). At the launch of the AIIB, Xi said that the bank "means a great deal to the reform of the global economic governance system" toward a system that is "more just, equitable and effective." and Xi listed the launch of the bank as one of several ways that China was "creating a

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[70] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," 2017.

[71] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," 2017.

[72] Rolland, 2018.

[73] Rolland, 2018.

[74] "Full Text of President Xi's Speech at Opening of Belt and Road Forum," Xinhua, May 14, 2017.

[75] "Full Text of President Xi's Speech at Opening of Belt and Road Forum," 2017.

[76] Xi Jinping, 2014a.

[77] Xi defined the Asian Dream as "lasting peace and common development," and in essence represents Xi's offer for Asian nations to bandwagon on China's rise. See Xi Jinping, 2014a.

Figure A.2
Membership in CICA

Member
Observer
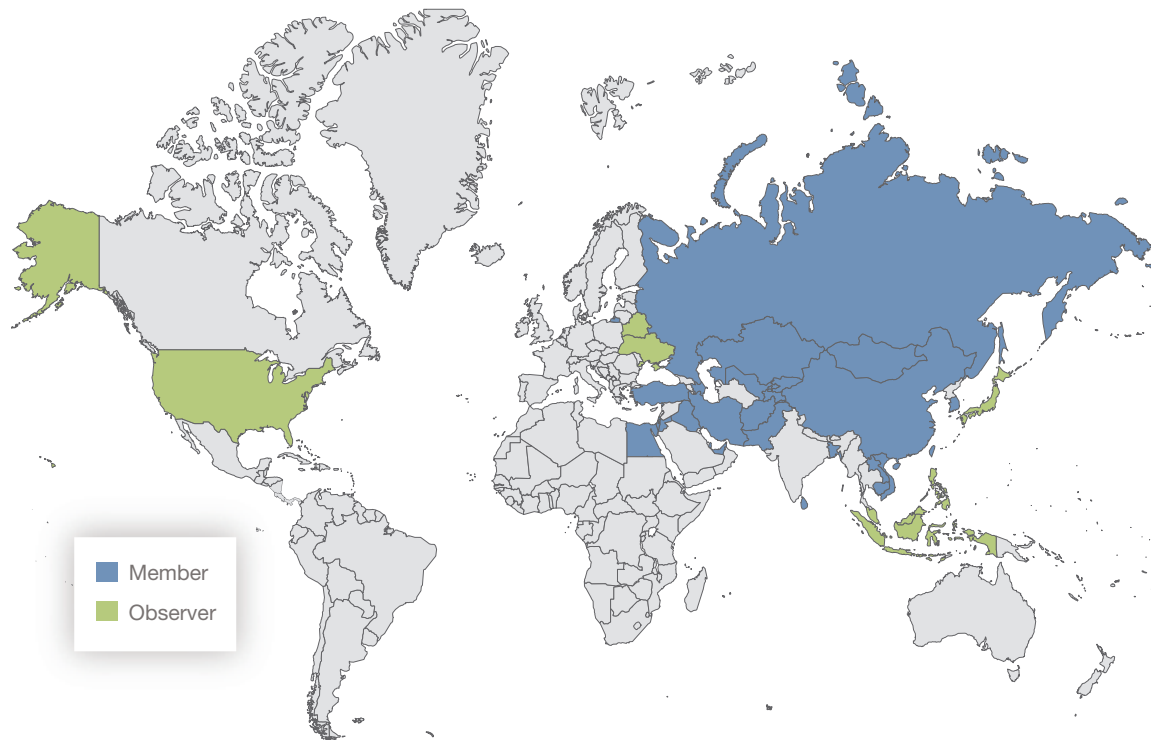
SOURCE: Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, "About CICA," web page, undated.

favorable external environment for China's development" in his 19th Party Congress speech.[78] Although Washington opposed the AIIB because of its role as a potential rival to Western lending institutions, the bank has partnered with rival lenders on grants and is generally considered to have adopted Western-style lending criteria and business practices—and China's role, so far, has been minimal.[79] Looking forward, however, the AIIB could allow China to support other state-led economies that might otherwise have adopted Western liberal-capitalist standards to qualify for needed loans.

Another more pernicious injection of Chinese economic principles into the global financial system is the role of Chinese credit-rating agencies. According to an analysis of their sovereign debt ratings compared with Western counterparts (such as Standard and Poor's) by Scott Kennedy of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Chinese agencies "[underrate] democracies and [overrate] authoritarian regimes" based largely on a hidden yet consequential premium for countries' political systems, even as they claim to give "greater weight [. . . to]

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[78] "Full Text of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Address at AIIB Inauguration Ceremony," *Xinhua*, January 16, 2016; "Full Text of President Xi's Speech at Opening of Belt and Road Forum," 2017.

[79] Geoff Dyer and George Parker, "US Attacks UK's 'Constant Accommodation' with China," *Financial Times*, March 12, 2015; G. John Ikenberry and Darren Lim, *China's Emerging Institutional Statecraft: The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Prospects for Counter-Hegemony*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, April 2017; Tamar Gutner, "AIIB: Is the Chinese-Led Development Bank a Role Model?" Council on Foreign Relations, webpage, June 25, 2018.

Figure A.3
Asian Infrastructure Development Bank Membership
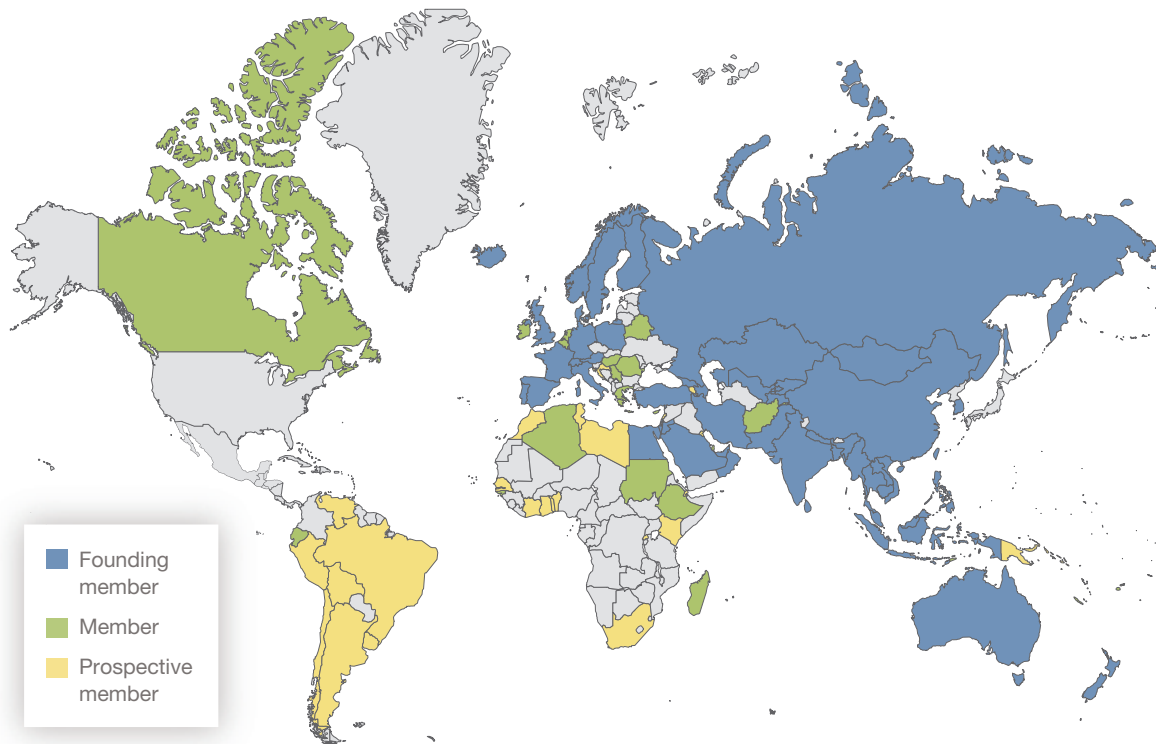
SOURCE: AIIB, "Members and Prospective Members of the Bank," webpage, December 31, 2019.
NOTE: Brazil, Kuwait, and South Africa are founding members, but have not ratified membership yet.

growth potential and fiscal position."[80] As Kennedy notes, even though these agencies currently "have no real-world significance other than as an ideological snub of the West," China's economic gravity means that, over time, "they reinforce other prominent norms favored by Beijing, including state intervention in the economy and regime control of information and the internet." This is one but one example of how the Chinese financial system's growing reach can have a subtle yet profound impact on global norms.

Beyond these public-facing efforts, China is also engaged in a long-standing and massive campaign of influence operations around the world. This includes covert campaigns to manipulate such international institutions as the United Nations (UN) and outreach through co-opted individuals whom Xi has called "magic weapons."[81] The Trump administration has also accused Beijing of interfering in U.S. elections.[82] These Chinese efforts are often focused on shaping countries' policies toward China and extending the reach of China's governance

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[80] Scott Kennedy, "In China's Credit Ratings, Democracies Pay a Price," *Foreign Policy*, August 8, 2019.

[81] Nick McKenzie, Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, Zach Dorfman, and Fergus Hunter, "Beijing's Secret Plot to Infiltrate UN Used Australian Insider," *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 11, 2018; Brady, Anne-Marie, *Magic Weapons: China's Political Influence Activities Under Xi Jinping*, Washington, D.C.: Wilson Center, September 2017.

[82] Michael Pence, "The Administration's Policy Towards China," speech delivered at the Hudson Institute, October 4, 2018.

and control to cover Chinese citizens and ethnic Chinese foreign nationals living abroad, but, so far, the efforts do not appear to specifically support China's ideological projects.

This influence campaign is coupled with more-transparent soft power, public diplomacy, and propaganda efforts—the latter of which cost an estimated $10 billion per year and include the Confucius Institute language and cultural centers and Xinhua news service.[83] Some of these efforts more clearly promote China's ideological projects. For example, Xi writes op-eds in local newspapers when he travels abroad to promote his vision for bilateral relationships and China's larger vision for the world, including the CCD.[84] Overall, it is clear China is investing massive resources across the government to increase its influence and promote its ideas abroad.

Some observers, such as John Garnaut, argue that the CCP's ideological promotion is an inseparable and subversive component of all its foreign engagement, especially its global campaign of influence operations: "The challenge for us is that Xi's project of total ideological control does not stop at China's borders. It is packaged to travel with Chinese students, tourists, migrants and especially money. It flows through the channels of the Chinese language internet, pushes into all the world's major media and cultural spaces and generally keeps pace with and even anticipates China's increasingly global interests."[85] The degree to which China promotes its economic and political models as practical applicable solutions or as inherently ideological programs will partly determine how intense the ideological rivalry will be with the United States.

Measuring China's Success

Despite China's efforts to popularize its ideology around the world, the results are uncertain. There is no specific polling on China's ideological projects, leaving some ambiguity as to whether other countries envy China for its economic success or are attracted to a China model to shape their own future development. One way to understand these divergent views is to consider both elite and nonelite perspectives among countries on the receiving end of China's efforts. Governing elites might be attracted to China's political model of high-tech authoritarianism, or they might simply lack commitment to democracy and tolerate corruption as a way to prolong their rule and enrich themselves.[86] The general public, on the other hand, might envy China's economic growth and see enhanced engagement with China as a way to achieve the same. Majority population groups might tolerate or even welcome China's high-tech repression as a way to ensure social control over a minority population, as China has done in Xinjiang against the Uyghurs. Both elites and the general public, however, could grow disillusioned with China if it fails to deliver on these two potentially conflicting goals.

Global public opinion is uneven when it comes to China (see map of China's net global favorability in Figure A.4). According to Pew Research Center polling in spring 2018, China had a small net favorability across all countries surveyed, but "favorable attitudes [are] most prevalent in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia," with a recent decline in the United

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[83] David Shambaugh, "China's Soft-Power Push: The Search for Respect," *Foreign Affairs*, June 16, 2016.

[84] Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, "Xi's Op-Ed Diplomacy: Selling the 'China Dream' Abroad," Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief*, September 25, 2014.

[85] Garnaut, 2019.

[86] Richard Fontaine and Kara Frederick, "The Autocrat's New Tool Kit," *Wall Street Journal*, March 15, 2019.

Figure A.4
Global Favorability of China

Sweden −45
Germany −22
Netherlands −22
UK −17
France −29
Spain −14
Italy −20
Tunisia +47
Lithuania 12
Poland 13
Czech Republic −30
Slovakia −8
Hungary +3
Ukraine +43
Bulgaria +35
Turkey −7
Lebanon +46
Greece +19
Israel +41
Russia +53
South Korea −29
Japan −71
India −23
Vietnam +78
Philippines −12
Indonesia 0
Canada −40
United States −34
Mexico +28
Brazil +24
Argentina +3
Nigeria +53
Hungary +3
Kenya +33
South Africa +11
Australia −21

Less favorable   More favorable

SOURCES: Pew Research Center, "Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey, Q8b," dataset, 2019; Laura Silver, Kat Devlin, and Christine Huang, "People Around the Globe Are Divided in Their Opinions of China," Pew Research Center, December 5, 2019.

States and an increase in Europe.[87] The United States is still favored for global leadership, as "63% [of global respondents in 25 countries] say they prefer a world in which the U.S. is the leading power, while just 19% would favor one in which China leads." This is especially true in Asia, where 81 percent of Japanese, 77 percent of Filipinos, 73 percent of South Koreans, and 72 percent of Australians "all favor a future where Washington, not Beijing, leads," Pew found.[88] Personally, Xi is not viewed as a reliable leader: "34% across the countries surveyed voice confidence in Xi, while 56% lack confidence in him," with his rating highest in Africa but lowest in Europe. China's governance model also does not score well, as two-thirds of people said that they believe "the Chinese government does not respect the personal freedoms of its people," while only 19 percent agree, and this critical view of China's human rights situation is correlated with a negative view of China overall.[89] From these data, it is clear that China has a long road before it surpasses the United States as the favored global leader, but it already has some advantages in the developing world.

Elite opinion of China is more difficult to track, but a current snapshot suggests at least a momentary turn against China in Asia. China was a campaign issue in many countries during elections in 2018, and many newly elected administrations have reassessed their countries' commitment to the BRI once in office.[90] In Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad was elected in May 2018, in part on a platform of criticism of his predecessor's close engagement with China and on pledges for transparency into Chinese projects in the country.[91] After his election, Mahathir paused or ended $23 billion worth of BRI projects, while slamming the previous agreements as "unequal treaties" and arguing that the BRI could become a "new version of colonialism."[92] In Pakistan, Prime Minister Imran Khan, the most high-profile partner for the BRI, has similarly revisited previous BRI-related agreements since his election in August and pledged renegotiations.[93] In the Maldives, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih was elected in September amid similar criticism of his predecessors' ties with Beijing, and popular resistance to the government's heavy-handed crackdown that was tacitly but clearly supported by China.[94] Although these elections obviously reflect a shift in public opinion, the focus on China also reveals elite concerns, in some cases specifically about the question of how to balance economic development through China against weakened sovereignty under Chinese influence.

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[87] Kat Devlin, "5 Charts on Global Views of China," Pew Research Center, webpage, October 19, 2018; Richard Wike, Bruce Stokes, Jacob Poushter, Laura Silver, Janell Fetterolf and Kat Devlin, "Trump's International Ratings Remain Low, Especially Among Key Allies," Pew Research Institute, blog post, October 1, 2018. For broader polling on China, see: "How Are Global Views on China Trending?" ChinaPower, webpage, undated.

[88] Devlin, 2018.

[89] Devlin, 2018.

[90] Iain Marlow and Dandan Li, "How Asia Fell Out of Love With China's Belt and Road Initiative," Bloomberg, December 10, 2018.

[91] Ben Bland, "Malaysian Backlash Tests China's Belt and Road Ambitions," *Financial Times*, June 24, 2018.

[92] Lucy Hornby, "Mahathir Mohamad Warns Against 'New Colonialism' During China Visit," *Financial Times*, August 20, 2018; Jamil Anderlini, "China Is at Risk of Becoming a Colonialist Power," *Financial Times*, September 19, 2018.

[93] Jamil Anderlini, Henny Sender, and Farhan Bokhari, "Pakistan Rethinks Its Role in Xi's Belt and Road Plan," *Financial Times*, September 9, 2018.

[94] Maria Abi-Habib and Hassan Moosa, "Maldives Opposition Declares Election Victory," *New York Times*, September 23, 2018; Yuji Kuronuma and Oki Nagai, "Maldives Election Marks Setback for China's Belt and Road," *Nikkei Asian Review*, September 25, 2018.

However, other global elites are clearly eager to work with China, and China's biggest success has been promoting high-tech illiberalism. For example, Zimbabwe has signed a strategic partnership agreement with a Chinese company to implement facial recognition technology, and smaller-scale adoption has also occurred in Malaysia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Bolivia, and South Africa. Venezuela has also contracted a Chinese state-owned enterprise to help develop its own version of a social credit score.[95] Moreover, Xi's ability to normalize China's governance philosophy should not be underestimated—the Saudi crown price endorsed China's crackdown on Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang during a February 2019 visit to Beijing, and in July, 37 countries voiced support for China's policies there.[96]

Conclusion

China's goal, as identified by Xi, is to surpass the United States as the world's superpower by 2049. China justifies its central role in world affairs through disparate intellectual traditions ranging from the traditional concept of *Tianxia* to the Marxist concept of dialectical and historical materialism. Though it might seem odd to justify its foreign policy with concepts derived from both ancient tradition and revolutionary ideology, both concepts do, in fact, point in the same direction—toward a much more assertive role.[97]

China's economic and military power will very likely be enough to rival the United States as a strategic competitor for decades to come. The ideological component is only one part of the larger U.S.-China competition already underway, but it is one that has the potential to shift the balance without the need for military force or even economic leverage. Yet questions remain over what kind of world Beijing would create as a long-term rival or eventual dominant power on the global stage.

This section has highlighted several ideological projects that Xi has clearly articulated and offered as China's vision for the future. In the near term, China is likely to focus on seeking to revise existing norms and institutions in line with Chinese ideas about its desired world order. In places where it is unable to reform the existing system, it is likely to pursue parallel efforts (e.g., AIIB) in which it can pursue its vision unfettered by U.S. restrictions. In the longer term, however, China's ambition is to create a coalition of countries bound to Beijing by economic interdependence and to redefine security as economic development instead of independence, moving toward geoeconomics—with Beijing at its core—as the driving force for international affairs.

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[95] Lynsey Chutel, "China Is Exporting Facial Recognition Software to Africa, Expanding Its Vast Database," *Quartz*, webpage, May 25, 2018; Scott N. Romaniuk and Tobias Burgers, "How China's AI Technology Exports Are Seeding Surveillance Societies Globally," *The Diplomat*, October 18, 2018; Angus Berwick, "How ZTE Helps Venezuela Create China-Style Social Control," Reuters, November 14, 2018.

[96] "Saudi Crown Prince Defends China's Right to Fight 'Terrorism,'" Al-Jazeera, February 23, 2019; Tom Miles, "Saudi Arabia and Russia Among 37 States Backing China's Xinjiang Policy," Reuters, July 12, 2019.

[97] For one effort to understand how these different concepts interact for Chinese foreign policy, see Didi Kirsten Tatlow, *China's Cosmological Communism: A Challenge to Liberal Democracies*, Mercator Institute for China Studies, *China Monitor*, July 18, 2018.

Russia

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought with it the end of the decades-long ideological struggle between Washington and Moscow. The newly formed Russian Federation embraced a political and economic approach that initially seemed to fall within the spectrum of Western norms, particularly given the context of Russia's nascent experiment with democratic institutions. President Boris Yeltsin had to struggle to achieve reelection in 1996, and there was a peaceful (though flawed) transfer of power through an electoral process in 2000.[98] And, despite the internal debate over the speed and correctness of economic reform, Yeltsin's government took painful steps to transition to a market economy.[99]

Implicit in these political and economic shifts in the early years of the Russian Federation was the decision to follow a Western path of development, which theoretically precluded the need to promote an ideological alternative or to seek allies discontented with the U.S.-led international order. Indeed, Yeltsin stated flatly in 1996 that the Russian Federation had no ideology.[100] Speaking before the German Bundestag in 2001, President Putin also supported ending the ideological competition, noting that "Stalinist totalitarian ideology could no longer oppose the ideas of freedom and democracy. The spirit of these ideas was taking hold of the overwhelming majority of Russian citizens. . . . As for European integration, we not just support these processes, but we are looking to them with hope."[101]

In subsequent years, Russia has moved sharply away from this vision of development and integration toward ideas such as Eurasianism (polycentrism), anti-Westernism, and conservatism while at the same time preserving some tenets of a market economy and participation in the global economic order.[102] In light of Russian actions in Georgia, Ukraine, Syria, Western Europe, and the United States, it has become increasingly relevant to understand the nature of Russia's ideological evolution and the ways in which it is promoting or exploiting ideas to undermine its Western opponents. This section explores the content of Russian ideology, its role in the renewed hostility between Moscow and the West, and what impact this clash of ideas might have going forward. We briefly examine Russian interests and motivations and its capabilities and actions. We then offer a forecast of international outcomes to facilitate some initial conclusions about the future of ideological competition between Russia and the West.

Ultimately, we find that Russia's ideological platform consisting of polycentric, anti-Western, and conservative elements is likely to be best received in countries that are trending away from support of Western institutions and where large portions of the population retain a relatively strong religious commitment.[103] The appeal to conservative values and traditions

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[98] Michael McFaul, "Russia's 2000 Presidential Elections: Implications for Russian Democracy and U.S.-Russian Relations," testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Washington, D.C., April 12, 2000.

[99] Anders Aslund, "Why Has Russia's Economic Transformation Been So Arduous?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 1999.

[100] As quoted in Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy, *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2015, pp. 45–46.

[101] Vladimir Putin, speech delivered to the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany, September 25, 2001.

[102] The idea of *multipolarity*, now referred to as *polycentrism*, was put forth by former Russian Foreign Minister Evgenii Primakov in the mid-1990s. It has gained prominence in official statements and policy, particularly since 2012.

[103] It is important to keep in mind that it is very difficult to know to what degree Russian ideas are actually driving events in any given country at any given time. The most we can say, given the scope of this work, is that such ideas might be well

might have some resonance in and of itself, particularly in eastern Europe, but in many cases there is relatively strong support for Western institutions across the continent (in addition to hostility toward Russia), which limits the ability of countries receptive to this message to affect the policy changes Russia seeks. Going forward, the critical variable is the extent to which political parties that are aligned with parts or all of Russia's platform can garner enough support domestically to fundamentally alter policy toward Russia and perhaps Europe more broadly. Should they not obtain such support, Russia's platform, as currently constructed, will likely have to be altered to appeal to a different audience or to find compromise with those who hold power and are fundamentally opposed to virtually every part of the Kremlin's strategic vision.

Interests and Motivations

With the exception of regime survival, regional influence is the most important strategic interest of Russia. In 1998, the Russian strategist and former Security Council Secretary Andrei Kokoshin wrote that "Russia attaches particular importance to the quality of its relations with the territories of the former Soviet Union, particularly with Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Admittedly, the prominence of the Russian-Ukrainian relationship transcends the boundaries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and even Europe as a whole. World politics to a large extent depends on the status of that relationship."[104] Just prior to returning to the presidency in 2011, Putin, affirming Kokoshin's claim, presented a plan to reintegrate the former Soviet space: "We present ourselves an ambitious task to move to the next, higher level of integration—a Eurasian Union."[105] Putin highlighted that Commonwealth of Independent States members were particularly welcome to join what, in his view, would become a supranational association that acts as one of the poles of the modern world and a bridge between Europe and Asia. Despite current headwinds, "the Greater Eurasia Project," as Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov described it in a 2017 interview, appears to be an important and unabandoned element of Putin's vision for Russia in the years ahead.[106]

From an ideological perspective, Russia's interest in its region stems from the fact that the Kremlin does not want to be exposed to political currents that might pose a threat to the regime. The events in Ukraine in 2013–2014, also known as the Euromaidan revolution; the color revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan in the early 2000s; and the large-scale protests in Moscow in 2011 and 2012 were seen by Putin as serious attempts to undermine existing power structures and potentially install pro-Western leaders across the former Soviet space, including in Moscow. In a 2014 meeting with the Russian Security Council, Putin stated, "Attempts to shake up the socio-political situation, in one way or another, to weaken Russia, to hit vulnerable areas, are being made and will be made . . . . For this purpose, the capabilities of special forces are used, modern information and communication technologies, channels of dependent non-governmental organizations—the mechanisms of so-called soft

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received, which could have any number of implications to include friendlier policy positions toward Russia.

[104] Andrei Kokoshin, *Soviet Strategic Thought, 1917–1991*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998, p. 194.

[105] Vladimir Putin, "Novii integratsionnii proekt dlya Evrazii—budushchee, kotopoe pozhdaetsya segodnya [New Integration Project for Eurasia—the Future is Born Today]," *Izvestiya*, October 3, 2011.

[106] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's Interview with RT," December 25, 2017.

power—are used."[107] The ideas that led to the Euromaidan revolution, which centered on discontent with a corrupt government and the desire for closer integration with the West, were seen as threatening to the political order in Russia.

Beyond the former Soviet space, a key interest for Russia is that it be regarded as a leading world power. Although playing an alpha regional role is clearly one aspect of this idea, it is not sufficient to fully explain Russian interests, motivations, and, ultimately, behavior. Based on a number of articles and speeches of senior Russian officials, and the so-called May Decrees of 2012—presidential orders that established benchmarks to be reached in a number of domestic and foreign policy areas—it is clear that Russia has broader interests. Russia believes that its role as a great power is to maintain strategic stability and the balance of power in the international system.[108] While the former concept typically connotes nuclear stability in the sense that world war can be deterred through mutually assured destruction, the latter has a related, though different, meaning for Putin. On many occasions he has argued that the world was out of balance or strategically unstable after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Russia was militarily, politically, and economically weak. From Moscow's perspective, unchecked U.S. hegemony led to a number of destabilizing acts that included interventions in the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Libya, and the mostly "rhetorical" intervention in Syria calling for the end of the Assad regime.[109] Restoring the global balance of power such that adversaries are deterred from intervening in areas of Russian interest (and in Russia itself), and ensuring that Russia is able to participate in the resolution of international conflicts are key components of Russia's current foreign policy.[110]

Ideas and Ideologies

Over the past several years, Russia has taken a number of steps to protect its perceived interests as relations with the West have gradually worsened. The significant military buildup that was launched in 2010 has been a critical element in its counterbalance strategy, but Russia has also sought to achieve balance in the international marketplace of ideas, where the West was perceived to have a monopoly position. For example, a common narrative in Russian geopolitical discourse today is the impact of globalization dominated by a liberal, Western worldview, including in the cultural sense, and the need for Russia to offer a traditional, or anti-Western, alternative.[111] Russia believes that a significant threat of a highly connected, globalized world comes from those that lead in the technology and information space and use these means to impose their views on populations to foment unrest against unfriendly regimes.[112] This threat lives in both political and cultural domains. Global mass media outlets and giant social

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[107] Vladimir Mukhin, "Militarizatziya ugrozhaet VVP [Militarization is Threatening GDP (Gross Domestic Product)]," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, July 23, 2014.

[108] Vladimir Putin, "Russia and the Changing World," *Moskovskie Novosti*, February 27, 2012b; Vladimir Putin, "Byt' sil'nymi: garantii natsional'noi bezopasnosti dlya Rossii [Being Strong Is a Guarantee of National Security]," *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, February 20, 2012a; Vladimir Putin, speech delivered at the Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club, Sochi, October 24, 2014; Vladimir Putin, speech delivered at the Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club, Sochi, October 22, 2015.

[109] "U.S. 'Hotheads' Seek to Create Atmosphere of Chaos in Russia, Diplomat Points Out," TASS, March 5, 2018.

[110] Sergei Karaganov, "Global Challenges and Russian Foreign Policy," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 40, No. 6, November 2016.

[111] Alexander Dugin, "Globalization and Its Enemies," *Izborskii Klub*, January 3, 2018.

[112] Ivan Egorov, "Patrushev: Attempts to Build 'Color Revolutions' in Russia Are Futile," *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, May 18, 2017.

media companies, most of which are located in the West, can be used to agitate "against those [regimes] who don't stick to Western imposed standards."[113] In regard to cultural issues, Putin has been vocal in support of conservatism and argued that some Western countries are not only rejecting Christian values and "denying moral principles and all traditional identities: national, cultural, religious and even sexual," but are "aggressively trying to export this [cultural] model all over the world."[114] The spread of "nontraditional" ideas and values can occur much more rapidly and dangerously in a globalized, connected world, in Russia's view.

To balance against these ideological trends, Russia has gradually attempted to develop both an alternative to the Western narrative on governance and foreign policy and the capability to propagate its own messages on a host of issues from military to political to cultural. The development of Russian ideas and the use of those ideas to counter the Western narrative has taken longer to evolve than the capabilities to propagate them. This is partially because of Russia's choice of a Western orientation in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and because Russian rhetoric in the early Putin years, when critical, was focused on U.S. and Western policy as opposed to the promotion of alternative models of development. As relations with the West have deteriorated over time, the identification of a "national idea" for Russia has taken on greater urgency. According to the head of the Carnegie Moscow Center, Dmitri Trenin, in the leadup to Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, Putin determined that Russia "needed a sense of spiritual sovereignty," and he became "preoccupied with helping Russia achieve self-determination, aided by answering such questions as 'What are we?' and 'What do we want to be?'"[115] In 2013, Putin reflected on the state of this national idea: "A spontaneously constructed state and society does not work, and neither does mechanically copying other countries' experiences. Such primitive borrowing and attempts to civilize Russia from abroad were not accepted by an absolute majority of our people. This is because the desire for independence and sovereignty in spiritual, ideological and foreign policy spheres is an integral part of our national character." Putin then called upon others within Russia with disparate views—"so-called Neo-Slavophiles and Neo-Westernizers, statists and so-called liberals"—to come up with a "development ideology" for Russia bound by the constraint that Russia could not simply follow the Western path.[116]

At least part of the answer for Putin lies in the role of Russia as a protector of so-called conservative values against the export of a development model that threatens to rapidly upend long-held cultural norms in regions around the world, including in the former Soviet space. According to Mark Galeotti, an expert on Russia's intelligence services, the decision to promote social conservatism as a wedge issue within Europe was debated at the highest levels of the Russian security establishment, perhaps around 2013, and subsequently adopted as policy.[117] Other Russia observers, such as Brian Taylor of Syracuse University, also noted a distinct

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[113] Fyodor Lukyanov, "A Failed New World Order and Beyond: Russian View," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 40, No. 6, October 2016, p. 483.

[114] Vladimir Putin, speech delivered at the Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club, Novgorod, September 19, 2013.

[115] Dmitri Trenin, "Russia's Breakout from the Post–Cold War System: The Drivers of Putin's Course," Carnegie Moscow Center, blog post, December 22, 2014.

[116] Putin, 2013.

[117] Mark Galeotti, "Putin's Hydra: Inside Russia's Intelligence Services," European Council on Foreign Relations, ECFR/169, May 11, 2016, p. 13.

shift at the beginning of Putin's third term toward a more explicit embrace of "conservative and antiliberal elements."[118] Correspondingly, Putin argued in late 2013 that it was "natural and right to defend [the values embedded in Christianity and other world religions]."[119] According to Trenin, these values included "the sanctity of the family as a union between a man and a woman, the indispensable role of religious faith, the function of traditional religions as spiritual compasses, the centrality of the state among all political and social institutions, and, of course, patriotism."[120]

In the context of a fundamental breakdown of relations with the West, the idea of supporting conservative, like-minded groups—particularly in Europe—that might also want to wall off parts of the world from the influence of the Western development model fits with the Russian vision of polycentrism. This vision is that each power center should be free to build its own regional political, economic, security, and cultural architecture without the invasion of nontraditional, foreign ideas. Furthermore, groups in the West that find common cause with Russian positions on cultural issues tend to support Russian positions on security and the international order.[121] In a speech before the UN General Assembly, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov commingled the ideas of polycentrism and rejection of the Western model of development that offended cultural sensitivities: "On the one hand, the polycentric principles of the world order are growing stronger and new economic growth centers are taking shape. We can see nations striving to preserve their sovereignty and to choose the development models that are consistent with their ethnic, cultural and religious identity. On the other hand, we see the desire of a number of Western states to retain their self-proclaimed status as 'world leaders' and to slow down the irreversible move toward multipolarity that is objectively taking place."[122] A recent strategy paper by the Council of Foreign and Defense Policy, an influential Moscow think tank, also attempted to summarize these ideas into a mission statement for Russia:

> Russia is a bulwark of international stability and peace, ensuring the free development of all countries and peoples and preventing the imposition of unnatural values and [political] orders, especially by force or through interference in internal affairs. Countries and peoples should have the possibility of organic, normal development. The imposition of any "-isms" should be a thing of the past. *Russia should actively come to the defense of cultural and civilizational diversity* [emphasis added], striving for harmony (and not unification) as the most important stabilizing factor of the polycentric world.[123]

Russia has therefore coalesced around a common set of ideas that involve the rejection of a development model that is opposed to Russian interests in both a cultural and strategic sense. Taylor has also observed the Kremlin promoting this combination of ideas more assert-

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[118] Brian D. Taylor, *The Code of Putinism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 19.

[119] Taylor, 2018, p. 19.

[120] Trenin, 2014.

[121] See Table A.2.

[122] Sergey Lavrov, "Remarks at the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly," speech delivered at the United Nations, New York, September 28, 2018.

[123] Sergei Karaganov, ed., *Strategiia dlia Rossii. Rossiiskaia vneshniaia politika: konets 2010-kh—nachalo 2020-kh godov* [*Strategy For Russia. Russian Foreign Policy: The end of the 2010s—Start of the 2020s*], Moscow: Sovet po vneshnei i oboronnoi politike [Council on Foreign and Defense Policy], 2017.

ively since 2012. He highlights statism (including great-power statism), anti-Westernism and anti-Americanism, antiliberalism, and conservatism as key elements of what he refers to as the "code of Putinism."[124] These ideas allow Russia to potentially appeal to a broad audience both in Europe and in the United States and increase the likelihood of policies more in line with its interests. As Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss, the authors of a 2014 report on the weaponization of information, suggest, the Kremlin in recent years "has adopted a different approach [from the Soviet era], creating alliances and funding groups both on the left and on the right: European right-nationalists are seduced by the anti-EU [European Union] message; members of the far left are brought in by tales of fighting U.S. hegemony; U.S. religious conservatives are convinced by the Kremlin's stance against homosexuality."[125] Regardless of the target audience, most crucial to Russian objectives is that the ideas it chooses to advocate find favor with those who could eventually alter the current course of anti-Russian policies, accept Russia's approach to domestic governance and its regional sphere of influence, and acknowledge Russia's status as a great power worthy of deference in international affairs.[126] Table A.1 provides a summary of this clash of ideas (or models) between Russia and the West.

Ability to Implement Its Ideas

The development of capabilities to promote such ideas on a global scale actually occurred well before the latest iteration of Russia's alternative development model, which has evolved over time in response to external developments. Although it is possible that the intent was altered retroactively in response to geopolitical changes, Putin claimed in the early 2000s that there needed to be greater balance among global media outlets. In a 2013 interview with Russia Today editor Margarita Simonyan, he stated that, "When we designed [Russia Today] back

Table A.1
Clash of Russian and Western Ideas

	Russian Model	Western Model
International level	*Polycentrism, anti-Westernism*: diversity of approaches to governance; spheres of influence; Russia as leader of Eurasia; balance of power	*Liberalism*: self-determination; open order (free flow of ideas, trade, investment)
Domestic level	*Cultural conservatism*: deference to the tenets of traditional faith, particularly in regard to homosexuality; rejection of "political correctness"	*Liberalism*: free and fair elections; rule of law; less reliance on religion; greater focus on "universal" human rights

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[124] Taylor, 2018, p. 40.

[125] Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss, *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money*, Moscow: Institute of Modern Russia, 2014.

[126] Alternatively, it could be speculated that Russian ideas that appeal to opposition "fringe" parties would eventually lead to a desire for compromise on the part of those in power who feel they must shift their position toward Russia to retain political control at home.

in 2005, we intended [to introduce] another strong player on the world's scene, a player that wouldn't just provide an unbiased coverage of the events in Russia but also try, let me stress, I mean—try to break the Anglo-Saxon monopoly on the global information streams. And it seems to me that you're succeeding in this job."[127] Russia has gone on to develop social media capabilities that have facilitated the propagation and, in some cases, weaponization of information—tools that were demonstrated in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, according to a U.S. Intelligence Community assessment.[128]

Since 2012, these and other information capabilities have been used by Russia to methodically and opportunistically promote the aforementioned ideas and to support groups in the West that are ideologically aligned with Russia in opposing the current political and security order in Europe. As many have pointed out, the backlash against Western policies and values in the United States and Europe was not instigated by Russia; as Scott Radnitz, the director of Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies at the University of Washington, has argued, economic stagnation, large influxes of refugees, and other internal EU problems have moved some voters to the political extreme, which tends to be more receptive and supportive of Kremlin ideas.[129] Indeed, such political, security, and cultural ideas certainly did not originate in Moscow and have been a platform of European opposition parties for some time.

At the same time, it is clear (based on the fact that Russia was not enthusiastically pursuing this policy a decade prior) that Russia is attempting to advocate ideas that would likely appeal to disaffected groups in order to capitalize on political and cultural divisions in pursuit of desired policy outcomes. At the governmental and nongovernmental levels, Russia has engaged in efforts to cultivate relationships with so-called fringe political parties (e.g., the Freedom Party in Austria, Northern League in Italy, National Front in France, and Alternative for Germany [AfD] in Germany) and other actors across Europe and the United States that reject the status quo on a number of issues important to Russia. To that end, United Russia, the dominant political party in Russia, signed cooperation agreements with the Freedom Party and an agreement with the Northern League in 2016 and 2017, respectively.[130] These organizations generally support Russia's emphasis on resisting migration and fighting cultural liberalism and secularization in Western societies.[131]

In Spain, Russia has used various information capabilities to amplify anti-EU sentiment; Russian-based hackers attempted to interfere in the 2016 Catalonia referendum in support of the separatist movement by promoting an "overarching anti-EU narrative," according to a U.S. State Department report.[132] A government-backed research institute in Madrid charac-

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[127] Margarita Simonyan, "Putin Talks NSA, Syria, Iran, Drones in RT Interview," *RT*, June 12, 2013.

[128] Office of the Director of National Intelligence, National Intelligence Council, *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections*, January 2017.

[129] Gustav Gressel, "Fellow Travellers: Russia, Anti-Westernism, And Europe's Political Parties," European Council on Foreign Relations, webpage, July 14, 2017a; Scott Radnitz, "Europe's Extremists Are Not Putin's Fault," *Foreign Policy*, February 13, 2016; Alina Polyakova, "Why Europe Is Right to Fear Putin's Useful Idiots," *Foreign Policy*, February 23, 2016.

[130] Alison Smale, "Austria's Far Right Signs a Cooperation Pact with Putin's Party," *New York Times*, December 19, 2016; Max Seddon and James Politi, "Putin's Party Signs Deal with Italy's Far-Right Lega Nord," *Financial Times*, March 6, 2017.

[131] Ronald Brownstein, "Putin and the Populists," *The Atlantic*, January 6, 2017.

[132] As cited in U.S. Government Publishing Office, *Putin's Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security*, minority staff report prepared for the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, January 10, 2018, p. 135.

terized Russian activities as "one more Russian attempt (and probably not the last) to influ-
ence the internal political situation of another country, to sow confusion and to proclaim the
decline of liberal democracy."[133] In France, a Russian bank loaned $11.5 million to the French
National Front, which has an explicitly anti-EU position, and a private cybersecurity firm
assessed that the Macron campaign was negatively targeted days before the French election by
APT (advanced persistent threat) 28, which might have ties to Russian military intelligence.[134]
Finally, a U.S. intelligence report detailed a Russian campaign to meddle in and influence the
2016 U.S. presidential election in favor of a candidate whose rhetoric was relatively favorable to
Russia and who questioned the need for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).[135]

Measuring Russia's Success

Russia's preferred outcome appears relatively clear. As stated previously, the desire for the politi-
cal and economic integration of Eurasia (the former Soviet space, excluding the Baltics) is a key
priority for Putin. Its realization would go a long way toward the establishment of a polycentric
world and Russia's undisputed status as a leading global power. The Western liberal model,
in many ways, directly contradicts Russia's desired end state because of the liberal model's
rejection of autocratic governance, its support of the right of countries to choose their foreign
policy orientation, and its support for human rights. As a result, Russian ideas that support the
Russian vision tend to portray the Western model as corrupt, elitist, unjust, and antithetical
to conservative values. The audience most receptive to the Kremlin's arguments (with some
exceptions) has been fringe parties and figures in the United States and Europe. Russia's ideal
outcome would be for parties sympathetic to its worldview and policies (e.g., the end of sanc-
tions and EU expansion, recognition of Crimea) to gain popularity within their countries and
eventually impact relations vis-à-vis Russia. Another less-ambitious goal for Russia might be
a less punitive Russia policy from that currently held by the mainstream parties in the United
States and Europe, which would likely be answered with a softening of anti-Western, conserva-
tive rhetoric on the part of the Kremlin and its subordinate entities.

In terms of the current and future trajectory toward this desired outcome, we briefly
examine the state of politics and culture in the Europe and the United States. In late 2014,
Trenin noted that to counter the trend toward the European renunciation of "Christian values,"
the "Kremlin reached out to European far-right conservative parties, like France's National
Front, the UK's Independence Party (UKIP), and Hungary's Jobbik, to create a coalition in
defense of traditional values."[136] According to Trenin, "This mechanistic effort . . . gained little
traction."[137] However, several years have passed, and there is more information to discern the
extent to which Trenin's conclusion was premature. Based on the results of recent elections, as
of mid-2017, Russia appears to have gained some traction, in countries where there are anti-
Western parties that are working under the assumption that Russia has some influence in
the political trajectories of European countries or the United States, a point of considerable

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[133] Mira Milosevich-Juaristi, *The 'Combination': An Instrument in Russia's Information War in Catalonia,* Elcano Royal Insti-
tute, November 20, 2017.

[134] U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2018, p. 133.

[135] National Intelligence Council, 2017.

[136] Trenin, 2014.

[137] Trenin, 2014.

Table A.2
Selected "Anti-Western" Political Parties in Europe, 2012 and 2018

Party	Country	Percentage of Seats in Parliament, 2012	Percentage of Seats in Parliament, 2018
Sweden Democrats	Sweden	5.7	17.7
UKIP	UK	0	0.2
National Front	France	0.002	0.01
AfD	Germany	n/a	13.2
Freedom Party of Austria	Austria	18.5	27.8
Northern League	Italy	9.5	19.6
Jobbik	Hungary	12.1	13
Ataka	Bulgaria	8.7	11.2
Harmony Centre	Latvia	31	23

SOURCE: Gressel, 2017a; Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Survey, data set, Spring 2017a.
NOTE: n/a = not applicable. AfD did not become a party until 2013.

debate (see Table A.2).[138] In either case, the trend lines remain important. In Hungary, Italy, Latvia, and Austria, and to a much lesser extent in the United States, "anti-Western" or "Russia-friendly" parties or leaders have come to power in recent years. Other than Russia's actual influence, which is difficult to determine, these types of results could both alter policy toward Russia and reorganize the aforementioned countries and potentially fracture the European order in the years ahead.

At the same time, there are several caveats to consider in thinking about future outcomes based on the results of these recent elections. First, rhetoric does not always translate into corresponding action. As Gustav Gressel, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, explained in an analysis of the implications of the new government in Austria, foreign and domestic policy dynamics of individual countries are complicated and often tied to other issues, such as economic relations with Germany.[139] In the United States, anti-Russia policies, particularly in the form of sanctions but also in other areas, have continued unabated despite signals of potentially friendlier relations during the 2016 campaign. In Hungary, Italy, Latvia, and Austria—countries where there have been actual shifts in the balance of power—the EU's favorability was 67 percent, 57 percent, 70 percent, and 61 percent (see Table A.3), respectively, and none of the countries surveyed ranked Russia above 40 percent in favorability, which could be a bellwether given Russia's vision for disruption of the current regional order. This suggests that a cardinal shift toward anti-Western policies (e.g., leaving the EU or undermining its processes based on sympathy for some Russian ideas) appears unlikely under anything resembling current conditions. Second, in key countries in western Europe, support for Western institutions remains high and participation in anti-Western parties remains low.

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[138] Radnitz, 2016.

[139] Gustav Gressel, "Austria—Russia's Trojan Horse?" European Council on Foreign Relations, webpage, December 21, 2017b.

Table A.3
European Sentiment Toward Russia, EU, and NATO in 2017

Country	Favorability Rating of Russia (%) (2017)	Favorability Rating of the EU (%) (2017)	Favorability Rating of NATO (%) (2017)
Sweden	18	65	65
UK	26	54	62
France	36	56	60
Germany	27	68	67
Austria	n/a	61[a]	n/a
Italy	35	57	57
Hungary	39	67	60
Bulgaria	n/a	n/a	n/a
Latvia	n/a	70[b]	73[b]
Poland	21	74	79
Lithuania	n/a	59[c]	81[d]

SOURCE: Unless otherwise noted, Pew Research Center, 2017a, pp. 186–190.
NOTE: n/a = not applicable.
[a] Austrian Society for European Politics, "ÖGfE Survey: Approval of Austria's EU Membership Has Increased Since the Brexit Vote," October 29, 2019.

[b] "Support for EU and NATO Membership High Among Latvian Speakers," Latvian Public Broadcasting, June 27, 2016.

[c] Galina Zapryanova and Neli Esipova, "Most in Eastern Europe Positive About EU Membership," Gallup, May 10, 2017.

[d] "Lithuanians Are Particularly Positive Towards NATO Allies, Polls Suggest," L24.lt, January 2, 2016.

In France and the United Kingdom, for example, opposition anti-Western parties hold a very small number of parliamentary seats. In Germany, where the AfD made considerable gains in the last election, there is thus far little evidence, based on EU/NATO sentiment, that Germany is poised to defect from the Western alliance or considerably alter its trajectory.

Finally, the Russian appeal toward traditional values should neither be assumed to have a broad audience across Europe nor wholly dismissed. Based on surveys conducted in 2015 through 2017, Pew found that large majorities in Western Europe were in favor of gay marriage. On the other hand, support for gay marriage is very low in eastern EU countries (see Table A.4). In the United States, a 2017 poll on the issue found 62 percent in support.[140] In terms of religiosity, Western Europeans, in general, do not see religion as playing an important role in their lives, which again stands in contrast to Eastern Europe, where the figures are much higher (see Table A.3). The challenge for Russia in this piece of its ideological platform is that, in some cases, more-religious countries (e.g., Lithuania and Poland) with "traditional" views on such issues as gay marriage have high levels of support for the EU and NATO and a high degree of antipathy toward Russia (see Table A.3). Theoretically, the most receptive audi-

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[140] Pew Research Center, *Support for Same-Sex Marriage Grows, Even Among Groups That Had Been Skeptical*, Washington, D.C., June 26, 2017b, p. 1.

Table A.4
European Views on Gay Marriage and Religion

Country	Support Gay Marriage (%)	Religion Is Important in Life (%)
Sweden	88	10
UK	77	10
France	73	11
Germany	75	11
Austria	72	12
Italy	59	21
Hungary	27	14
Bulgaria	18	19
Latvia	16	10
Poland	32	29
Lithuania	12	16

SOURCE: Pew, 2017b.

ence for Russia's traditional values message would be countries that are more religious, traditional, and less supportive of key Western institutions, though ideological alignment on religious or cultural issues cannot necessarily be connected to future willingness to change course on Russia; there would seem to be a confluence of a greater number of factors.

Conclusion

The ideological struggle between Russia and the West particularly intensified with Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, before the annexation of Crimea and the total breakdown in relations, which have considerably exacerbated the situation. The contest, from the Russian perspective, essentially boils down to whether Russia can dictate the current and future development of the Eurasian region without interference from abroad. Viewing itself as a great power, Russia believes this regional influence is its right—one that the West has continually ignored as Russia did little to push back for much of the post–Cold War era. This bystander role was seen by many elites as a denigration of Russian prestige on the world stage, a denigration that required a serious course correction. Furthermore, given Russia's consolidation of an authoritarian form of government, the post-Soviet states cannot be allowed to serve as an ideological bridgehead to undermine Russia's regime. The ideas of polycentrism, anti-Westernism, anti-Americanism, and conservatism are thus a strong rejection of and bulwark against the Western development model and its so-called universal values, which are seen as both offensive and a threat to the current national idea of Putin's Russia. In pursuit of a polycentric vision where Russia and its region can freely chart a non-Western course of development, Russia has supported groups and figures that are sympathetic to its vision and interests.

Looking ahead, the extent to which Russia will succeed in achieving its vision mostly depends on the continuity of the political status quo across the Western world. Based on Russia's behavior over the past several years and the level of grievance among the Russian elite,

there can be little doubt that Russia will persistently promote its ideological platform with all available means for at least the near future and potentially considerably longer. It cannot be ruled out that Russian efforts to promote its anti-Western ideas could intensify as the result of domestic changes within Russia that produce a more hardline leader at the same time as a broader shift in the global balance of power away from the West toward Russia and China. As mentioned above, Russia's approach could bear fruit in countries where anti-Western sentiment is increasing and devotion to traditional and religious values remains strong or is reinvigorated. Should there be a change in course by the West, whether through political disruption in a number of Western capitals or through a reversal of existing leaderships' positions toward Russia, a drop-off in Russian informational tactics to undermine the political establishment in the West is not implausible.

Finally, how Russia's ideas might evolve over time will depend in part on the perceived success of the current anti-Western, conservative narrative. If, for example, it appears that Russia's propagation of ideas, in addition to other forms of influence, are not having the desired political effect and in fact are simply alienating Western policymakers who have consolidated their position vis-à-vis "fringe" challengers, then Russia might choose different points of emphasis in its messaging or resort to more coercive measures. A greater or lesser emphasis on the conservative or anti-Western element of its platform could also be adjusted depending on the perceived trend lines across Europe. On the other hand, should trends point to "Russia-friendly" parties gaining ground in Europe—such as the Harmony Centre party in Latvia—Russia is unlikely to change its narrative and, in fact, will have an incentive to intensify the methods that seem to be working.

Conclusion

Despite the world having experienced the greatest reduction of poverty in its history over the past few decades and one of the longest periods of peace among great powers since the end of World War II, there is growing dissatisfaction with the current international order. China's power continues to grow, and Russia has reasserted itself after years of relative inaction. Yet the most critical international norms are ones that the United States helped to craft and often continues to take the lead in interpreting and sometimes enforcing.

Both Chinese and Russian ideological alternatives to the current liberal order remain nascent. Various components of what might be called a Chinese or Russian worldview are being advocated by disparate thinkers. It is often unclear to what extent senior decisionmakers embrace their ideas. Where contradictions exist, there is little effort to weave these strands together into a coherent whole. Nonetheless, China is clearly increasing in its ideological ambitions. Up to this point, Russian leaders have been more opportunistic, employing anti-Western, antiliberal, and conservative ideologies to legitimate themselves and to weaken opponents.

The direction in which Chinese and Russian ideational projects are likely to evolve remains uncertain. Appendix B provides an overview of how two important groups of nonstate actors—transnational activist networks and populist movements—are shaping the broader ideational landscape. Appendix C then turns to the social science literature on how ideological competition has evolved in the past for hints about how it might evolve in the future.

Nonstate Actors in Ideological Competition

States are still the preeminent actors in the international system; however, nonstate actors also affect the spread of ideas, especially during times of crisis. This section will review two groups of nonstate actors—populists and transnational advocacy networks (TANs)—that play an important role in debates over the future evolution of the international order.

The two actors are quite different. Populism threatens aspects of the current liberal order, from trade agreements to liberal democracy itself. TANs instead account for a major pillar of global governance and are being weakened as populism has grown in strength. Populism is an electoral movement that seeks to gain power in democracies; TANs appeal to existing leaders. Both actors wield influence by spreading ideas.

Populist Movements

Populism has had a resurgence around the world. Actors as disparate as Trump and Bernie Sanders in the United States, Nigel Farage and Jeremy Corbyn in the United Kingdom, Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France, Erdoğan in Turkey, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, and Viktor Orban in Hungary have all been labeled populist, and populist parties are represented in the parliaments of Austria, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. This section provides a brief overview of populism as a political phenomenon, focusing in particular on whether it can be considered a unified transnational movement and whether it poses a threat to the liberal world order.

How to Define Populism

Although *populism* is notoriously difficult to define, it can be understood as any political ideology that divides society into categories of "us" and "them" in both vertical and horizontal dimensions.[1] Vertically, populist ideologues distinguish among (1) ordinary or common people in the middle strata of society, who are characterized as hardworking and noble; (2) the elites at the top, who are characterized as corrupt and out of touch; and (3) those in the bottom strata, who are characterized as parasites.[2] Horizontally, populism's adherents distinguish between "virtuous people" and "evil outsiders." In populist worldviews, all three boogeymen—elites,

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[1] Rogers Brubaker, "Between Nationalism and Civilizationism: The European Populist Moment in Comparative Perspective," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 8, March 2017a, p. 1192.

[2] Rogers Brubaker, "Why Populism?" *Theory and Society*, Vol. 46, No. 5, November 2017b, p. 363.

parasites, and outsiders—work together to weaken the people and undermine their democratic rights. In the contemporary Western context, the sociologist Rogers Brubaker writes, populist ire is therefore directed at the elites who are

> represented as being concerned with the rights and welfare of distant others but indifferent to the struggles of proximate brothers and sisters, and as favouring a world without borders, regardless of its destructive effects on the bounded solidarities of nation and community. They are criticized for welcoming immigrants and refugees; for favouring mixing and multiculturalism; for speaking for minorities rather than the majority; and for condescendingly denouncing ordinary people as racist and Islamophobic.[3]

Populism can be differentiated between two types: populism that is compatible with liberal democracy and populism that is not. For easy reference, these strands can be labeled *illiberal* and *liberal populism*.

William Galston, a fellow of the Brookings Institution, identifies four features of liberal democracy: *the republican principle*, *democracy*, *constitutionalism*, and *liberalism*. The first requires that the people are the true source of legitimacy for governance, the second that political decisions are made by a broad base of politically equal citizens, the third that institutions govern and limit the application of political power in codified traditions, and the fourth that there is a private sphere for individuals beyond the reach of government. Illiberal populism does not dispute the first two but does reject the latter two, seeing them as undemocratic restrictions on the will of the people.[4]

At best, illiberal populism engages in the majoritarianism of an "illiberal democracy," the term favored by Orban. The rights of minorities and the rule of law are disregarded, as is any respect for pluralism.[5] The carefully constructed institutional checks and balances that characterize liberal democracies are seen as creations of the hated elite that serve only to subvert real democracy.[6]

At worst, illiberal populism veers into outright autocracy, as its proponents centralize authority and restrict the freedom of the press.[7] This tendency is expressed by the common belief that populism "is a way to gain power, whereas totalitarianism is seen as a way to exercise and maintain power."[8] The primary difference between an illiberal democracy and an autocracy run by illiberal populists is that in the latter, the state apparatus is so capable of distorting public opinion and controlling elections that popular legitimacy is doubtful, as is the case with Erdoğan in Turkey.

In contrast, liberal populism is compatible with liberal democracy. Liberal populists, such as the Netherlands' Geert Wilders, still divide society on horizontal and vertical dimensions, but they do not seek to completely do away with constitutions or institutions (though Wilders

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[3] Brubaker, 2017a, p. 1192.

[4] William A. Galston, "The Populist Challenge to Liberal Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 29, No. 2, April 2018.

[5] Cas Muddle, "Europe's Populist Surge: A Long Time in the Making," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2016.

[6] Galston, 2018.

[7] Olga Oliker, "Putinism, Populism, and the Defence of Liberal Democracy," *Survival*, Vol. 59, No. 1, February–March 2017, p. 8.

[8] Philip Dimitrov, "Does 'Populism' in Europe's New Democracies Really Matter?" *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Fall 2009, p. 316.

has called for constitutional amendments that would reduce minority rights for Muslims).[9] While liberal populists might hold some positions that mainstream parties, for lack of a better word, would deem *deplorable*, Galston cautions that a distinction must be drawn between unconventional positions and positions that threaten liberal democracy. He writes:

> We should distinguish between policy disputes and regime-level threats. Populist parties often espouse measures, such as trade protectionism and withdrawal from international institutions, that challenge established arrangements but not liberal democracy itself. In a similar vein, it is essential to distinguish between the liberal element of liberal democracy and what is often called cultural liberalism. Liberal democrats can adopt diverse views on issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, local traditions, and religion while remaining true to their political creed.[10]

The Causes of Populism

Populism is a diverse phenomenon with varied causes; any in-depth discussion of populism needs to address the country-specific factors that give rise to individual movements. However, the academic literature has focused on two explanations—often framed as competing reasons—for the rise of populism: cultural and economic drivers.

The cultural explanation for populism centers on the concept of cultural backlash, which is a "reaction against progressive cultural change."[11] Social scientists Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris examined the European Social Survey and found that populist support was much better predicted by "anti-immigrant attitudes, mistrust of global and national governance, support for authoritarian values, and left-right ideological self-placement" than by economic grievances.[12] Similarly, another scholar found that status anxiety was a much better predictor of support for Trump in 2016 than was economic hardship.[13]

The single most important issue that activates cultural backlash for populists is immigration. President Trump began his campaign characterizing some Mexican immigrants as "rapists."[14] Viktor Orban has labeled immigration a "poison" and declared that his country "does not need a single migrant."[15] Populism's first modern success, the emergence of France's National Front in the 1980s, was directly tied to that party's opposition to immigration.[16]

Immigration is such an important issue for most populists because it works on both the horizontal and vertical dimensions. Horizontally, populists believe that immigration threatens "virtuous people" by bringing "evil outsiders" into their midst, corrupting their culture, and jeopardizing their sovereignty. Vertically, populists believe that immigration intensifies the

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[9]   Geert Wilders, "Klare Wijn," *Partij Voor de Vrijheid*, March 31, 2006.

[10]   Galston, 2018.

[11]   Ronald F. Inglehart and Pippa Norris, "Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash," Harvard Kennedy School, Faculty Research Working Paper Series, No. RWP16-026, August 2016, pp. 2–3.

[12]   Inglehart and Norris, 2016, p. 4.

[13]   Diana C. Mutz, "Status Threat, Not Economic Hardship, Explains the 2016 Presidential Vote," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Vol. 115, No. 19, May 2018, E4330–E4339.

[14]   "Here's Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech," *Time*, June 16, 2015.

[15]   "Hungarian Prime Minister Says Migrants Are 'Poison' and 'Not Needed,'" *The Guardian*, July 26, 2016.

[16]   Muddle, 2016.

divide between hardworking people and globalized elites who want to import immigrants for cheap labor and easy votes; immigrants are also seen by populists as parasites and sponges who overburden the welfare system and flood the streets with crime.

For populists, immigration is an existential issue: If it is not addressed, then the fundamental makeup of society will be forever altered and the "virtuous people" will be relegated to an impotent minority. Wilders proclaimed in the Dutch parliament, "One century ago, there were approximately 50 Muslims in the Netherlands. Today, there are about one million Muslims in this country. Where will it end? We are heading for the end of European and Dutch civilisation as we know it."[17] Orban questioned in an opinion piece, "Is it not worrying in itself that European Christianity is now barely able to keep Europe Christian? If we lose sight of this, the idea of Europe could become a minority interest in its own continent."[18]

Economic explanations for populism focus on the idea that poor economic conditions, such as widespread unemployment, lead to populist successes. By analyzing regional voting data in Europe, scholars have shown that rises in unemployment lead to corresponding rises in the electoral fortunes of populist parties.[19] In the United States, several researchers have tied 2016 presidential voting patterns directly to Chinese import penetration, arguing that less international trade would have resulted in a Democratic win.[20]

Scholars who argue for the importance of economic factors emphasize how repeated economic crises destroy the public's trust in mainstream political parties and traditional institutions—even among those who manage to keep their jobs.[21] This decline in trust opens up political space for populist parties and, more importantly, convinces the supporters of mainstream parties to stay at home.[22] According to this school of thought, proponents of cultural explanations focus too much on individual voter preference, leaving out the more important effects of economic anxiety on voter turnout and cultural mood. The economic explanation, to these scholars, subsumes the cultural one—cultural backlash becomes a symptom of economic insecurity. Guiso et al. write, "Populism does not have a cultural cause, but rather an economic insecurity cause, with an important and traceable cultural channel."[23]

Regardless of the cause of populism, it is difficult for mainstream political parties to counter directly. Populist parties tend to garner support when mainstream political parties converge on important issues, leaving voters feeling like they have no real choice.[24] During times when there is strong opposition to the establishment consensus, mainstream parties lose

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[17] Geert Wilders, "Mr. Wilders's Contribution to the Parliamentary Debate on Islamic Activism," September 6, 2007.

[18] Eleni Kounalakis, "Hungary's Xenophobic Response," *New York Times*, September 6, 2015.

[19] Yann Algan, Sergei Guriev, Elias Papaioannou, and Evgenia Passari, "The European Trust Crisis and the Rise of Populism," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, Fall 2017, p. 1.

[20] David Autor, David Dorn, Gordon Hanson, and Kaveh Majlesi, "A Note on the Effect of Rising Trade Exposure on the 2016 Presidential Election," revision dated March 2, 2017, p. 1.

[21] Sergei Guriev, "Economic Drivers of Populism," *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, Vol. 108, May 2018, p. 201.

[22] Luigi Guiso, Helios Herrera, Massimo Morelli, and Tommaso Sonno, "Populism: Demand and Supply," *CEPR Discussion Paper No. DP11871*, February 2017, p. 3.

[23] Guiso et al., 2017, p. 4.

[24] Jens Rydgren, "Is Extreme Right-Wing Populism Contagious? Explaining the Emergence of a New Party Family," *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 44, No. 3, May 2005; Karl Loxbo, "Voters' Perceptions of Policy Convergence and the Short-Term Opportunities of Anti-Immigrant Parties: Examples from Sweden," *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3, September 2014.

support to populist parties over politics that assert "there is no alternative" to the current consensus.[25] Therefore, it seems unlikely that mainstream parties can take coordinated action that will have the desired effect of reducing public support for populist parties.

Is Populism a Transnational Actor?

Populism is certainly too disparate a movement to be considered a strategic actor, like China or Russia, but the various populist parties across Europe and the United States do seem to be connected (described later in this section). However, the structure of populism itself, which distrusts outsiders, is not conducive to transnational collective action, even between ideologically similar populists. As one author writes, "The much-discussed attempt to form a transnational extreme right-wing Populist Party seems doomed to fail: the overtly nationalistic orientation of such movements does not lend itself to any transnational or even cosmopolitan alliance."[26] Even populists who can be characterized by their *civilizationism*—adherence to a pan-European identity threatened by and in conflict with Islam—have not given up on nationalism.[27]

The closest cooperation between populist parties is probably found in in the European Parliament, where various populists have united to form Euroskeptic political groups, such as Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) and Europe of Nations and Freedom.[28] Even then, the populist parties are only united in their opposition to unity; as the EFDD charter states, "there is no such thing as a single European people."[29] Of course, there is a conclusion to be drawn about the ability of populist parties to cooperate: The European Parliament has two separate political groups whose main goal is to end the EU.

Instead of treating populism as a transnational actor, it is necessary to treat populists as intranational actors who learn from and are energized by each other, especially through online communication.[30] Successes for populists in one part of the world are picked up by mass media and used to energize populists elsewhere, regardless of the national differences at play.[31] Populists also transmit successful ideas and practices to emerging populists in other countries.[32]

An example of this type of energization and transmission is the effort by Steve Bannon, the former chief advisor to President Trump and former editor-in-chief of Breitbart, to form a transnational right-wing foundation in Europe. Bannon has dubbed his creation The Move-

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[25] Muddle, 2016.

[26] Ruth Wodak, "It Would Be Dangerous to View Modern European Populism as a Triumph of Style over Substance," London School of Economics European Politics and Policy, blog post, July 23, 2014, p. 2.

[27] Brubaker, 2017a, p. 1211.

[28] EFDD, "Our Charter," undated; Europe of Nations and Freedom, "About," webpage, undated. EFDD has since failed to register for the European Parliament, losing status as an official group and removing much of their online content. See Maia de la Baume, "Brexit Party Misses First Deadline to Form Political Group in European Parliament," *Politico*, June 26, 2019.

[29] EFDD, "Our Charter," undated.

[30] Manuela Caiani and Patricia Kroll, "The Transnationalization of the Extreme Right and the Use of the Internet," *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, Vol. 39, No. 4, August 2015.

[31] Rydgren, 2005, p. 430.

[32] Rydgren, 2005, p. 415.

ment, and he plans to offer polling, political consultation, data targeting, and general research to right-wing populists across the continent.[33]

The resources Bannon is offering might seem to be most attractive to smaller political parties, which tend to lack their own polling apparatuses and data expertise. However, the parties most receptive to Bannon have been both large and small. The European organizer of The Movement is Mischael Modrikamen, leader of the minuscule Belgian People's Party, which holds no seats in the European Parliament.[34] Bannon has also been joined by Nebojsa Medojevic, leader of the Movement for Changes Party in Montenegro, which is not in power; Montenegro is not a member of the EU.[35] On the larger side, Matteo Salvini—leader of the League in Italy, which is currently in power—has officially joined Bannon, and Geert Wilders of the Dutch Party for Freedom has expressed interest.[36]

However, the general response of European populists to Bannon's Movement has been severe skepticism.[37] After her party, the National Front, initially expressed support for Bannon, Le Pen argued that Bannon cannot meaningfully contribute to her cause because he is "American, not European."[38] Jorg Meuthen of AfD has stated that his party has "no need of coaching from outside the EU," and Harald Vilimsky of Austria's Freedom Party has said, "We will continue to work on this without any external influence."[39] Gerard Batten, leader of the UKIP, stated that "UKIP doesn't fit" into Bannon's plans because "UKIP is a British party that is going to pursue aims for the British people."[40]

The responses of these leaders show that, while it is still too early to know what effect Bannon's efforts will have, the deep distrust of foreigners that is characteristic of populists generally diminishes their ability to work together.

Transnational populism is somewhat related to autocracy promotion, in that illiberal populists who form autocracies might seek alliances with each other and with nonpopulist autocratic rulers, especially Putin.[41] Russia, for its part, has promoted certain populists abroad, even going so far as to interfere in foreign elections.[42]

Russia's influence over populist parties, particularly far-right populist parties in Europe, is a matter of some debate. Some scholars, like Alina Polyakova of the Atlantic Council, argue that one cannot explain the successes of European populists without looking at Moscow's

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[33] Nico Hines, "Inside Bannon's Plan to Hijack Europe for the Far-Right," *Daily Beast*, July 20, 2018.

[34] Nikolaj Nielsen, "Bannon's The Movement to Launch with January Summit," *EU Observer,* October 22, 2018.

[35] Filip Rudic, "Montenegro Opposition Leader to Join Steve Bannon 'Movement,'" *Balkan Insight*, February 4, 2019.

[36] Silvia Sciorilli Borrelli, "Steven Bannon: Italian Experiment 'Will Change Global Politics,'" *Politico*, September 23, 2018; Mark Bendeich and Crispian Balmer, "Steve Bannon Hopes to Unite Europe's Populists Under 'The Movement,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, September 11, 2018.

[37] Zack Beauchamp, "Steve Bannon's Bold Plan to Start a Populist Revolution in Europe," *Vox*, July 25, 2018.

[38] David Keohane and Mehreen Khan, "Marine Le Pen's Far-Right Party to Join Bannon Populist Project," *Financial Times*, September 18, 2018; Angela Giuffrida, "Marine Le Pen: Steven Bannon Has No Part to Play in 'Saving Europe,'" *The Guardian*, October 8, 2018.

[39] "Bannon Plan for Europe-Wide Populist 'Supergroup' Sparks Alarm," BBC News, July 23, 2018.

[40] William James, "UKIP Will Not Join Steve Bannon's Anti-EU Movement, Says Leader," Reuters, September 21, 2018.

[41] Oliker, 2017, p. 9.

[42] Office of the Director of National Intelligence, National Intelligence Council, 2017; Isabella Hansen and Darren J. Lim, "Doxing Democracy: Influencing Elections via Cyber Voter Interference," *Contemporary Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 2, July 2018.

influence. To Polyakova, Russia's efforts are more than "just tactical opportunism" and should be considered one of the contributing causes of populist party successes.[43] As evidence of the Kremlin's control over these populists, Polyakova points to the newfound popularity of Russia and Russian positions within these parties. She writes, "Prior to 2010, one would be hard-pressed to find public statements in praise of Putin by far-right leaders. Today, they are commonplace."[44]

Other scholars push back on that narrative, arguing that Russian support of populists is a byproduct of their successes, not a cause of them. Radnitz contends that populism's causes are found in European dysfunction, on which Putin is happy to piggyback. He writes, "If Russia is, in fact, assisting sympathetic groups in Europe . . . it is not because Putin is a puppet master, manipulating unsuspecting politicians with crafty subterfuge. It is because he has been invited in."[45] Olga Oliker, discussing Putinism and populism, agrees: "The illiberal surge . . . should not be primarily attributed to an emulation of Russia and the influence of the Russian government. The causes of these phenomena lie within democratic countries, and their solutions must be found at home."[46] To some extent, even Polyakova acknowledges the domestic roots of populism's popularity: "The rise of the far right is first and foremost a cultural backlash against the rapid economic and political integration of the E.U. over the last 25 years."[47] Regardless, support for Russia is yet another issue that drives a wedge between different populist parties. Karol Karski, an Member of Parliament for the Polish Law and Justice Party, stated that his party would never support Bannon's Movement, because it works with populist parties, like Le Pen's, that are tied to Russia.[48]

Outcomes

Even beyond the well-covered victories of Brexit and President Trump in 2016, populism has been wildly successful in recent years, especially in Europe. There is no worldwide consensus on which politicians can be classified as populist, largely due both to inherent definitional difficulties and to the fact that the word "populist" is often used a political insult, not an academic term. However, there are some efforts to comprehensively catalogue populist support, most notably the Foundation for European Progressive Studies and Policy Solutions' continuously updated list of populist party support in Europe, which is included below in Figure B.1.

When populists have been successful, they have eroded the liberal world order. The nature of the threat depends on the type of populism in question.

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[43] Alina Polyakova, Marlene Laruelle, Stefan Meister, and Neil Barnett, *The Kremlin's Trojan Horses,* Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council, November 2016, p. 6.

[44] Polyakova et al., 2016. For a discussion of the similarities over "traditional values" between Putin and the populists, see Alina Polyakova, "Strange Bedfellows: Putin and Europe's Far Right," *World Affairs*, Vol. 177, No. 3, September–October 2014, p. 39.

[45] Radnitz, 2016.

[46] Oliker, 2017, p. 9.

[47] Polyakova et al., 2016.

[48] Piotr Sieminski, "PiS will nicht an Zerschlagung der EU teilnehmen [PiS Does Not Want to Participate in Smashing the EU]," Radio Poland, July 27, 2018.

Figure B.1
Populist Party Support in Europe, Q2 2018

SOURCE: Progressive Post, "The Populism Graph," data set, data for Q2 2018, 2018.

The Threat from Illiberal Populism

The threat to the liberal world order from illiberal populism is direct: If illiberal populists take power and turn liberal nations into autocracies, then those nations will be much less likely to support the rules-based global order created by the United States and its allies after World War II, at least in anything like its current form.[49] While the likes of Erdoğan, Orban, Polish leader Jarosław Kaczynski, and Duterte might support a limited Westphalian global order that emphasizes the absolute sovereignty of states within their own territory, these leaders hold no love for the international institutions that underpin the liberal rules-based global order.

Established democracies can backslide in various ways, the most relevant of which is executive aggrandizement.[50] *Executive aggrandizement* occurs when "elected executives weaken

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[49] Galston, 2018.

[50] Nancy Bermeo, "On Democratic Backsliding," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 27, No. 1, January 2016, p. 5.

checks on executive power one by one, undertaking a series of institutional changes that hamper the power of opposition forces to challenge executive preferences."[51]

Executive aggrandizement is the favored method of illiberal populists to maintain power, and it is quickly becoming the most common cause of democratic failure.[52] Traditionally, most democracies have ended through coups, but between 2000 and 2010, populist-driven authoritarianism has accounted for two-fifths of all failures of democracy, equal to the proportion caused by coups.[53] Executive aggrandizement is particularly insidious because there is no clear dividing line between democracy and autocracy, which paralyzes resistance. As Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Erica Frantz note,

> [b]ecause it is subtle and incremental, there is no single moment that triggers widespread resistance or creates a focal point around which an opposition can coalesce. And in cases in which vocal critics do emerge, populist leaders can easily frame them as "fifth columnists," "agents of the establishment," or other provocateurs seeking to destabilize the system. Piecemeal democratic erosion, therefore, typically provokes only fragmented resistance.[54]

The Threat from Liberal Populism

While not as severe as the threat from illiberal populism, liberal populism poses its own threat to the current liberal world order. Because of the horizontal division of society, liberal populists are skeptical of outsiders and the international institutions that undergird the liberal world order. Mélenchon, for example, has advocated France's withdrawal from the EU and NATO.[55] Similar Euroskepticism is professed by Alex Tsipras in Greece, Beppe Grillo in Italy, Wilders in the Netherlands, and almost all other European populist parties.[56] In the United States, Bernie Sanders campaigned on opposition to a pillar of the liberal world order—free trade agreements—virulently opposing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and even the World Trade Organization (WTO) itself.[57] Although these populists might not alter the fundamental liberalism of their own democracies, they are unlikely to support the liberal world order in its current form, should they take power.

Importantly, these liberal populists are not necessarily averse to a liberal world order, just the existing liberal order. In contrast to the free-market focus of the neoliberal Washington Consensus, scholars like John Ruggie have built upon the work of Karl Polanyi to suggest the benefits of *embedded liberalism*, an economic order built on a compromise between free market

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[51] Bermeo, 2016, p. 10.

[52] Oliker, 2017, p. 8.

[53] Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Erica Frantz, "How Democracies Fall Apart: Why Populism Is a Pathway to Autocracy," *Foreign Affairs*, December 5, 2016.

[54] Kendall-Taylor and Frantz, 2016.

[55] Nicolaus Heinen and Florian Hartleb, *Euroscepticism Gaining Currency? Implications of the EU Elections for Economic Policy*, Deutsche Bank Research, EU Monitor, March 2014, pp. 8–11.

[56] Heinen and Hartleb, 2014, pp. 8–11.

[57] Bernie Sanders, "The Trans-Pacific Trade (TPP) Agreement Must Be Defeated," May 5, 2015; "Bernie Sanders on Free Trade," On the Issues, webpage, 2016.

forces and the ability of states to intervene in their own economies.[58] Liberal populists might favor an arrangement of international institutions that allows states to intervene more actively in the domestic market in order to provide social welfare, reduce unemployment, and curtail immigration.

Transnational Advocacy Networks

TANs, like populists, are nonstate actors that affect the international competition of ideas about the rules-based global order. TANs have contributed to the end of apartheid in South Africa and the fall of the Soviet Union, but they will struggle to combat the rising tide of illiberalism. TANs wield power through persuasion, and when national leaders become less liberal, they become less likely to listen to TANs.

How to Define TANs

TANs are loose organizations composed of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), governmental elites, and other stakeholders that attempt to influence national and global governance.[59] The term "transnational advocacy network" was coined by political scientists Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, who argued that TANs were distinguishable from other types of networks by "the centrality of principled ideas of values in motivating their formation."[60] As networks, TANs are informal and lack official memberships—though many of their constituent parts, such as NGOs, might possess these features.[61]

As an example, one particularly important TAN was the "liberal internationalist community," which Thomas Risse-Kappen, a professor at the Free University of Berlin, argues is responsible for the relatively peaceful end of the Cold War.[62] That TAN had four parts: the liberal arms control community in the United States, Western European peace researchers, the Socialist International and various left-of-center parties in Europe, and scientists and policy analysts in various Soviet institutes.[63] The ties among those groups were rarely formalized, but together they advocated such principled ideas as collective security.

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[58] John Gerard Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order," *International Organization*, Vol. 36, No. 2, Spring 1982. See also Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, 1st ed., New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1944; Hannes Lacher, "The Politics of the Market: Re-Reading Karl Polanyi," *Global Society*, Vol. 13, No. 3, July 1999.

[59] Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998a, p. viii.

[60] Keck and Sikkink, 1998a, p. 1.

[61] Zeynep Kadirbeyoglu, "Assessing the Efficacy of Transnational Advocacy Networks," in Fikret Adaman, ed., *Environmentalism in Turkey, Between Democracy and Development?* 1st ed., Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005.

[62] Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War," *International Organization*, Vol. 48, No. 2, Spring 1994.

[63] Risse-Kappen, 1994, pp. 196-198.

Historical Impact and Mechanisms of Influence

TANs played an important role in the democratization of Latin America and the push for nuclear nonproliferation.[64] Constructivist scholars further argue that TANs are crucial to explaining how the Cold War ended.

Risse-Kappen argues that both realism and liberalism fail to adequately explain the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Western response to it. These theories, he contends, cannot answer the fundamental questions of why Soviet leaders accepted peaceful dissolution rather than attempt retrenchment through force, as Chinese Communists did, or why the Soviet Union collapsed from 1989–1991 rather than during the early 1980s.[65]

Instead, Risse-Kappen turns to the role played by the liberal internationalist community, which influenced (with varying degrees of success) policymakers in the Soviet Union, Europe, and the United States. This TAN provided Soviet leaders with ideas about common security and reasonable sufficiency that persuaded those leaders to adopt more peaceful and liberal policies. While the network was not completely successful in persuading Western policymakers, especially in the United States, to welcome the tattered remnants of the Soviet Union into the international system, it is notable that the Cold War victors acted with such restraint toward their defeated foe.[66]

Despite that record of influence, however, TANs still operate on an international stage dominated by states. While some scholars have touted the importance of "global civil society," with the accompanying decline of the nation-state, nation-states remain the gatekeepers of power in the international system.[67] TANs therefore achieve their influence by persuading national leaders to follow their recommendations.[68]

Keck and Sikkink detail four means by which TANs attempt to persuade: information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics.[69] Information and leverage politics are by far the most important. *Information politics* consists of "collecting credible information and deploying it strategically at carefully selected sites."[70] By exposing noteworthy information and publicizing it to national leaders and the public, TANs can exert

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[64] Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, "Transnational Advocacy Networks in the Movement Society," in David S. Meyer and Sidney Tarrow. eds., *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century*, Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1998b, p. 219; Nina Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 63, 152.

[65] Risse-Kappen, 1994, pp. 189–191.

[66] Risse-Kappen, 1994, p. 186.

[67] As examples, see Jessica T. Matthews, "Power Shift," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1997; Ronnie D. Lipschultz, "Reconstructing World Politics: The Emergence of Global Civil Society," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, December 1992; Oscar Schachter, "The Decline of the Nation-State and Its Implications for International Law," *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol. 36, No. 1–2, 1998; Andrew Gamble, "Regional Blocs, World Order, and the New Medievalism," in Mario Telo, ed., *European Union and New Regionalism: Competing Regionalism and Global Governance in a Post-Hegemonic Era*, 3rd ed., London: Routledge, 2014.

[68] TANs also occasionally seek to influence specific companies, especially over environmental degradation. However, even in those examples, TANs generally seek to persuade national governments to pass specific regulation and only resort to such measures as boycotts when they have failed to persuade national leaders. See Anne-Marie Slaughter, "The Real New World Order," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 5, September/October 1997, p. 184.

[69] Margaret E.Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics," *International Social Science Journal,* Vol. 51, No. 159, March 1999, p. 95.

[70] Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 226.

influence over national policy. An important example is the effort by TANs to collect and publicize information on human rights violations under the Argentine junta, which hastened the rise of democracy in that country.[71]

Often, the target nation (or corporation) will not respond to the initial publication of information by TANs. In this case, TANs must seek leverage by finding powerful allies and convincing them to pressure the target entity. Those powerful allies can link acceding to TANs' demands with the provision of economic aid or military support.[72] Key examples include the campaigns against Apartheid and Nestle's problematic promotion of infant formula in developing countries.[73] Often, TANs seek to exert pressure on recalcitrant leaders by appealing directly to the people in a target country. TANs are aided in their ability to influence national governments and international institutions because of the composition of their memberships. Many TANs, such as those centered on conservation and international development, include political and business elites who also play key roles in shaping government policy.[74]

Relationship Between TANs and the Rules-Based Global Order

TANs are embedded into the current U.S.-created international order. When efforts to persuade the leaders and mobilize the people of a target state fail, TANs often rely on the international institutions that compose the global order, such as international courts, to pressure target states.[75] Recognizing the power of international institutions, TANs have occasionally targeted these institutions and the national governments that support them in order to promote a specific agenda. The (ineffectual) protests against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Berlin in 1988 are a prime example.[76]

Similarly, international institutions have recognized the importance and expertise of TANs, and specifically those of the large NGOs that occupy a central spot in the informal hierarchy of these networks. Many international institutions, such as the World Bank and UN Environmental Programme, rely on TANs to provide expert advice and collect information.[77] That role is occasionally codified in international treaties.[78]

Outcomes

The most important and concerning trend for TANs is the rise of illiberalism in Western democracies. If populists continue to consolidate power in Western democracies and enact illiberal policies, then TANs are likely to see their influence decline for three reasons.

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[71] Keck and Sikkink, 1998a, p. viii.

[72] Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 97.

[73] Keck and Sikkink, 1998a, pp. 28, 209.

[74] George Holmes, "Conservation's Friends in High Places: Neoliberalism, Networks, and the Transnational Conversation Elite," *Global Environmental Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 4, November 2011, p. 16.

[75] Jonas Tallberg and Christer Jonsson, "Transnational Actor Participation in International Institutions: Where, Why, and with What Consequences?" in Christer Jonsson and Jonas Tallberg, eds., *Transnational Actors in Global Governance: Patterns, Explanations, Implications*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 6.

[76] Mario Pianta, "Parallel Summits of Global Civil Society," in Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius, and Mary Kaldor, eds., *Global Civil Society 2001*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 172–173.

[77] Tallberg and Jonsson, 2010, p. 1.

[78] Tallberg and Jonsson, 2010, p. 6.

Reliance on States

TANs do not wield power directly; their influence comes from persuading those who do.[79] If national governments become less receptive to TANs' arguments, then their influence will decline. Risse-Kappen writes:

> Ideas, however, do not float freely. Decision makers are always exposed to several and often contradictory policy concepts . . . . The transnational promoters of foreign policy change must align with domestic coalitions supporting their cause in the "target state" to make an impact.[80]

The rise of illiberalism means that fewer leaders in target states are likely to be persuaded by TANs. For example, Duterte is certainly less likely than his predecessors were to listen to Amnesty International.[81] Additionally, illiberal leaders who centralize power are better able to prevent the mobilization of their own populations, depriving TANs of another avenue of influence. While China's Xi is no populist, he certainly is illiberal, and his programs of social control—such as the jailing of activists, regardless of ideology, and the introduction of social credit scores—illustrate how illiberal leaders can prevent internal political mobilization.[82]

When the target state is not receptive to TANs, those TANs must seek out other national governments to gain leverage over the target state and wield indirect influence. This vital source of influence is another reason the illiberal trend is so problematic for TANs: Western democracies that have historically been most receptive to TANs' arguments are the very states experiencing the rise of populism.

If fewer and fewer countries become receptive to TANs, then the price of international censure will fall, making further defections more attractive. This is especially true if wealthy developed nations—such as the United States—stop promoting the TANs' causes. Being an international pariah does not sound so bad to illiberal leaders when other countries are doing the same thing.

Ultimately, TANs can only influence states that are willing to be influenced. States that have been willing to suffer bad press and international censure—e.g., North Korea today or Haiti under a military dictatorship—have always been able to resist the efforts of TANs.[83] Today, illiberal nations such as China, Russia, and Pakistan have shown decreased willingness to tolerate the activities of TANs.[84]

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[79] Keck and Sikkink, 1998a, p. 204.

[80] Risse-Kappen, 1994, p. 187.

[81] Amnesty International, *"If You Are Poor, You Are Killed," Extrajudicial Executions in the Philippines' "War on Drugs,"* London, 2017; Hannah Ellis-Petersen, "Rodrigo Duterte to Pull Philippines out of International Criminal Court," *The Guardian*, March 14, 2018.

[82] Javier C. Hernandez, "Young Activists Go Missing in China, Raising Fears of Crackdown," *New York Times*, November 11, 2018; Audrey Murrell, "Pushing the Ethical Boundaries of Big Data: A Look at China's Social Credit Scoring System," *Forbes*, July 31, 2018; Simina Mistreanu, "Life Inside China's Social Credit Laboratory," *Foreign Policy*, April 3, 2018.

[83] Keck and Sikkink, 1998a, p. 208.

[84] "Fact Sheet on China's Foreign NGO Law," China NGO Project, webpage, November 1, 2017; Daria Skibo, "Five Years of Russia's Foreign Agent Law," *openDemocracy*, August 14, 2017; Saud Sayeed, "Pakistan Tells 18 International NGOs to Leave: ActionAid," Reuters, October 4, 2018.

Reliance on Democratic Resources

While TANs rely on the governments of Western democracies to exert influence on leaders in recalcitrant developing nations, TANs also rely disproportionately on Western countries for funds and members. The large majority of people who participate in TANs come from democratic nations, as does the lion's share of money raised by these networks.[85] If the bastions of TAN support become illiberal, then those organizations will see dramatic losses in available labor and funding.

Too Big a Problem for TANs

The rise of illiberalism and the potential dissolution of the rules-based global order are problems that TANs are not equipped to solve. Support of international governance is not a prime issue area for TANs; it is, rather, a means to some specific end, such as human rights, environmentalism, or women's rights.[86] TANs tend to advocate issues that "can be assigned to the deliberate actions of identifiable individuals; issues involving bodily harm to vulnerable individuals, especially when there is a short and clear causal chain assigning responsibility; and issues involving legal equality of opportunity."[87] Combating illiberalism is too expansive an issue for TANs. While large issues that touch on many things TANs care about should theoretically unite several TANs in a common goal, the current reality is that cross-cutting issues tend to fall through the cracks rather than foster solidarity.[88]

In general, the enormous power differential between states and nonstate actors reduces the ability of nonstate actors to influence the international system—except in times of crisis. When the current system is failing, an opportunity is created for nonstate actors to provide a solution and gain influence. The current moment of crisis seems to be much kinder to populists than to TANs, perhaps because of the extent to which TANs have become embedded in the status quo of the current liberal international order.

Conclusions and Future Trends

Nonstate actors exert important influence over the ideas that shape ideological competition. Populism is a powerful force driving political movements across the world. It is best defined by its division of society on both the horizontal and vertical dimensions, between the "virtuous people" and those who would "corrupt" them: elites, parasites, and outsiders. Populist parties do not constitute a transnational actor because they remain deeply suspicious of foreign influence—even each other. They nonetheless pose several threats to the world order as currently constituted. Liberal populists largely want to remove or transform various market-based pillars of that order, such as international trade agreements and international institutions. Illib-

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[85] Marcel Hanegraff, Caelesta Braun, Dirk De Bievre, and Jan Beyers, "The Domestic and Global Origins of Transnational Advocacy: Explaining Lobbying Presence During WTO Ministerial Conferences," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 12, October 2015, p. 1593; Taedong Lee, "The Rise of International Nongovernmental Organizations: A Top-Down or Bottom-Up Explanation," *Voluntas*, Vol. 21, September 2010, p. 412.

[86] Keck and Sikkink, 1998a, p. ix.

[87] Keck and Sikkink, 1998a, p. 27.

[88] R. Charli Carpenter, "Studying Issue (Non)-Adoption in Transnational Advocacy Networks," *International Organization*, Vol. 61, No. 3, Summer 2007, pp. 658-659.

eral populists threaten to turn their countries into illiberal democracies or autocracies that would no longer support the basic tenets of the liberal world order.

Populism is a complex phenomenon with both economic and cultural drivers. Both sets of drivers indicate that populism is likely to be an important political force for the foreseeable future. The large difference in population growth rates between the developed and developing world—coupled with the pressure of climate change and endemic conflict—indicates that migration will continue to be a global issue.[89] Likewise, automation appears likely to reduce the need for low-skilled human labor, increasing unemployment and depressing wages for low-skilled workers.[90]

Like populists, TANs will continue to shape global discourse about ideas, norms, and values. Yet they will struggle to exert influence if their traditional sources of power—wealthy Western democracies—slide into illiberalism or isolationism. In the absence of state support, the maintenance of the rules-based global order is a task for which TANs are generally unsuited because of the issue's size and abstract nature.

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[89] Michael Bommes, Heinz Fassmann, and Wiebke Sievers, eds., *Migration from the Middle East and North Africa to Europe: Past Developments, Current Status, and Future Potentials*, Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2014; David Held, "Climate Change, Migration, and the Cosmopolitan Dilemma," *Global Policy*, Vol. 7, No. 2, May 2016.

[90] Daron Acemoglu and Pascual Restrepo, "Robots and Jobs: Evidence from US Labor Markets," National Bureau of Asian Research, NBER Working Paper No. 23285, March 2017, p. 1.

Social Science Models of Ideological Competition

In studies of international affairs that take ideas and ideologies seriously, analysts typically understand their role in one of three ways. First, ideas can be *motivations for competition*. Autocracies, for instance, might regard liberal democracies as inherently threatening, thus increasing the chances that competition will turn increasingly hostile and potentially violent. Second, ideas can be *objects for competition*. To the extent that the United States has embedded its own liberal ideology in international institutions, for example, illiberal states might seek to revise or replace these institutions. Finally, ideas and ideologies can be *weapons in competition*. States and nonstate actors can seek to persuade others of the rightness of their ideas, undermining support for the current order.

This appendix examines all three roles of ideas and ideologies, but it will focus in particular on actors' ability to formulate attractive alternatives to the current international order or to persuade others to interpret the principles of that order in different ways than the United States has done historically. Drawing from the academic literature on communications theory, we divide communications into three constituent components: the actor attempting to communicate (the *sender*), the actor attempting to interpret the communication (the *receiver*), and the *environment* in which the act of communication takes place.[1] The next three sections of this appendix look at each of these elements in turn. A final section concludes with an analysis of the implications for world politics.

The discussion that follows focuses on the role of states in ideational competition, in part because of the extensive resources that states are able to invest in these efforts and in part because of the particular risks that interstate competition poses to the United States. Nonstate actors, however, are critical voices in the global marketplace of ideas. The ideas promoted by nonstate actors can influence states directly, can influence the personnel of international organizations, and can influence the public. Thus, while this appendix focuses on states, it will also make reference to the roles of nonstate actors.

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[1]   This way of understanding communications is closely related to the Lasswell Formula. In a 1948 article, the political scientist Harold Lasswell divided communications processes into five components: a communicator, a message, a medium, a receiver, and an effect. For simplicity's sake, we examine messages together with senders or communicators and the immediate mental effect together with receivers. Communications theory has become much more complex in the seven decades since Lasswell's article was published. Because our intention is to examine the effects of ideological messages 20 years in the future, however, we do not have the detailed, contextual information necessary for more-complex models. Instead, we employ this simple model to help crystallize a small number of important patterns. For Lasswell's original model, see Harold D. Lasswell, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," in Lymon Bryson, ed., *The Communication of Ideas*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948. For a broader overview of the evolution of communications models, see Denis McQuail and Sven Windahl, *Communications Models for the Study of Mass Communications*, 2nd ed., New York: Longman, 1993.

Senders

Senders are the agents who try to transmit information, ideas, or attitudes to others. To understand how successful they are in persuading others to change their views of how the world works or should work, we distinguish among their goals, strategies, capabilities, and messages.

Sender Goals

States engage in competition in the realm of ideas for a variety of reasons. First, states might pursue prestige or status—that is, they might seek to persuade others that they should occupy a high position in the international hierarchy. States pursue status for both instrumental and intrinsic reasons. Status is a sort of currency in international politics: Higher-status states might be more likely to persuade others of the rightness of their ideas, their ability to prevail in a dispute, and so on. Yet status might also be valued in and of itself as an affirmation of a state's (and its population's) identity.[2] It is hard to understand Russia's foreign policy over the past three decades, for example, without some reference to its sense of wounded pride at its diminished status in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse. As discussed in Appendix B, China regards itself as having a particularly grand destiny (reminiscent of the United States' own sense of "exceptionalism") and expends considerable effort attempting to convince other nations of its special status. According to one recent report, "Chinese sources depict partnerships as highly moralistic relationships in which China bestows financial and other benefits as the higher-status partner and in return expects deference and cooperation on sensitive issues."[3]

Second, states and nonstate actors alike routinely seek to persuade others of the appropriateness of specific policies. During the Cold War, for example, many physicists, religious organizations, and other elements of civil society joined together with sympathetic diplomats and other government officials to advocate particular arms control policies. More recently, a similar community of physical scientists, economists, government officials, and others involved in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change won the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to influence public policy.[4]

But changes in specific policies might be inadequate to achieve actors' goals. For dominant powers, socializing other states to an integrated and coherent set of normative and causal ideas about how the world should run can lessen the costs of international leadership when compared with the effort required to broker consensus on an issue-by-issue basis.[5] On the other hand, for countries that are not dominant, it could be that specific policies are incompatible with the existing norms and laws of the international order established by the hegemon. Or if the existing international order is antithetical to an actor's norms about governance and governing practices, the very act of participation in that order might help to delegitimize the actor.

[2]   On status-seeking in international relations, see, for example, William C. Wohlforth, Benjamin de Carvalho, Halvard Leira, and Iver B. Neumann, "Moral Authority and Status in International Relations: Good States and the Social Dimension of Status-Seeking," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3, July 2018.

[3]   Michael J. Mazarr, Timothy R. Heath, and Astrid Stuth Cevallos, *China and the International Order*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2423-OSD, 2018, pp. 18–19.

[4]   On nonstate actors' roles in shaping international policymaking through the dissemination of knowledge and ideas, see Peter M. Haas, ed., *Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination*, Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1997.

[5]   G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 3, Summer, 1990.

In the case of China, for example, one recent analysis claimed that "the democratic core of Western ideology delegitimizes China's authoritarian government. China cannot be expected to integrate into an order that challenges the ideological foundations of its own domestic rule."[6] In these cases, actors might become much more ambitious, not advocating specific policies but instead a broader ideology that legitimizes its many individual policy preferences.

Finally, if actors find the normative foundations of the existing order antithetical to their own interests or worldviews, but those actors lack the influence necessary to challenge that order, they can instead seek to play a more negative role: They can disrupt and delegitimize the existing order without attempting to replace it with a new ideology. Many of Russia's recent information operations in Europe and the United States fall into this category.

Sender Strategies

States can seek to shape the ideational landscape of world politics in four ways: (1) as models; (2) as entrepreneurs of ideas; (3) as realists, changing the material context that shapes the evolution of ideas and identities; and (4) as spoilers, undermining support for existing worldviews without offering an alternative.

For decades, U.S. foreign policy has swayed between efforts to promote its ideas and values by serving as a model to the rest of the world ("a shining city on a hill") and more-active efforts to promote those ideas and values in other societies.[7] Even without campaigns to promote specific ideologies, countries' domestic forms of governance and market relations can inspire others to change if they are considered particularly successful. The relative success of the West, for example, was an essential part of the explanation for why the collapse of the Soviet bloc transpired in the way it did. Chinese state elites similarly feared that Poland and Hungary's successful revolutions in 1989 might serve as a model for democracy protesters in China.[8] In the economic realm, at various points in time, different countries have served as models of superior economic policies adopted by other states desperate for solutions to their own economic problems.[9] Success at home, in other words, can have important effects on the evolution of ideas and identities elsewhere, even if successful states do not actively proselytize their political or economic systems. As discussed in Appendix B, China currently seeks to be a model of successful development worthy of emulation by many other developing countries.

Second, states can serve as "entrepreneurs" in the marketplace of ideas, seeking to export their own ideas and ideologies. This externalization of internal norms can take place through many mechanisms. They can directly press their values and political systems on other states. The EU's expansion policy is perhaps the preeminent example of such an approach. All aspiring members of the EU must accede to the *acquis communautaire*—a complex list of requirements for their political systems and public policies—before they can join. Alternatively,

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[6] Bentley B. Allan, Srdjan Vucetic, and Ted Hopf, "The Distribution of Identity and the Future of International Order: China's Hegemonic Prospects," *International Organization*, Vol. 72, No. 4, Fall 2018, p. 5.

[7] See for instance John B. Judis, *The Chosen Nation: The Influence of Religion on U.S. Foreign Policy*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Brief, No. 37, March 2005; and Rosa Brooks, "Winthrop's Warning," *Foreign Policy*, March 17, 2014.

[8] Mary Elise Sarotte, "China's Fear of Contagion: Tiananmen Square and the Power of the European Example," *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 2, Fall 2012.

[9] West Germany, for example, served as a model for countries attempting to deal with the stagflation of the 1970s; see John L. Campbell, "Ideas, Politics, and Public Policy," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 28, August 2002, p. 22.

states can attempt to persuade foreign populations of the value of their ideas, either through public diplomacy (such as Radio Free Europe) or by promoting norms of appropriate behavior through international institutions.[10] States sometimes also strengthen domestic political actors in other countries, who then serve as internal champions of the ideas the state is attempting to export—for instance, Russia's outreach to populist parties and "traditionalist" civil society actors in Europe and the United States, or China's use of Confucius Institutes.

Third, states can attempt to change the material environment in which ideas and ideologies evolve. The Marshall Plan, for instance, was undertaken in large part because of the belief that economic prosperity and incentives for cooperation among European countries would strengthen the appeal of democracy and capitalism in Western Europe and weaken support for communism.

Finally, senders can act as spoilers: A state might seek to gain competitive advantage against its rivals by undermining their governing ideologies and discourse without ever trying to articulate an alternative. As detailed in Appendix B, much of Russia's information operations have attempted to undermine Western populations' faith in their governing institutions and pit different subpopulations against one another. Such efforts can distract governments from foreign policy, and they potentially provide a bargaining chip in negotiations. Such strategies might be particularly appealing to states that do not have an attractive governing ideology of their own, as described in the following section.

Sender Characteristics

The persuasiveness of a sender's message is shaped in part by the sender's own characteristics—in particular, its perceived successfulness and its cultural similarity or affinity with receivers.

A communicator's status influences the persuasiveness of its communications. In international relations, countries that are perceived as powerful and prosperous are more likely to be considered models worth emulating.[11] For example, the comparisons that Soviet citizens drew between their own circumstances and those that predominated the West were a significant contributor to the legitimacy crisis that the Soviet Union faced in the 1980s:

> The growth of trade and other contacts in the 1970s enabled highly educated, "loyal" Soviet elites—political functionaries, military officers, economic managers, and *institutchiki* (professional academics)—to see more of the West at precisely the time when the East-West technology gap was widening and the West's advantage in material well-being was growing even larger. Despite the prolonged recession in the West in the 1970s, the continued dynamism of Western countries was evident to all Soviet visitors. Although some of the Soviet elites denied what they saw, and others "hunkered down" in a prickly, defensive confusion, many others began to question the performance and principles of the system in which they had been reared. These people by the mid- to late 1980s proved enthusiastic supporters of Gorbachev's program for change.[12]

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[10] See, for example, Ethan A. Nadelmann, "Global Prohibition Regimes: The Evolution of Norms in International Society," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 4, Autumn 1990; and Ann Florini, "The Evolution of International Norms," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 3, September 1996.

[11] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 34.

[12] Walter D. Connor, "Soviet Society, Public Attitudes, and the Perils of Gorbachev's Reforms: The Social Context of the End of the USSR," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Fall 2003, p. 63.

This relationship between material success and persuasiveness works in the other direction as well. Russia's long-running economic stagnation has made it difficult for Moscow to articulate a forward-looking ideology. Instead, the Kremlin has sought to legitimize itself and articulate a vision for international politics based on Russia's "past glory."[13]

Other than a country's perceived successfulness, its cultural affinity with receivers also influences the likelihood that its messages will be persuasive. A variety of literature suggests that communications are more likely to be persuasive when audiences perceive communicators to be part of their "in-group."[14] But even where communicator and audience do not belong to the same group, audience perceptions of a sender's empathy or respect can influence the success of communication. In international relations, a country's multiculturalism or cosmopolitanism—that is, its embrace of other cultures from around the world—can enhance its persuasiveness.[15] In this respect, the United States' social diversity and the accessibility of its culture (due in part to the pervasiveness of the English language and American dominance in many forms of entertainment) gives it an advantage over many countries, particularly China.[16]

Sender Messages

Finally, the content of a message is critical to how influential it can become. Ideas and ideologies are likely to prove influential if they satisfy complex cognitive or social needs:

> Psychologists might argue that certain ideas are adopted when they involve heuristic devices, metaphors, and analogies that render complex situations manageable or justify actions after the fact. Sociologists would be more inclined to suggest that these ideas become important if they assign blame for poor performance, provide a vision for the future, create group solidarity, help build political coalitions, or further other political purposes.[17]

Regardless of whether they were right or wrong, for example, Keynesian economic policies became highly influential in the 1930s because they provided a clear blueprint that suggested a pathway out of persistently low demand.[18] As will be discussed in more detail in the following section, messages are typically more persuasive when there is a clear problem to be solved and no existing preponderance of opinion behind any single blueprint for how to solve it.

Of course, states and individuals are known for advocating solutions to others' problems that they do not follow themselves. The aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, for instance, made clear that austerity policies are much easier for wealthy countries like the United States to impose on other states than to adopt themselves. There is evidence, however, that a failure

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[13] Andrei Kolesnikov, *Russian Ideology After Crimea*, Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center, September 2015, p. 2.

[14] See, for example, Michael A. Hogg and Scott A. Reid, "Social Identity, Self-Categorization, and the Communication of Group Norms," *Communication Theory*, Vol. 16, No. 1, February 2006; Katharine H. Greenaway, Ruth G. Wright, Joanne Willingham, Katherine J. Reynolds, and S. Alexander Haslam, "Shared Identity Is Key to Effective Communication," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 2015.

[15] Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: PublicAffairs, 2004.

[16] According to one recent review, "Chinese values and ideals have generally found a lukewarm reception at best. Western observers have generally concluded that Chinese efforts to promote 'soft power' continue to lag." See Mazarr et al., 2018, p. 76.

[17] Campbell, 2002, p. 23.

[18] Mark Blyth, *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

to align actions with espoused norms imposes such costs as a loss of reputation and, ultimately, influence.[19]

Receivers

Receivers are the potential audiences of a sender's message. They might be decisionmakers in state governments or international organizations, or they might be the populations that can indirectly influence elites' policy choices. In this discussion, we are interested, in particular, in the determinants of genuine persuasion—that is, not simply cases in which actors parrot the ideas of powerful states to court favor or extract support, but cases in which actors change their beliefs about which practices are appropriate. The likelihood that receivers will be influenced by a given message depends on the extent to which international communications can reach these potential audiences, the density of communications flows, cleavages within the community that receives the messages, and the extent to which existing ideologies have been delegitimized by crises of performance.

Permeability and Regime Type

The greater the number of points of contact between different societies, the more likely that ideas will become diffuse between them.[20] Communications can influence elites and nonelites alike, but the likelihood that a message will reach these different audiences, and the political consequences that they are likely to have, differs as a function of the regime type of the receiving state.

Outside decisions to go to war and a handful of other exceptions, foreign policy is generally a low-salience issue area for most populations. Elites are therefore the key audiences, but they are constrained at some level by nonelite opinion, even in absolutist regimes. Elites are likely to have difficulty advocating for international orders that are directly at odds with their domestic legitimation strategies.[21] Foreign ideas and ideologies can also influence nonelites, who, in turn, can pressure their governments for change.[22]

Of course, authoritarian regimes are capable of restricting and shaping the flow of information and ideas to their populations, even in the internet age. Indeed, such restrictions are often integral to the stability of authoritarian regimes.[23] The quest to control the ideas and information reaching their populations is often a key motivation behind authoritarian regimes'

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[19] Martha Finnemore, "Legitimacy, Hypocrisy, and the Social Structure of Unipolarity: Why Being a Unipole Isn't All It's Cracked Up to Be," *International Organization*, Vol. 61, No. 1, January 2009; Frank Schimmelfennig, "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union," *International Organization*, Vol. 55, No. 1, Winter 2001; Mlada Bukovansky, "Liberal States, International Order, and Legitimacy: An Appeal for Persuasion over Prescription," *International Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 2–3, March 2007; Richard Ned Lebow, "Power, Persuasion and Justice," *Millennium*, Vol. 33, No. 3, June 2005.

[20] See, for example, Karl W. Deutsch, "The Growth of Nations: Some Recurrent Patterns of Political and Social Integration," *World Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2, January 1953; Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "Linkage Versus Leverage. Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 4, July 2006.

[21] Allen, Vucetic, and Hopf, 2018.

[22] Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990; Keck and Sikkink, 1998a.

[23] Walter Connor, for instance, is emphatic about the importance of stifling ideas and information from the outside world for the durability of the Soviet Union: "That the stability of the Soviet regime was enhanced by the isolation of Soviet citi-

establishment of "buffer zones." Indeed, the ideological purpose of such zones might be more important than their military purpose.[24]

Authoritarian regimes therefore might be much more successful than more-open, liberal democratic societies in resisting outside ideational influences. The same concentration of power that enables authoritarian regimes to regulate communications flows, however, also makes them particularly susceptible to rapid change when ideas do penetrate. Because liberal democratic societies contain many actors who help to shape policy outcomes, efforts at persuasion must convince a large number of actors before the political tide shifts in favor of a new idea. In authoritarian regimes, the smaller number of actors involved in decisionmaking means that many fewer people must be convinced before an idea is transformed into policy. The Soviet totalitarian regime was highly successful in shielding itself from foreign ideas, but when Mikhail Gorbachev became convinced of the need for liberalizing reforms, change occurred very quickly.[25]

Social Cleavages

Ideas and ideologies are often used instrumentally, either to strengthen one's own position or to weaken others. In such contexts, the power of ideas is shaped in part by social cleavages within the "receiver" state.

States sometimes use ideas and ideologies to weaken the political stability of rival states. Arab nationalist state elites, for instance, fanned the flames of anti-Zionist sentiment in the Middle East not only to strengthen their own domestic legitimacy but also to undermine more status quo–oriented monarchical regimes in the region. In these cases, tensions between traditional and nationalist legitimation principles functioned as weapons of statecraft.[26]

In other cases, elites use ideas or identities to gain status relative to challengers within their own state. In such cases, the power of ideas often depends more on the strength of social cleavages than on the underlying ideas themselves. The political scientists Lisa Blaydes and Drew Linzer, for instance, argue that Muslim anti-Americanism is *not* strongest where Islamic religiosity is strongest: "Although more observant Muslims tend to be more anti-American, paradoxically the most anti-American countries are those in which Muslim populations are less religious overall, and thus more divided on the religious–secular issue dimension."[27] The explanation, they argue, is that anti-Americanism is stoked by political elites seeking competi-

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zens from the world outside the USSR—through severe restrictions on their access to it and its access to them—is hardly a matter for doubt." See Connor, 2003, p. 62.

[24] According to Robert Jervis, "When there are believed to be tight linkages between domestic and foreign policy or between the domestic politics of two states, the quest for security may drive states to interfere preemptively in the domestic politics of others in order to provide an ideological buffer zone." See Robert Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2, January 1978.

[25] Matthew Evangelista, "The Paradox of State Strength: Transnational Relations, Domestic Structures, and Security Policy in Russia and the Soviet Union," *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 1, Winter 1995.

[26] Michael N. Barnett, *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

[27] Lisa Blaydes and Drew A. Linzer, "Elite Competition, Religiosity, and Anti-Americanism in the Islamic World," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 106, No. 2, May 2012, p. 225.

tive political advantage. Consequently, anti-Americanism is more politically useful in societies with greater religious cleavages.[28]

Positive Feedback Loops and Moments of Crisis

In general, people resist the difficult work of repeatedly reexamining their ideas about how society should be governed. Such work is cognitively demanding, and few people, whether elites or nonelites, have the time to gather the necessary information to accurately update their understanding of the complexities involved. In short, most people function as "cognitive misers," to borrow terminology often used by economists. Beyond these practical costs, people are reluctant to update deeply held beliefs about politics because their existing beliefs are often closely associated with their value systems and pattern of past actions.[29] Consequently, in periods of everyday life, ideational and material factors largely reinforce one another in a stable equilibrium, and change occurs slowly.

In periods of crisis, however, people might be confronted with a gulf between their understanding of "what works" or is "appropriate" and the actual performance of their past beliefs. In these circumstances, ideational change might occur much more quickly and more extensively. The political scientist Sheri Berman writes:

> Processes of ideational change are rooted in dissatisfaction with or a recognition of the inadequacy of existing belief structures or behavioral patterns. Dissatisfaction can stem either from an exogenous shock that forces a rapid reconsideration of traditional ideational frameworks or from gradual yet increasing disillusionment and the slow delegitimization of existing beliefs. Both can serve to open up a political space into which new ideas can be inserted.[30]

For entire political ideologies to be disrupted and populations to become open to alternatives, the scale of the crisis required is normally substantial. War (especially defeat in war) and deep economic dislocations are the most typical causes of large-scale crisis. In such circumstances, ideas about politics can change rapidly and can disseminate across large swathes of territory and among disparate populations. Political revolutions, such as the revolutions of 1848, the fall of communism beginning in 1989, the color revolutions of 1998 through 2005, and the Arab Spring of 2011 are perhaps the most obvious examples.[31] The rapid shift toward Keynesian economics and social democracy in the wake of the Great Depression similarly illustrates the potential for rapid, widespread change.[32]

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[28] Blaydes and Linzer, 2012.

[29] According to one recent analysis of the role of ideas in world affairs, "domestic identity discourses and mass-level constraints are unlikely to change in the short run because they are rooted in the categories of everyday life. The discursive structures of everyday life change slowly, if at all, over time. They exist in complex relationships to daily practices and local cultural traditions." See Allen, Vucetic, and Hopf, 2018, p. 11.

[30] Sheri Berman, "Ideas, Norms, and Culture in Political Analysis," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 2, January 2001, p. 234. See also Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2, April 1986.

[31] See especially Henry E. Hale, "Regime Change Cascades: What We Have Learned from the 1848 Revolutions to the 2011 Arab Uprisings," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 16, May 2013.

[32] Blyth, 2002.

Such crises provide an opening for great powers intent on revising the existing international order. According to the political scientists G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan,

> [S]ocialization occurs primarily after wars and political crises, periods marked by international turmoil and restructuring and the fragmentation of ruling coalitions and legitimacy crises at the domestic level. The simultaneity of international and domestic instability creates the conditions conducive to socialization. At the international level, the emerging hegemon articulates a set of normative principles in order to facilitate the construction of an order conducive to its interests. At the domestic level, crisis creates an environment in which elites seek alternatives to existing norms that have been discredited by events and in which new norms offer opportunities for political gains and coalitional realignment.[33]

Even in moments of crisis, however, the likelihood that a new ideology will become dominant is influenced by the broader environment in which ideological competition takes place.

Environment

Communication does not take place in a vacuum. In the global competition of ideas, proponents of various ideologies must situate their persuasive appeals within the existing ideational landscape. They must also channel their messages through various media, the characteristics of which will help to shape the message itself and how it is perceived.

Existing Ideational Landscape

As described in the previous section, people are typically slow to revise their existing beliefs in the absence of a major crisis. Arguments that nest within existing norms in the security, governance, and economic spheres are more likely to be persuasive than those that require a substantial revision of an individual's notions of right and wrong or "what works" in a given context. The United States and other Western powers thus start at a large advantage relative to potential rivals in ideological competition.[34]

Even if audiences are open to considering alternative ways of organizing societies at either the domestic or international levels, ideological entrepreneurs will struggle to capture their audience's attention. Gathering the information necessary to make informed decisions about complex policy issues is hard work that relatively few people are willing to undertake. In a crowded marketplace of ideas, alternative ideologies tend to crowd each other out, with each one absorbing some of the vital attention that others would need to gain widespread support. In part for this reason, ideological change at the international level tends to take place when there are only one or perhaps two major ideological alternatives to the dominant worldview. When those discontented with current affairs face a relatively simple choice between a long-standing but discredited ideology and a single alternative that promises better outcomes, it is easier for large numbers to change their ideological allegiances.[35] In this regard, China faces

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[33] Ikenberry and Kupchan, 1990, p. 284.

[34] Allen, Vucetic, and Hopf, 2018; Randall L. Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu, "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline," *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 1, Summer 2011.

[35] Jeffrey W. Legro, *Rethinking the World: Great Power Strategies and International Order*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005.

a relatively easier task: With the exception of radical Islam, which has only a narrow appeal, there are few, if any, major comprehensive ideologies that might challenge the existing liberal order.

Information and Communications Technology

The media through which ideas flow do a great deal to influence their content and effects. In recent years, the rises of the internet and social media have been particularly consequential. Traditional television and radio broadcasting was targeted at a wide portion of the population. Much of the internet and social media, on the other hand, can be characterized as *narrowcasting*— communication targeting much narrower subpopulations.

Broadcasting has the potential to unite large populations—for better and for worse. The Cornell University political scientist Benedict Anderson famously argued that the rise of print media helped to establish a sense of broader communities than had previously been possible because of the fact that people who would never meet one another were reading about the same events and ideas at the same time.[36] This sense of community engendered by broadcasting is not necessarily a good thing. Radio, for example, played a role in both the rise of the Nazi party in Germany and in the Rwandan genocide (although the independent effects of radio should not be overstated).[37] But quantitative analyses suggest that, in aggregate, mass media do tend to unite populations.[38]

Narrowcasting seems to have much different effects. Particularly in the early days of the internet, there was considerable optimism about its potential to promote development and liberalization: Anyone with an internet connection would have access to an incredible wealth of knowledge, breaking down the ability of entities (whether authoritarian governments or private broadcasters) to exercise control over the flow of information. In recent years, not only has the initial enthusiasm about the internet as a liberating technology cooled, but many observers also express concern about the potential for narrowcasting to fracture and polarize populations.[39] In mature democracies, many social scientists have found that social media have influenced the nature and content of political attitudes and activism in a variety of ways, many of them negative.[40] In more-fragile societies, and especially in relatively opaque polities where

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[36] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, revised edition, London and New York: Verso, 1991.

[37] See, for example, Maja Adena, Ruben Enikolopov, Maria Petrova, Veronica Santarosa, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, "Radio and the Rise of the Nazis in Prewar Germany," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 130, No. 4, November 2015. For a careful analysis of the role of "Radio Machete" in the Rwanda genocide, see Scott Strauss, "What Is the Relationship Between Hate Radio and Violence? Rethinking Rwanda's 'Radio Machete,'" *Politics and Society*, Vol. 35, No. 4, December 2007.

[38] Mass media has been found to depress the incidence of substate violence and increase the stability of authoritarian states. See, for example, T. Camber Warren, "Not by the Sword Alone: Soft Power, Mass Media, and the Production of State Sovereignty," *International Organization*, Vol. 68, No. 1, January 2014; Espen Geelmuyden Rød and Weidmann and Nils B. Weidmann, "Empowering Activists or Autocrats? The Internet in Authoritarian Regimes," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 52, No. 3, May 2015; and Daniela Stockmann and Mary E. Gallagher, "Remote Control: How the Media Sustain Authoritarian Rule in China," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 4, February 2011.

[39] On the disappointing democratic returns on internet technology, see, for example, Rød and Weidmann, 2015, and Thomas Carothers, "Why Technology Hasn't Delivered More Democracy," *Foreign Policy*, June 3, 2015.

[40] See for instance W. Lance Bennett, "The Personalization of Politics: Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 644, No. 1, November 2012; Robert M. Bond, Christopher J. Fariss, Jason J. Jones, Adam D. I. Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Jaime E. Settle, and James H. Fowler, "A 61-Million-Person Experiment in Social Influence and Political Mobilization," *Nature*, Vol. 489, September

accurate information is difficult to come by, social media might have much stronger and more fractious consequences.[41]

Changes in the media environment do not necessarily advantage one ideology over another. Rather, these changes increase the centripetal forces that tear at the unity of all large-scale political communities. These effects might become more pronounced as such technologies as social media "bots" controlled by sophisticated artificial intelligence programs and "deep fakes" become more common.[42]

Conclusion

Persuasion is a complex phenomenon, even at the individual level. At the level of whole societies, where communication is mediated through various organizations and electronic channels, it becomes more complex still. At the level of international affairs, when communication occurs between different societies, mediated by a wide variety of regimes, it becomes astoundingly complex. Therefore, it should not be surprising that there is no single model that can explain the circumstances under which different ideologies are likely to become dominant in world affairs. One recent review of scholarship on the related field of public diplomacy summarized the state of research in this area succinctly: "no theory yet fully explains how media coverage and other forces influence elite and public opinion toward American foreign policy within the United States. Still less, then, do we have a theory of whether and how messages from the United States activate and spread through other political communication systems."[43] Despite these challenges, a number of patterns are evident from our review of the literature.

First, while explanations for ideological change cannot be reduced to material factors, these factors play a significant role in determining the ambitions of major powers, the content of their ideological messages, and the likelihood that these ideological messages will prove influential. States tend to become more ambitious and define their interests more broadly as their power grows.[44] While neither China nor Russia currently demonstrates a great deal of commitment to any major ideological projects outside their own borders, that does not mean that they will remain similarly uncommitted over the coming two decades. The two countries' different economic trajectories, however, also shape the content of their ideological messages. China, as the world's leading economic success story, has clear advantages in trying to influence other developing countries to adopt something like the so-called China model. With no indication that it is likely to emerge from its economic stagnation any time soon, Russia has

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2012; Kay Lehman Schlozman, Sidney Verba, and Henry E. Brady, "Weapon of the Strong? Participatory Inequality and the Internet," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2010; and Matthew Gentzkow and Jesse M. Shapiro, "Ideological Segregation Online and Offline," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 126, No. 4, November 2011.

[41] T. Camber Warren, "Explosive Connections? Mass Media, Social Media, and the Geography of Collective Violence in African States," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 52, No. 3, May 2015, pp. 297–311.

[42] See, for example, P. W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar: The Weaponization of Social Media*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018.

[43] Robert M. Entman, "Theorizing Mediated Public Diplomacy: The U.S. Case," *International Journal of Press/Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 2, March 2008.

[44] Gilpin, 1981; Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999.

no comparable advantage. It should not be a surprise, then, that China's nascent ideological projects offer a vision of progress to audiences throughout the developing world. Conversely, to the extent that Russia has an ideological project at all, it is rearward-looking and conservative, appealing to populations in advanced industrialized countries yearning for a return to a "golden age" of traditional values and identities. More often, Russia has simply sought to disrupt others' legitimizing ideologies rather than offering a clear alternative.

Second, when feasible, states tend to export their domestic systems of governance to other states, attempting to recreate their own regime types elsewhere. They do so through a wide variety of tools, from ideological messaging, to support for like-minded actors (e.g., in civil society or political parties), to occasional recourse, to forcible regime change. This pattern has held across several centuries of great-power politics: for monarchical, theocratic, totalitarian, and democratic regimes.[45] Even when force is not involved, such efforts—or the perception of such efforts—is highly threatening to other regimes, leading to a much higher risk of war between states of differing regime types.[46] In part to protect themselves from ideological "contagion," great powers often attempt to form ideological buffer zones or spheres of influence, which themselves can become a source of conflict. Since the end of the Cold War, neither China nor Russia has evidenced much interest in exporting their domestic political governance models. But if China continues to gain in relative power, it will become more likely to increase its ambitions accordingly. It might then choose to further elaborate and actively support "people-centered governance" and the export of the China model to other countries. In keeping with its diminished role in world affairs, Russia seems less likely to export its model of governance beyond establishing relationships with conservative parties and civil-society actors. It has, however, shown a great deal of interest in maintaining an ideological buffer zone in the former Soviet space.

Third, states also tend to externalize their domestic norms of governance in the management of international affairs. It is no accident that the evolution of international law and international organizations trailed and, in many ways, paralleled the earlier evolution of constitutional regimes at the domestic level:

> From the time of the Hague Peace Conferences to the establishment of the United Nations, the tendency to use specific (and this often meant one's own indigenous) constitution as a model for one's project existed to some extent. Thus, at the beginning of the present century, Schücking used as his models for what he proposed to call the "Union des Etats de la Haye" various constitutional instruments of Germany, such as the German Confederation of 1815, the Vienna Final Act of 1820, and the German Imperial Constitution of 1871 . . . [F]ormer President Taft, who headed the League to Enforce Peace, argued for the creation of a world court on the model of the United States Supreme Court. President Wilson and Colonel House incorporated in their pan-American project a provision which they most certainly copied from the United States Constitution. A similar provision was included

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[45] See especially Charles A. Kupchan, "The Normative Foundations of Hegemony and The Coming Challenge to Pax Americana," *Security Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, May 2014; and John M. Owen IV, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics: Transnational Networks, States, and Regime Change, 1510–2010*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010.

[46] On the tendency of great powers to balance on the basis of ideology, see Mark L. Haas, "Ideological Polarity and Balancing in Great Power Politics," *Security Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 4, October 2014. For an examination of the ways in which domestic revolutions can lead to interstate wars, see Stephen M. Walt, *Revolution and War*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996.

in their League plan, and this later became the basis of the tenth article of the Covenant. Robert Cecil referred to English legal history in support of his proposal for an international court, and the Conference system of the British Empire inspired Alfred Zimmern and General Smuts in their respective League proposals . . . . And President Roosevelt, in explaining to the Soviet Ambassador at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference the idea that a party to a dispute can be heard, but not vote, characterized it as a principle "imbedded by our forefathers in American law."[47]

Such externalization of domestic norms can be found throughout the postwar world. "Global prohibition regimes" (such as those against human trafficking), for instance, "mirror the criminal laws of states that have dominated global society to date."[48] Foreign aid tends to resemble (in both scale and content) the domestic governance norms of the countries that provide it. European social democracies, for instance, are much more likely to provide foreign aid—and especially aid serving primarily humanitarian, as opposed to strategic, purposes—than nonsocialist countries.[49]

Fourth, under usual circumstances, most audiences are likely to be resistant to major changes to existing dominant ideologies. There are both practical and cognitive reasons for this resistance. At a practical level, once norms become embedded in international law and organizations, they develop a considerable degree of inertia; it becomes increasingly difficult for challengers to upend institutions around which a great many actors have coordinated their international interactions. At a cognitive level, most people are reluctant to reconsider foundational assumptions absent an urgent need to do so. Even if populations do not actively support existing liberal norms, they might simply be "unavailable" to agents who seek to press new ideological agendas. These historical regularities suggest that China might well seek to reshape the global order according to its own ideologies, but that it is likely to encounter considerable resistance in the absence of a large-scale crisis, such as great-power war or extended economic dislocations.

Despite these patterns, many critical uncertainties remain. There is a large role for human agency. Leaders of discontented states can decide how aggressively they will pursue changing the existing world order, whether pursuing an agenda that resembles the evolutionary path described earlier or one that more closely resembles the parallel or revolutionary paths. Even if state leaders choose to pursue ambitious ideological projects, it is unclear how viable their alternative orders are, what the costs will be, and whether they ultimately can sustain these costs. Finally, it is difficult to predict how receptive audiences will be to these new ideological projects. This report began with polling data suggesting that China is perceived more favorably in many parts of the world than the United States currently is. Whether it continues to strengthen its influence will depend in part on its ability to restrain its more overbearing or predatory impulses. It will also depend on the future stability of the liberal order. If the 2008 financial crisis was just the first in a number of economic dislocations resulting from sustained global economic imbalances, populations might become increasingly receptive to new ideas.

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[47] Hidemi Suganami, *The Domestic Analogy and World Order Proposals*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 201.

[48] Nadelmann, 1990, p. 524.

[49] David Halloran Lumsdaine, *Moral Vision in International Politics: The Foreign Aid Regime, 1949–1989*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.

If technological developments, such as artificial intelligence–powered social media bots and "deep fakes," undermine public debate and confidence in liberal governing institutions, then there similarly might be more receptivity to alternatives. Appendix D turns to these and other potential factors, reviewing recent trends in world affairs and sketching alternative future trajectories for global ideological competition.

Underlying Economic, Political, and Social Trends

As discussed in Appendix C, there is a complex relationship between material factors (such as economic growth rates, demographic trends, or technological innovations), political institutions (such as domestic regime type or international organizations), and ideational change. This appendix provides a brief overview of trends in a number of areas that have been identified elsewhere in the report as influencing the future trajectory of ideological competition and ideational change.

Differential Growth Rates

Figure D.1 shows how the share of the world's material capabilities have changed for Russia, China, and the United States over the past four decades. The figure is based on the composite index for the Correlates of War Project. The index aggregates six measurements of national

Figure D.1
Changes in National Material Capabilities over Time
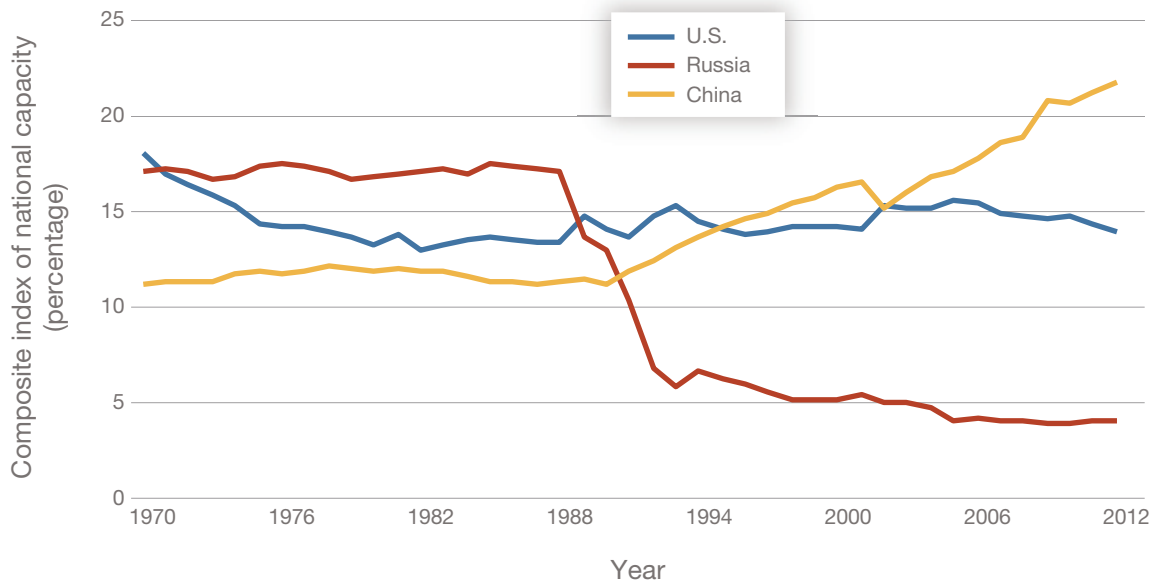
SOURCES: J. David Singer, Stuart Bremer, and John Stuckey, "Capability Distribution, Uncertainty, and Major Power War, 1820–1965," in Bruce Russett, ed., *Peace, War, and Numbers*, Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1972; "National Material Capabilities (v5.0)," Correlates of War Project, webpage, undated.

material capabilities—total population, urban population, military personnel, military expenditures, primary energy consumption, and iron and steel production—and standardizes them by an individual nation's share of the world's capabilities as a whole.[1] Although China's capabilities have soared, the United States' material capabilities have generally held steady, and Russia's precipitously declined after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

These divergent trajectories, in turn, influence the ideological agendas of these countries. During its decades of dominance, the United States was able to institutionalize norms reflecting its own domestic governance principles. As China begins to catch up to and in some ways surpass the United States, it is likely to become increasingly assertive in demanding that international norms reflect its own ideas and ideologies. Russia, on the other hand, has halted the precipitous decline in its capabilities after the end of the Soviet Union. With domestic stability restored at home, it increasingly seeks to regain some measure of its previous influence on the world stage. With a stagnant economy, however, its ability to articulate a forward-looking ideology is limited. In contrast to the dynamic China, Russia has largely adopted a rearward-looking, conservative legitimating ideology.

Economic Volatility

As discussed in Appendix C, in normal times, widespread, rapid ideological change is extremely uncommon. Crises, however, frequently create a discrepancy between people's beliefs and the material reality with which they are confronted. This disjuncture creates openings for new ideas that might explain such inconsistencies and provide the promise of a better alternative to the discredited ideas of the past. Deep and prolonged economic dislocations are some of the most common causes of such crises.

The Great Recession in the late 2000s was the first time in decades that the world economy contracted (Figure D.2). While trends toward automation and globalized trade had gradually placed increasing pressures on the social contracts underlying political stability in many advanced industrialized countries, it is probably no coincidence that highly disruptive politics (such as populist movements) only became widespread following this crisis.

Global Immigration

Immigration—a key motivator of populist movements—has been steadily increasing in the last few decades, both in absolute numbers (Figure D.3) and as a share of the total world population (Figure D.4). Asia in particular has seen a surge in immigration, likely because of rapid economic development in China and other large Asian nations.

The share of migrants settling in high-income countries (Figure D.5) has spiked considerably since 1990. Populists often view immigration in terms of competition for employment opportunities, so significant immigration to high-income countries presents populist movements another opportunity for political gain.
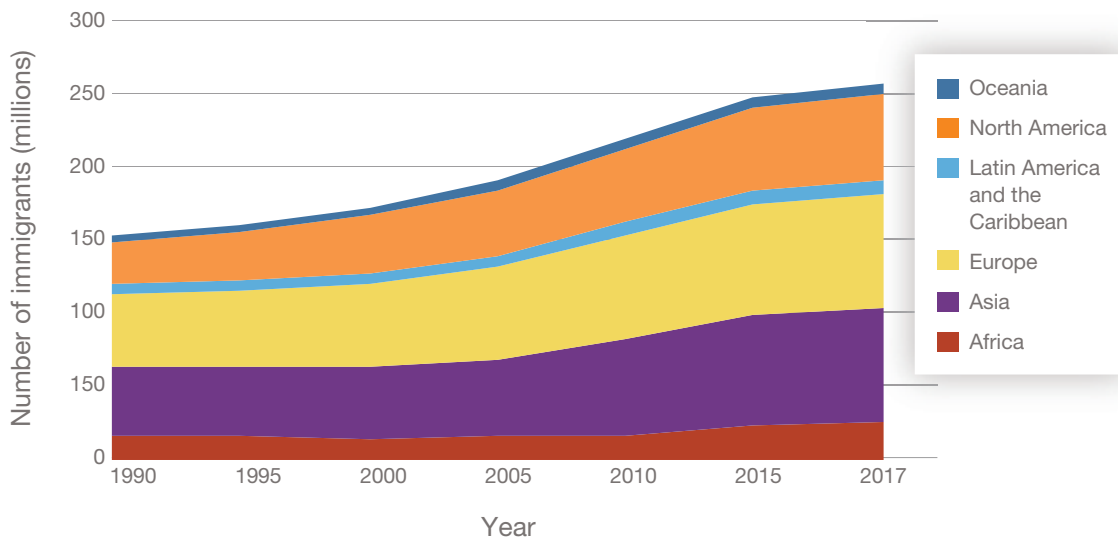
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[1]   Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey, 1972; "National Material Capabilities (v5.0)," undated.

Figure D.2
Global Gross Domestic Product Growth Rate
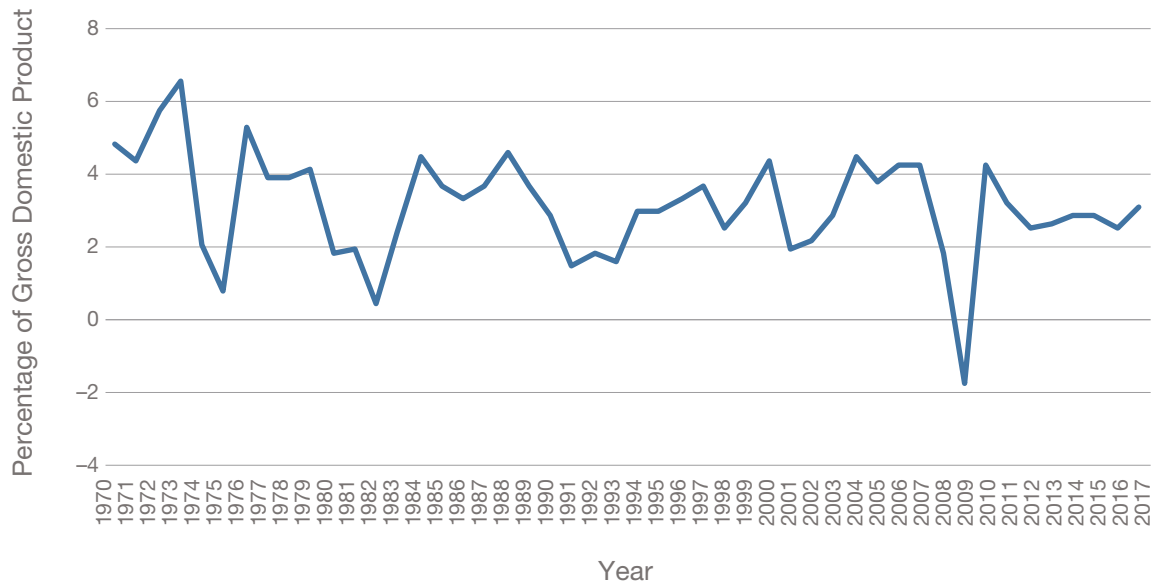
SOURCE: World Bank, "GDP Growth (Annual %)," data set, undated a.

Figure D.3
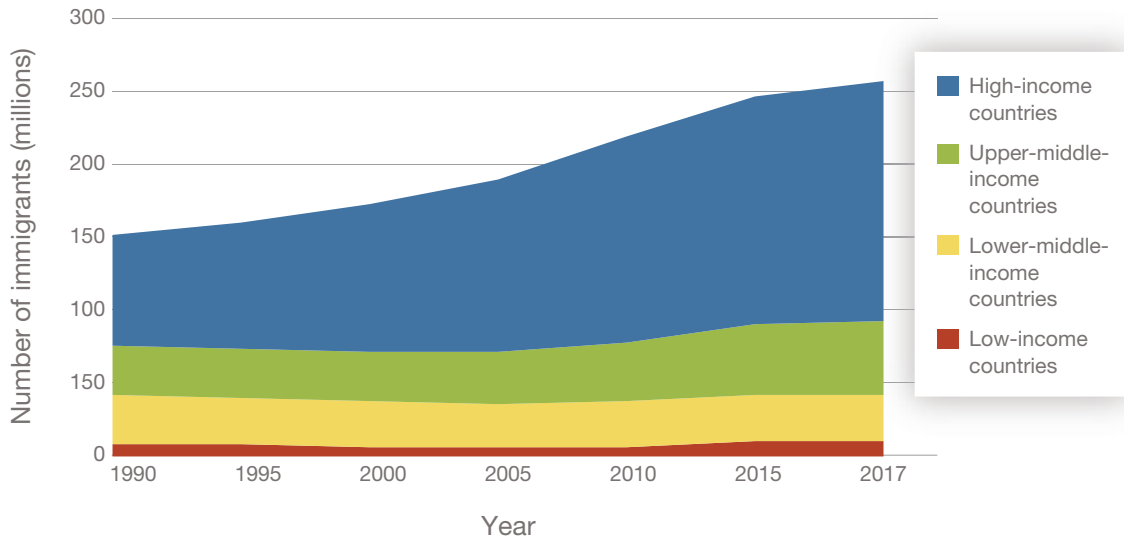**Immigrants by Area of Destination**

SOURCE: UN Population Division, "International Migrant Stock: The 2017 Revision," United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs," data set, undated.
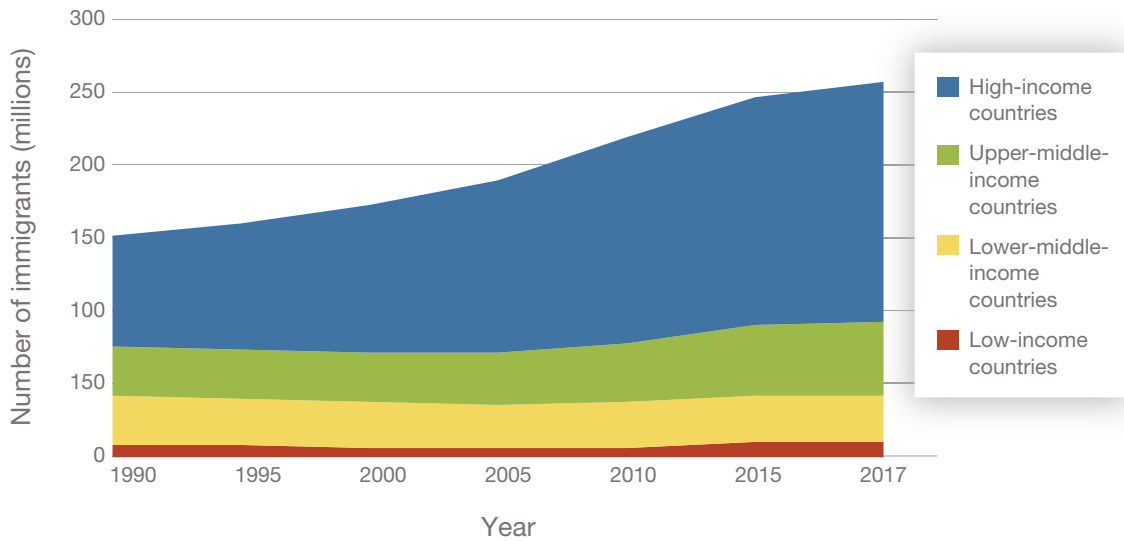
Figure D.4
Immigrants as a Percentage of World Population

SOURCE: UN Population Division, undated.

Figure D.5
Immigrants by Income-Region over Time

SOURCE: UN Population Division, undated.

## Changes in Information and Communication Technology

The percentage of the world population using the internet has dramatically increased since the turn of the millennium, as illustrated in Figure D.6. While the trend is most pronounced in high-income countries, low-income countries are increasing their internet base and close to half of all people in the world are now internet users. As with previous waves of information and communication technology, the internet poses challenges to long-standing forms of political authority. On the other hand, democracies have been able to absorb previous technology waves, such as radio and television, despite those technologies' disruption of established patterns of consensus-building.[2]

Uncertain Future for Democracy?

The number of countries that can be classified as democracies has risen steadily since the beginning of the 19th century, with a commensurate decline in the number of autocracies (Figure D.7). The only major period of reversal was during the rise of fascism in the 1930s and 1940s. The rise in the number of democracies has become especially pronounced since the end of the Cold War.

Certainly, the ideologies being espoused by both China and Russia represent some level of threat to democratic norms. Moreover, the potential for continued economic volatility, the growing weaponization of misinformation on social media, and other trends are all weakening the fabric of long-held democratic norms. The long-term trends in democratization portrayed in Figure D.7, however, are also important to bear in mind. Contemporary challenges might be

Figure D.6
Internet Users as Percentage of Population
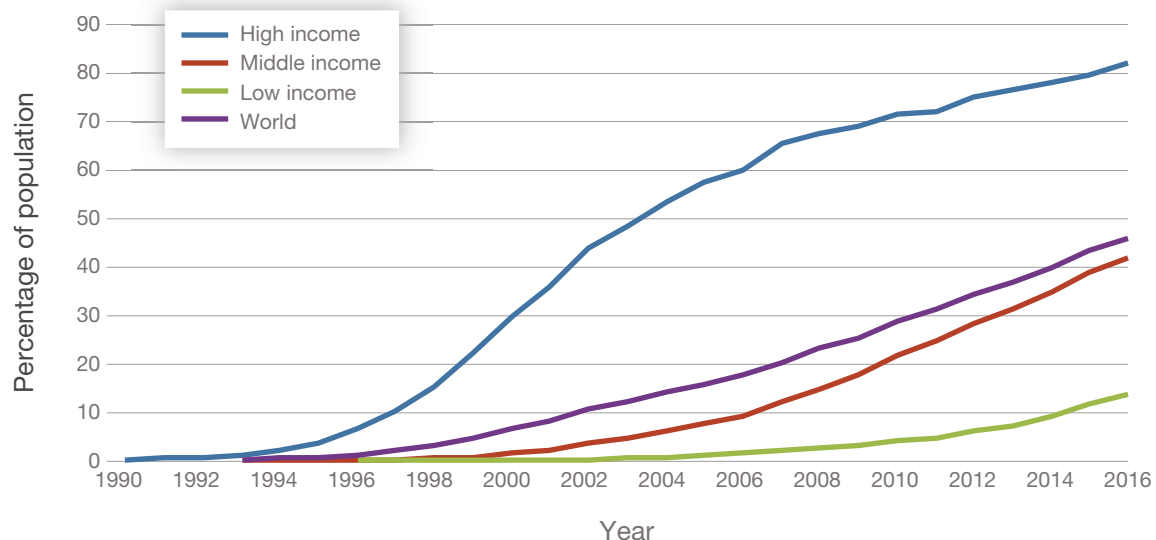
SOURCE: World Bank, "Individuals Using the Internet (% of Population)," data set, undated b.

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[2]   On prior changes in political communication, see especially Jay G. Blumler and Dennis Kavanagh, "The Third Age of Political Communication: Influences and Features," *Political Communication*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1999.

Figure D.7
Global Changes in Regime Type over Time
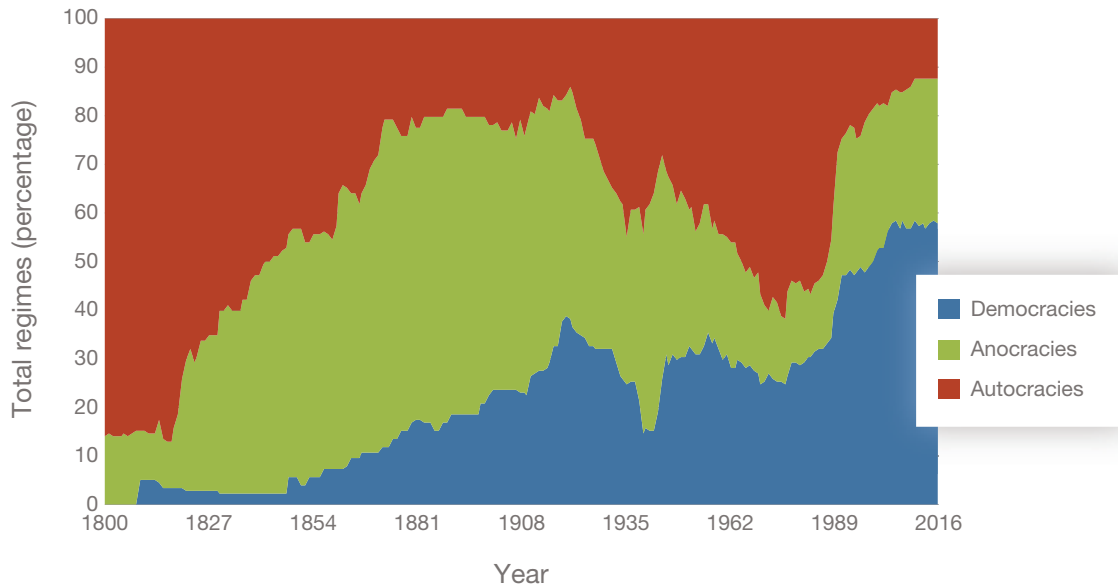
SOURCE: Monty G. Marshall, Ted Robert Gurr, and Keith Jaggers, "Polity IV Project, Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2017," Center for Systemic Peace, 2018.

grave enough to lead to a large-scale reversal of the democratization trend—but if so, it would be only the second time in the past two centuries that such a large-scale reversal has occurred.

An Exploration of Alternative Futures

Predictions of political events over long time horizons have a poor track record of success.[1] It is nonetheless extremely useful to reflect on broad patterns in history and recent trends—combined with a considerable respect for the role of contingency—to consider how future events might unfold. This appendix combines this report's inductive analysis of the ideas and ideologies of key actors (Appendixes A and B); broad patterns discernable from the academic literature on international relations (Appendix C); and recent economic, political, and social trends (Appendix D) to suggest four possible trajectories for global ideological competition over the next two decades. The first of these scenarios represents a baseline projection—the world as it might look if change is relatively linear. We know from past experience, however, that change in world politics is seldom linear. Consequently, this appendix also suggests three "alternative futures" that might arise if one or more factors take on unexpected values in the future. The goal of this discussion is not to make predictions. Rather, it is to use the insights from the other appendixes in this report to help discern a range of possible futures and how ideas and ideologies might shape each of them.

Scenario Ingredients: Patterns, Trends, and Contingency

The earlier review of the social science literature on the role of ideational factors in world affairs suggested the following four broad patterns that have frequently recurred in international relations:

- State power is reflected in ideological ambitions. As states grow more powerful, they tend to expand their ambitions.
- States tend to externalize their domestic forms of governance. At the international level, this takes the form of creating international institutions that reflect key elements of their domestic-level governance. At the domestic level, many great powers have a tendency to attempt to reproduce their norms of governance in other states.
- Divergent governing ideologies heighten threat perceptions. States might become rivals for reasons related to incompatible material interests. But they are more likely to see these disputes as irresolvable and potentially dangerous if they disagree on core tenets of domestic politics.

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[1] Philip E. Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005.

- Rapid ideological change typically occurs in periods of crisis. Many powerful forms of change unfold over decades, such as the gradual expansion of the political franchise to women. In times of crisis, however, people might be willing to adopt bold new ideas that appear to offer solutions to systemic problems. Historically, such revolutionary change has occurred most often following defeat in war or deep and sustained economic dislocations. In the future, environmental catastrophe could potentially play a similar role.

Despite these frequently recurring patterns, there is considerable variation in how they unfold. Some of that variation has to do with the aggressiveness and risk tolerance of the leadership of major powers. Both the United States and Germany were rising powers in the first half of the twentieth century, and both sought to challenge British domination of the international order. Obviously, however, they followed very different paths. In the post-Soviet period, Russia first adopted an evolutionary approach to the international order, seeking to modify the U.S.-dominated system through engagement, where possible. Under Putin's second presidency, despite little having changed in the broad structure of the U.S.-Russian relationship, Moscow has taken a much more aggressive approach, combining elements of the parallel and revolutionary models outlined previously.

Other sources of variation relate to the receptiveness of potential audiences to ideological messages. Ideological messages that might make little headway in ordinary times might become considerably more attractive in periods of crisis, especially in countries characterized by deep social cleavages or high polarization. Intense economic crises—most notably the Great Depression—have had a catalytic effect on ideological change in the past. Previous waves of innovation in information and communication technology, such as the printing press and radio, were similarly destabilizing, at least until societies had adapted to the new technologies. The internet and social media might play a similar role in accelerating the pace of ideational change. Catastrophic environmental degradation might similarly provoke periods of crisis in the future. While any of these factors can induce crises sufficient to make rapid ideational change more likely, it is highly uncertain whether we will see severe crises induced by economic imbalances, technological change, environmental degradation, or other causes over the two-decade span covered by our scenario analysis.

A final source of uncertainty relates to ideas themselves and to the interactive relationships through which they flow. As discussed in Appendix C, ideas are likely to be particularly persuasive when they provide metaphors that help to make complex social phenomena understandable or provide easily understandable solutions to pressing problems. Political ideologies need not be optimal to gain market share in the marketplace of ideas; they need only be adequate for the needs of a large proportion of their potential audience while imposing fewer costs than the prevailing ideologies.[2] Attempting to predict the content of new ideas, however, is difficult, if not impossible. In some cases, new ideas come into being that had not been considered before. In other cases, existing ideas are transformed through an iterative process of engagement, debate, and ultimately synthesis.

In the following sections, we develop four scenarios by considering differing degrees of ambition and risk tolerance among the leadership of key countries, cases of continuity in mate-

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[2]   In this sense, new ideas and ideologies might be analogous to the concept of "disruptive innovations." See Clayton M. Christensen, Michael Raynor, and Rory McDonald, "What Is Disruptive Innovation?" *Harvard Business Review*, December 2015.

rial trends and cases of deep crisis, and cases in which ideological contestation is more adversarial and cases in which it is more synthetic. None of these scenarios are meant to be predictions, nor are these scenarios exhaustive. Instead, they are intended to illustrate many of the dynamics reviewed in this report and suggest key factors and processes that observers should monitor in the future.

The Baseline Future

The baseline future represents a largely linear projection of current trends. In this scenario, China continues to grow economically at a robust rate but at lower levels than it has seen for most of the past three decades. Russia continues its economic stagnation, experiencing low growth rates that do not help it close the gap with wealthier countries and leave it falling further behind the more dynamic economies. The Russian population is dissatisfied with the level of social services provided but has little effective means to organize politically to force a change of direction. Western economies continue to grow, but the high price of labor in these countries continues to incentivize the trend toward automation, leading to persistent political discontent and support for populist politicians. This discontent is amplified by information and communication technology, with social media providing a means for more-radical subpopulations to organize on a large scale and ever-better targeted disinformation campaigns continuing to strain the population's faith in governance. On the other hand, with no new economic dislocations on the scale of the 2008 crisis, these challenges test but do not overwhelm the resilience of these societies. Looking beyond the great powers, developments in information and communication technology and environmental degradation pose increasing challenges to the political stability of fragile states in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

In this future, Russia continues its attempts to cement its dominance over its Eurasian periphery, using traditional and social media and its ties with various "influencers" to persuade these countries that Western norms of governance and Western integration is inappropriate. Russia seeks out diplomatic relationships with other countries that oppose a U.S.-dominated world order, believing that a polycentric world helps to legitimate governing arrangements that differ from the liberal democratic norm that has become entrenched since the end of the Cold War. At the same time, Russia continues its efforts to undermine Western societies' trust in their governing institutions and to build alliances with organizations attracted to Russia's supposed championing of traditional values. Such offensive uses of ideas and ideology help to divert and potentially weaken the West and might provide valuable leverage or bargaining chips in a time of crisis. This Russian trajectory combines elements of the parallel and, to a lesser extent, revolutionary paths outlined earlier in this report.

Buoyed by its continued economic success, China refines and advances its ideological projects. Where existing institutions are not incompatible with Chinese ideas and where Western powers are willing to renegotiate current arrangements, China is likely to seek to modify core pillars of the global order, such as the WTO. Where China finds existing arrangements more fundamentally problematic or that Western resistance to its ideas are high, China is likely to route around them. At a minimum, China tries to delegitimize the U.S. alliance system in Asia and Oceania while seeking to gain legitimacy for its state-led economic model in such institutions as the WTO.

China's fervor for its state-led economy could spur it to proselytize its state-led economic model abroad. Doing so, however, would likely be a costly strategy for global influence, testing the strength of China's ideological commitment. China is already attempting to gain influence around the world through the BRI. In many cases, however, Beijing seems to be maximizing its short-term gains, in many cases at the expense of partner nations. There are reports, for instance, of China making loans that cannot possibly be repaid, then taking possession of critical infrastructure when partners inevitably default on these loans.[3] Such predatory lending practices have already sparked backlash in many countries.[4] Beyond these specific cases, there is broader doubt that China can export its model of economic development to very many more countries. China has followed a similar development path to many of the other East Asian "tigers," with a strong role for state investments in infrastructure and key industries coupled with an export-led growth strategy.[5] With protectionist sentiment rising around the world, however, it is not clear that export-led growth strategies will be as viable in the future. Moreover, many developing countries that might be attracted to Chinese investment do not have strong states with traditions of capable bureaucracies—a typical prerequisite for successful developmental states. Were China truly committed to exporting its model of state-led development to other developing countries, it could potentially try to offset these limitations. It could accept losses from nonperforming loans, allow greater exports of consumer goods—potentially on concessionary terms for partner nations—to China, and invest in building its partners' capabilities for rational-legal administration. In this baseline future, China is unlikely to accept the potentially massive costs of such efforts outside a few select partners, predominantly in Asia.

Overall, China's approach in this scenario most closely approximates the evolutionary and parallel models outlined earlier in this report.

Western commitment to the current world order is tested but largely holds in this future. Populist movements are likely to remain powerful political actors, buoyed by fears of China's increasing economic might and by the active efforts of Russia to exploit Western social cleavages. There nonetheless remain powerful sectors in society committed to upholding the existing order at both the domestic and international levels.[6] Such dynamics are likely to lead to policy volatility and difficulty achieving consensus in multilateral forums, but not a large-scale repudiation of existing arrangements.

This constellation of ideological projects is likely to have several implications for world politics. First, many less-resilient countries are likely to be attracted to Chinese and Russian ideas. Russian ideas are likely to be particularly attractive to relatively poorly performing countries in parts of Eastern Europe, especially those with a history of pro-Russian sentiment. Russian ideas are also likely to be attractive to subpopulations in the West that long for a return to "traditional" social order. Chinese ideas are likely to find a willing audience among many developing countries, especially those suffering from economic setbacks or crises of political order. Unless China is willing to make large-scale investments in improvements to these coun-

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[3]   Maria Abi-Habib, "How China Got Sri Lanka to Cough Up a Port," *New York Times*, June 25, 2018.

[4]   Marlow and Li, 2018.

[5]   Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy: Transitions and Growth*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007.

[6]   On the persistence of various groups' support for a hegemonic economic order even after the decline of hegemony, see Stephen D. Krasner, "State Power and the Structure of International Trade," *World Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 3, April 1976.

tries' welfare, however, the attractiveness of Chinese theoretical ideas is likely to battle with the realities of China's hard-nosed bargaining in its own narrow national interest.

At the international and transnational levels, existing models of governance are not likely to be overturned but instead are likely to thin out. With existing Western norms under strain but no alternative clearly established, "lowest common denominator" solutions to global problems are likely to predominate. Discontent with the performance of the current world order might lead to a renewed emphasis on sovereignty—both in developed and developing countries—with the exception of Chinese and Russian efforts to more firmly establish informal spheres of influence in their peripheries. In the nearer term, without a normative consensus to which they can appeal for legitimacy, TANs might lose some of their ability to influence political events. In the longer term, they might play an important role in helping to broker a new consensus on pressing global problems, such as climate change. Over the next two decades, however, most factors are pointing toward a degradation and fracturing of normative consensus.

Alternative 1: Liberal Retrenchment

The first alternative from this baseline scenario begins from a similar set of material circumstances. The main difference is that in this scenario, the United States and Europe are consumed by domestic crises. Such crises could emerge from the political effects of continued (or accelerated) automation in the economy, the long-term effects of persistent international economic imbalances, new waves of immigration that spur more widespread nativist political movements, or new breakthroughs in information and communication technology that degrade the role of authoritative information and evidence-based debate in public affairs. Such crises might be prompted, at least in part, by actions from China or Russia, such as a Russian-induced return to ethnic war in the Balkans that unleashes waves of refugees to Europe, or large changes in Chinese macroeconomic policies.

These crises lead to Western retrenchment in world affairs. The previous commitment of liberal democracies to relatively open trade is replaced by much higher levels of support for protectionism. Development assistance dries up as governments turn inward, using all available funds to address domestic problems. Lack of popular trust in both national-level governments and international organizations undermines efforts to find multilateral solutions to problems like international economic imbalances and environmental degradation that flow across borders.

In this scenario, the perceived political and economic failures of the liberal model make the Chinese development model more attractive to developing countries and make the Russian appeal to traditional values more appealing to various populist movements in the West. At the same time, Western retrenchment further emboldens Chinese and Russian elites, who become more willing to accept risks to gain influence at the Western powers' expense.

In this scenario, China's willingness to embrace the costs of international leadership plays a key role. If China were not only to replace Western markets but also Western development assistance in a manner consistent with its emerging "China solution," it would tie China's partners closely to China. It could potentially pose a major challenge to the open world economy that the United States has constructed, especially if China built these relationships around a closed or partially closed trading bloc. But it would be an extremely costly strategy, imposing

major sacrifices in the short term with uncertain long-term payoffs. A full-scale commitment to externalizing Chinese governance and economic practices in this way is likely an extreme scenario. More probable are scenarios in which China and its partners remain integrated in the global economy, but China increasingly accepts costs to increase its influence among a growing number of partner governments. Were the economic crises in this scenario to test the viability of the current global economic architecture, however, or if continued Western suspicion of Chinese advances in information and communication technology led to a bifurcated technological architecture for the world, more-extreme scenarios might become more likely.

Overall, this scenario combines elements of the parallel and revolutionary models, but with the potential for more-revolutionary trajectories more likely if Western economic crises force China to adopt a leadership role to prevent a severe global recession or even depression. Such a leadership role for China would test how committed Beijing is to its vision of a CCD.

Alternative 2: Generalized Crisis

The second alternative future might initially look very similar to the first, in that both begin with economic and political crises in the countries of the West. Unlike in the first alternative future, however, neither China nor any other actor is able to create sufficient economic stimulus to blunt the worst effects of the crises. Instead, they intensify and spread globally, placing China and Russia in at least as much risk as the Western democracies. In this scenario, because of their instability, *all* major actors feel acutely vulnerable to domestic pressures. In such circumstances, China and Russia do not simply seek to protect themselves while selectively weakening their adversaries when circumstances permit such gains at low cost and risk. Under pressure from what they perceive to be existential threats, the Chinese and Russian regimes are likely to overreact to potential setbacks. They might also be more susceptible to blaming even organically arising discontent on hidden malign activities by foreign actors.

In China, a campaign to make the world safe for Chinese Marxist-Leninist ideology could turn into a broad, ideologically driven confrontation with Western democracies. The total Marxist-Leninist worldview seeks to preserve the regime through a perpetual struggle against the hostile democratic West. While in past years this struggle has been focused within China, particularly on maintaining CCP purity, in this future, the CCP would decide that the two systems are fundamentally incompatible and thus it is necessary to go on offense and take the fight to the West. This approach would include cultivating like-minded Leninist regimes around the world as a bulwark against this Western democratic threat, whether through supporting existing regimes or creating new regimes through subversion and regime change. This could be accompanied by increased political interference activities intended to foment paralysis, instability, and potentially even revolution in vulnerable liberal-democratic states. At an extreme, the "scientific truth" of Marxism-Leninism could drive a fatalistic acceptance of U.S.-China confrontation and increase China's willingness to risk military conflict.

There are some hints of this in today's China under Xi. The CCP has always railed against "hostile foreign forces," but Xi has increased the sense of urgency against cultural infiltration that could undermine CCP rule, specifically targeting Western ideas of constitutional democracy, universal values, and civil society, among others.[7] Xi has also enshrined an

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[7] "Document 9: A ChinaFile Translation," ChinaFile, web page, November 8, 2013.

expansive definition of *state security* into law that seeks the absence of threats and has embraced more foreign political influence operations that seek to shape other countries' policies toward China.[8]

Faced with acute domestic vulnerabilities, both the Chinese and Russian regimes would likely resort to extreme measures to prop up their rule. Such measures would likely include information and influence operations designed to shore up their own stability and that of neighbors and partners, but it could also take the form of more aggressive operations designed to gain bargaining leverage with Western powers. More worrisome, this intensified competition could transition from the realm of ideas into contests of military strength, either purposefully in pursuit of domestic legitimation (the so-called rally-around-the-flag effect), or potentially in a spiral of inadvertent escalation. This alternative future has elements of the parallel model, but the revolutionary model of ideological competition predominates.

Alternative 3: Partial Convergence

Certainly long-standing global economic imbalances, environmental degradation, and some of the destabilizing aspects of information and communication innovation all carry the potential for future crises. But in exploring this potential, we do not intend to suggest that the future is bleak. Indeed, the overall trajectory of a great many indicators of global well-being has been overwhelmingly positive. The world has experienced tremendous economic growth over the past few decades, lifting record numbers of people out of poverty. Even if we look more narrowly at wealthier democracies, there are reasons for optimism. As Figure D.7 showed, consolidated democracies very rarely revert to authoritarianism or even hybrid regime types, such as illiberal democracy. Over the past two centuries, the only time that global democracy has appreciably declined was during the Great Depression.[9] That so many governance challenges have arisen in the wake of the Great Recession should not be surprising. What is perhaps encouraging is that they have not been worse.

Some political scientists have suggested that these trends are, in fact, part of the long arc of history that has tilted increasingly toward higher levels of democracy, prosperity, respect for human rights, and peace.[10] We need not accept any particular teleology, nor assume that these trends indicate that the world will adopt Western conceptions of democracy, human rights, or indeed what it means to lead a good life. These trends do suggest, however, that there are underlying areas of commonality that national leaders, intellectuals, and others might build upon to forge a new consensus about key elements of the world order. It is possible that the populations of China and Russia might rebel against their "velvet prisons" in ways that are at least somewhat reminiscent of popular movements in the later years of the Soviet Union. Such

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[8] Peter Mattis, "China's 'Three Warfares' in Perspective," *War on the Rocks*, January 30, 2018; Larry Diamond and Orville Schell, *Chinese Influence and American Interests: Promoting Constructive Vigilance*, Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, October 2018.

[9] *Global democracy* here is expressed as the proportion of all countries around the world that are considered fully democratic on the Polity scale.

[10] See, for example, Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Post-Modernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997; and Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, New York: Viking, 2011.

pressures need not result in democracy or revolution; they might simply induce national leaders to steer a path toward practical problem-solving of pressing problems rather than engaging in costly ideological confrontation.

There are certainly many challenges that call for such pragmatism, most notably climate change. In other cases, the outline of pragmatic mutual accommodation might already be visible. The United States and Russia might recognize spheres of privileged interest among each other's neighbors and close allies. Although less absolute than a formal sphere of influence, such an arrangement would recognize the costs involved in unfettered competition in vital areas and seek to establish rules of the road to return competition to less intense levels.[11] Reallocation of decision rights in international organizations in ways that recognize China's new position in the world would also represent a pragmatic accommodation, similar to that between the United States and Great Britain. None of these compromises, of course, would be easy. But given the high levels of interdependence among these countries, it is also simplistic to assume that differences in opinions and interests necessarily lead to more confrontation.

It is also possible that new norms of international governance might emerge piecemeal. As the great powers, nonstate actors such as TANs, and others all vie for influence in an increasingly interconnected world, private interests (such as major corporations) and citizens' groups might demand pragmatic problem-solving on key issues. In many of the developing and emerging economies, Chinese ideas about development might find an eager audience. To avoid becoming isolated, the United States and its close allies might need to accept elements of the evolving Chinese model for ordering the international economy. In other cases, countries might well look to the United States as a counterweight to unwelcome Chinese influence. Through multiple iterations of competition and compromise, a broader framework for global order might incrementally emerge. This future approximates the evolutionary trajectory discussed earlier in this report.

Conclusion

As discussed at various points throughout this report and its appendixes, there are certain patterns of ideological competition that appear throughout modern history. As states grow more powerful, their ideological ambitions tend to grow accordingly. Those ambitions typically take the form of externalizing the rising power's own norms of governance, both internationally and in the domestic politics of countries it can successfully influence or dominate. Both these rising powers and others tend to find countries with different political ideologies particularly threatening, heightening the risk of conflict.

How exactly these patterns play out, however, is highly uncertain. Trajectories of ideological competition partially derive from the decisions of key leaders, based on those leaders' ideological allegiances and tolerance for risk. These trajectories also derive from opportunities for rapid ideational dissemination, which in turn arise from differences in information and communication technology, the number and character of other major ideologies, and the pres-

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[11] Such a bargain might resemble the one that launched the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). See Gregory Flynn and Henry Farrell, "Piecing Together the Democratic Peace: The CSCE, Norms, and the 'Construction' of Security in Post–Cold War Europe," *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 3, Summer 1999.

ence of a crisis or crises that leave large numbers of people willing to revisit their fundamental political beliefs.

The alternative futures in this appendix provide illustrative ways in which these factors might combine and recombine over time. None of them is intended as a definitive prediction. Rather, they highlight the importance of ideas and ideologies alongside material factors in determining the direction of world affairs.

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