THE RETREAT FROM GLOBALISM

AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GLOBAL IMAGINARY

By Theodore M. Horesh

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Abstract

This thesis examines the deeper conceptions driving the retreat from globalism and identifies their origins in the failure to generate a more cohesive global imaginary. The global imaginary refers to the shared conceptions binding humanity together. And since countless factors contribute to the world we imagine, understanding the global imaginary means examining a range of forces. Yet, this thesis focuses on a set of incipient global institutions that are essential to taking action on a multitude of shared global threats. And it explores how the perception that these institutions have in some way failed is leading people to retreat into more limited ethnic and national identities.

The retreat from globalism has been widely commented upon through the lenses of ethnonationalism and economic globalization, but comparatively little has been written about how our conceptions of the world drive the retreat. A dangerous and dysfunctional world has been conjured up in the imaginations of people the world over. Yet, it is not the actual world that they imagine, but rather a set of scattered narratives about the way the real-world works, and it is these narratives and their sources that will be explored in greater detail.

The thesis explores the porousness of social imaginaries in the first chapter and provides a comprehensive account of the global imaginary in the second. It examines how global institutions structure our thinking about the world in the third. And it explores how the practices of peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid contribute to the shape of the global imaginary in the next three respective chapters. It concludes that stronger global institutions can generate a more cohesive global imaginary. And it argues that through participation in a shared global community, humanity might generate a global imaginary able to meet the great global challenges of the twenty-first century.

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Introduction

The Nature of the Retreat

From the fall of the Berlin Wall to the middle of the last decade, globalization appeared to many an inevitability;[1] now, it seems to be reversing itself.[2] The world seemed as if it were becoming more integrated; now, it appears to be more divided than it has been in generations.[3] This retreat from globalism may be best understood through the metaphor of a sea change, for it captures both the tectonic shift in the way so many people have come to conceive of their relationship to the world and the multitude of countercurrents drawing it into question. Somehow, majorities of people in countries across the world have banded together behind ethnonationalists,[4] even as strong majorities in precisely those countries where they are being elected tell pollsters that they view themselves less as citizens of their own nations than the world itself.[5] Somehow,

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[1] Friedman, Thomas L. *The World is Flat: The Globalized World in the Twenty-First Century.* Penguin. 2007; Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man.* Free Press. 1992.

[2] Cronin, James E. *Fragile Victory: The Making and Unmaking of the Liberal Order.* Yale University Press. 2023; Deneen, Patrick J. *Why Liberalism Failed.* Yale University Press. 2018; Gerstle, Gary. *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era.* Oxford University Press. 2022; Luce, Edward. *The Retreat of Western Liberalism.* Atlantic Monthly Press. 2017.

[3] Fukuyama, Francis. *Liberalism and Its Discontents.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2022; Maalouf, Amin and Bray, Barbara trans. *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong.* Arcade. 2012.

[4] Applebaum, Anne. *Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism.* Knopf Doubleday. 2021; Krastev, Ivan and Holmes, Stephen. *The Light That Failed: Why the West is Losing the Fight for Democracy.* Pegasus Books. 2020; Mishra, Pankaj. *The Age of Anger: A History of the Present.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2017.

[5] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism.* Allen Lane. 2019; Reysen, Stephen and Katzarska-Miller, Iva. *The Psychology of Global Citizenship: A Review of the Theory and Research.* Lexington Books. 2018.

technological advances and mass immigration in every major region of the world continue to integrate human civilization, even as the narrative of a divided humanity grows in strength.

This thesis seeks to describe the nature of the retreat from globalism, the factors contributing to it, the dialectical forces pushing in the opposite direction, and the role of our imaginations in bringing it about. The next subsection will clarify its research aims and methodology, but this first subsection will attempt to describe the nature of the retreat itself. Globalization might be defined as the increasing global interconnectivity of humanity. The connections may be social, political, economic, cultural, technological, ecological, recreational, or institutional. And globalism as it is being used here might be defined as the embrace of these connections.

The language of an embrace is suggestive of a sentimental attachment. Globalists as defined here might not be cosmopolitans, who identify themselves as citizens of the world, possessed of moral commitments to the whole of humanity,[6] but they see the increasing interconnectivity of human civilization as a positive development. Thus, the retreat from globalism pertains to a souring on the idea of globalization among ordinary people who previously viewed it as a net good. It might be variously seen as a flight, a rejection, a withdrawal, a repudiation, or an opposition to it. It can take the form of an abandonment of global identities and responsibilities, and it is in many ways an amorphous process bound up with a multitude of closely related sentiments. In short, there are many ways to characterize the retreat from globalism, because it is accompanied by such a range of feelings.

The retreat from globalism can be looked at as a rejection of globalization and a shift toward more parochial concerns, topics of ample commentary in recent years.[7] But the retreat from

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[6] Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal.* Belknap Press. 2021.

[7] Applebaum, Anne. *Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism.* Knopf Doubleday. 2021; Cunliffe, Phillip. *Cosmopolitan Dystopia: International Intervention and the Failure of the West.* Manchester University Press. 2020; Deneen, Patrick J. *Why Liberalism Failed.* Yale University Press. 2018; Diamond, Larry. *Ill Winds: Saving Democracy from Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition, and American Complacency.* Penguin Press. 2019; Fukuyama, Francis. *Liberalism and Its Discontents.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2022; Hazony, Yoram. *The Virtue of*

globalism is first and foremost an impulse pertaining to our relationship to the world, and this impulse has been subjected to far less scrutiny. It involves a rejection of global thinking and identification with the fate of the world, and it culminates in an abandonment of duties to the whole of humanity. In this way, to retreat from globalism is to dispense with concern for the wider world. It is to spurn the effort to understand it and to absolve ourselves of the moral duty to make it better. The effort may be in vain, for as we will see the world penetrates our lives and imaginations at every turn. Yet, it is the *effort* to retreat from globalism that is the concern of this thesis, not its e*ffectiveness*. The impulse can be witnessed in xenophobic and nationalistic movements that draw a sharp line between insiders and outsiders, where the outsiders are typically seen to come from places far away.[8] But as we will explore in the coming chapters, it can also be discerned in the growing sense of ambiguity concerning the foundations of our identities.

It is a retreat in the sense that it involves a withdrawal and backing away, but it is also a retreat in the metaphorical sense of running from the field of battle. The retreat from globalism seeks to provide solace through the reification of narrower tribal, ethnic, national, and religious identities.[9] And it seeks to shut down the nagging reminders of our global interconnectedness, like the alien immigrants living in our midst.[10] In short, it is a rejection of the global imaginary through which we conceive of our relationship to the world and our duties to it—and it is therefore a repudiation of our more global identities. Thus, examining the retreat from globalism requires us to get a handle on how we have come to imagine the world, the ways with which we identify with it, and the bases upon which humanity has come to see itself as interconnected. In

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Nationalism. Basic Books. 2020; Kagan, Robert. *The Jungle Grows Back: America and Our Imperiled World.* Alfred A. Knopf. 2018; Krastev, Ivan and Holmes, Stephen. *The Light That Failed: Why the West is Losing the Fight for Democracy.* Pegasus Books. 2020; Maalouf, Amin and Bray, Barbara trans. *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong.* Arcade. 2012; Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019; Tamir. Yael. *Why Nationalism.* Princeton University Press. 2019.

[8] Stanley, Jason. *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them.* Random House. 2018.

[9] Maalouf, Amin and Bray, Barbara trans. *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong.* Arcade. 2012.

[10] Polakow-Suransky, Sasha. *Go Back to Where You Came From: The Backlash Against Immigration and the Fate of Western Democracy.* Bold Type Books. 2017.

short, it requires that we take a closer look at the global imaginary.

Something similar to what is being described here as the retreat from globalism has been described elsewhere as a crisis of liberalism,[11] a frustration with global elites,[12] a rebellion against multiculturalism,[13] a disillusionment with global economic institutions,[14] and an abandonment of the liberal world order.[15] There are several explanations for these trends, including the increasing inequality within and between nations,[16] which has accompanied the rise of neoliberalism.[17] The

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[11] Fukuyama, Francis. *Liberalism and Its Discontents.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2022; Luce, Edward. *The Retreat of Western Liberalism.* Atlantic Monthly Press. 2017.

[12] Mishra, Pankaj. *The Age of Anger: A History of the Present.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2017; Rothkopf, David. *Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World They Are Making.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2009.

[13] Maalouf, Amin and Bray, Barbara trans. *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong.* Arcade. 2012; Mounk, Yascha. *The Great Experiment: Why Diverse Democracies Fall Apart and How They Can Endure.* Penguin Press. 2022; Tamir. Yael. *Why Nationalism.* Princeton University Press. 2019.

[14] Gerstle, Gary. *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era.* Oxford University Press. 2022; Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* Oxford University Press. 2007; Kutter, Robert. *Can Democracy Survive Global Capitalism?* W.W. Norton and Company. 2018; Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the Global Economy.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2012; Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2017.

[15] Cronin, James E. *Fragile Victory: The Making and Unmaking of the Liberal Order.* Yale University Press. 2023; Ikenberry, G. John. *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crisis of Global Order.* Yale University Press. 2020; Krasner, Stephen D. *How to Make Love to a Despot: An Alternative Foreign Policy for the Twenty-First Century.* Liveright. 2020; Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019; Porter, Patrick. *The False Promise of Liberal Order: Nostalgia, Delusion, and the Rise of Trump.* Polity Press. 2020; Walt, Stephen M. *The Hell of Good Intentions: America's Foreign Policy Elites and the Decline of U.S.* Supremacy Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2018.

[16] Kutter, Robert. *Can Democracy Survive Global Capitalism?* W.W. Norton and Company. 2018; Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the Global Economy.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2012.

[17] Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* Oxford University Press. 2007.

inequality has contributed to a sense of social insecurity,[18] generating a range of negative social indicators,[19] which have led many people to retreat into smaller worlds,[20] and to embrace radical ethnonationalist movements,[21] which they believe might give them greater control over their fates.[22] And it has left others skeptical of the intentions of international elites and the global projects they champion.[23] Meanwhile, the increasing geopolitical competition accompanying the relative stagnation of "the West" and "the rise of the rest" has led to the emergence of a multipolar world order,[24] which has encouraged states to foster nationalism as a means of increasing their strength in a more competitive world.[25]

The retreat from globalism is tied to and often confused with these trends through its rejection of the diversity and complexity of the wider world. But this thesis will attempt to demonstrate that the retreat from globalism is distinct, and its analysis requires its own methodological approach. The world itself is far more complex than, say, liberalism or multiculturalism, for the world transcends and includes them, along with countless other globalized phenomena, like the depletion of resources, climate change, deforestation, technological development, the loss of species, overpopulation, and nuclear proliferation. Making sense of the world is vastly more complex, and our feelings about the world are therefore likely to be far more complicated, for "the world" weighs on our consciences as an existential concern for the ultimate fate of humanity. Global elites might frustrate us, the global economy might leave us feeling powerless,

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[18] Payne, Keith. The Broken Ladder: *How Inequality Changes the Way We Think, Live, and Die.* Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 2018.
[19] Wilkenson, Richard and Pickett, Kate. *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger.* Bloomsbury Press. 2009.
[20] Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right.* The New Press. 2016.
[21] Mishra, Pankaj. *The Age of Anger: A History of the Present.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2017.
[22] Horesh, Theo. *The Fascism This Time: And the Global Future of Democracy.* Cosmopolis Press. 2020; Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Monarchy of Fear: A Philosopher Looks at Our Political Crisis.* Simon and Schuster. 2019.
[23] Giridharadas, Anand. *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World.* Alfred Knopf. 2018.
[24] Zakaria, Fareed. *The Post-American World: And the Rise of the Rest.* Penguin Press. 2011.
[25] Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics.* Waveland Press. 1979.

and multiculturalism might make us uncomfortable, but the world befuddles us, and it makes us question our nature. Hence, to imagine the world is to contemplate our bond with the whole of humanity and the fate we share in common, substantially weightier and more complex concerns.

The second and third chapters on the global imaginary and global institutions respectively demonstrate that we are far more globalized than we tend to think. Thus, we require an expansive conception of the global imaginary to capture the shared bases upon which we experience ourselves as bound together. This more expansive conception of the global imaginary serves to remind us of the difficulty of wrapping our minds around the world and sorting through our feelings about it. The world is simply too complex and contains too many variables to assess it with the same clarity we might bring to discussions of, say, the international order. Hence, a reporter should not expect to get a clear answer when pressing upon a person, with forceful urgency, as if in an imaginary presidential debate, "the world: for or against?"

The very idea of asking such a question is laughably absurd because the world contains so much that only nihilists and panglossian optimists could give a definite answer to whether they support it. Yet, it would not be so hard for most politically informed people to answer with some caveats whether they support democratization, multiculturalism, economic globalization, or the liberal world order. Reasonably well informed people can be expected to hold opinions on these matters because they are relatively definite and distinct. Positions on, say, economic globalization are also more likely to have been formed in response to real world events, whose benefits might be measured and debated. Unfortunately, the vastness and overwhelming complexity of the world render any such response to it absurd. There is just too much going on in the world for even well informed observers to make such a reasoned judgment about its value, and capturing the way it binds us together in our minds will require an unusually expansive conception of the global imaginary.

It might be argued that the wider global imaginary remains incipient and undeveloped, and that what people really imagine when they think of the world is the current international order. In this way, when people imagine "the world," they would actually be envisioning the international order, with its 195 states and major bodies like the United Nations Security Council, the UN

General Assembly, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, and countless treaties regulating the use of force. But this is to mistake politics for practice, system for reality, and abstract conception for the concrete realities of a far more vast and variegated world.

Reducing the global imaginary to some denuded idea of the international order fails to account for the outsized role that climate change plays in our imaginations, and the fact that people frequently worry most about the world when the international order has completely broken down, as in the case of genocide. It has little if anything to do with fears that a world of 11 billion people might not be able to feed itself, that major powers might annihilate us in a nuclear holocaust, that the United States and Israel might together destroy the international order, reestablishing a neocolonial era of extraordinary exploitation, that humanity is wiping out hundreds of millions of years of evolved species, or that advanced AI might take over the planet. In short, it has little to do with what ordinary people actually worry about when they think about the world.

World trade might be looked at as residing within the international order, but what is most concerning about it is the elements of it that remain completely unregulated, which is arguably the greater part of it.[26] Indeed, the very activities making up the vast bulk of UN budgets in the form of peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid all pertain to areas where the international system might be said to have broken down as we shall see later in the thesis. Darfur and the Congo may not shape the international order, but they certainly help shape our conceptions of it. And platitudes that people everywhere like to repeat about the world, like the idea that "everyone is pretty much the same everywhere" have nothing to do with the international order. Nor do the overwhelming majority of human universals that every culture shares in common, like music, dance, meals, and homes.

Visions for the future of humanity have little to do with the current international order. Meditations on the oneness of the world have little to do with the current international order. The

[26] Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the Global Economy.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2012.

cosmopolitan embrace of ethnic diversity has little to do with the current international order. Nor does the sense that the global middle class is converging on a commonly shared lifestyle, or the idea that we share a single fragile biosphere, which we must carefully protect. In this way, many of our most salient experiences of the world have nothing to do with the current international order.

No, the world of our imaginations is vastly greater than the current international order, and the very conflation of the relatively weak international order with the far more vast and variegated world itself will be shown to account for a good portion of the frustrations with the global imaginary that will repeatedly crop up in this thesis. Indeed, it is the very confusion of the international order with the world itself that has led so many people to retreat from globalism. For instead of seeing an international order dominated by a few powerful states, which cannot function effectively, they see humanity itself as broken. Instead of seeing the possibilities of an international order that might redress many of the aforementioned challenges, they see a hopeless world strapped to a static international order, which is in actuality always in flux.

The complexity of the world makes it difficult to act upon, and this in turn has contributed to the relative ineffectiveness of global institutions, which has also contributed to the retreat from globalism. As the case studies on peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid will demonstrate, the international system of states has not been very effective at the tasks it has taken on,[27] and it has been plagued by the inability to get major powers to act in concert in an era increasingly characterized by global threats and the need for collective action.[28] The result has been a loss of faith in global collective action and a loss of legitimacy in global institutions. The malfunctions of the international order might drive a good part of the retreat from globalism, but it is the inability to get a handle on a vastly greater world that is spinning out of control that

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[27] Chandler, David. *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2017; Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019; Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2017; Walt, Stephen M. *The Hell of Good Intentions: America's Foreign Policy Elites and the Decline of U.S.* Supremacy Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2018.

[28] Keohane, Robert and Nye Jr., Joseph S. *Power and Interdependence, fourth ed.* Pearson. 2011.

drives the better part of the retreat.

Meanwhile, there has been little discussion of how the liberal international order has failed to generate a compelling notion of global citizenship.[29] And little has been written on how exposure to intractable mass suffering, which has been the focus of so many international projects, has led to the image of an overwhelming world. Nor has there been much focus on how the sheer magnitude and complexity of the world has complicated our efforts at forming a more complete picture of it. These are strange gaps in the literature given the implications, and they provide ample opportunities for meaningful and original research that will pervade this thesis.

The idea that the postwar liberal world order has entered a period of turbulence that might lead to its collapse is now a commonplace,[30] and many have identified the increasing turn to nationalism and rejection of globalism as essential to this shift.[31] Yet, comparatively few thinkers have examined the psychosocial forces fueling the retreat from globalism,[32] and few if any have articulated how our ideas about the way the world works and our place within it have contributed to this turnabout. Could it be that there is a deeper repository of thoughts and feelings fueling the retreat from globalism that has largely gone unnoticed? If so, it would constitute a remarkable discovery, which is only likely to be uncovered where few else are looking.

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[29] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism.* Allen Lane. 2019.

[30] Chandler, David. *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2017; Cronin, James E. *Fragile Victory: The Making and Unmaking of the Liberal Order.* Yale University Press. 2023; Ikenberry, G. John. *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crisis of Global Order.* Yale University Press. 2020; Kagan, Robert. *The Jungle Grows Back: America and Our Imperiled World.* Alfred A. Knopf. 2018; Kissinger, Henry. *World Order.* Penguin Press. 2014.

[31] Deneen, Patrick J. *Why Liberalism Failed.* Yale University Press. 2018; Ikenberry, G. John. *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crisis of Global Order.* Yale University Press. 2020; Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019.

[32] Horesh, Theo. *The Fascism This Time: And the Global Future of Democracy.* Cosmopolis Press. 2020; Mishra, Pankaj. *The Age of Anger: A History of the Present.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2017; Norris, Pippa and Ingelhart, Ronald. *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism.* Cambridge University Press. 2019.

The thesis starts to address this lacuna by examining the ways we have come to imagine ourselves as bound together with the rest of humanity and the frustrations with it that have led so many to retreat from globalism. In short, it seeks to articulate the foundations of a global imaginary and to identify some of its more neglected shortcomings in the failure of global institutions. But is it even possible to speak of an imaginary encompassing something so vast as the world? And if so, on what basis can we do so? Given the complex dialectical forces surging within it, how might we frame the global imaginary so as to better comprehend the retreat from globalism? And might it be possible to draw out a more grounded cosmopolitan dimension of it that staunches the retreat?

The end of the Cold War represented a watershed moment in the history of the world. It was seen to represent the end of a bi-polar world order characterized by the looming threat of nuclear apocalypse, and it ushered in a unipolar moment characterized by democratic liberalization and globalization.[33] It was a celebrated moment that has often been described as euphoric, and in just the first years after its fall, dozens of new democracies were created.[34] But in retrospect the euphoria itself would come to be seen as the pride that preceded a fall. The democratization it initiated all too often turned out to be shallow.[35] The liberalization it inaugurated culminated in shocking inequities.[36] The globalization it brought about was plagued by contradictions and dysfunctionality.[37] And we are now living in the ruins of these projects, salvaging what we can of

[33] Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man.* Free Press. 1992.
[34] Diamond, Larry. *Ill Winds: Saving Democracy from Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition, and American Complacency.* Penguin Press. 2019; Huntington, Samuel P. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century.* University of Oklahoma Press. 1993.
[35] Applebaum, Anne. *Twilight of Democracy: The Seductive Lure of Authoritarianism.* Knopf Doubleday. 2021; Dahl, Robert A. *On Democracy.* Yale University Press. 1998; Levitsky, Steven and Ziblatt, Daniel. *How Democracies Die.* Crown Publishing. 2018.
[36] Case, Anne and Deaton, Angus. *Deaths of Despair: And the Future of Capitalism.* Princeton University Press. 2020; Milanovic, Branko. *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization.* Belknap Press. 2016; Piketty, Thomas and Goldhammer, Arthur trans. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century.* Belknap Press. 2014.
[37] Chang, Ha-Joon. *Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism.* Bloomsbury Press. 2007; Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and*

them, while struggling with the reactions to their failures, along with the viciousness of the new elites they have brought to power.

It is this legacy that has largely shaped the global imaginary, so much of this thesis will be focused on what went wrong during this period, particularly through an examination of the case studies of peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid. Meanwhile, global institutions like diplomacy and statebuilding have far more ancient roots than we tend to imagine, so we will also be exploring the primordial roots of the global imaginary. But global institutions are only established within the context of an already existing global imaginary, and they are particular expressions of a far deeper imaginary that transcends and includes their various practices.

In this way, the coming chapters will develop the image of a world that is far more globalized than even the cheerleaders of globalization tend to think. The chapters will also put together the pieces of a global imaginary that is far too sprawling and complex to inspire much devotion. It is this paradox of being immersed in a globalized world while seldom being able to comprehend it that drives the dialectic of the global imaginary, for it complicates our efforts to either fully renounce or embrace globalism. Hence, the final chapters of the thesis will ask how the global imaginary might be grounded in shared institutions and identities.

These trends have been so routinely commented upon that the foregoing citation of sources for them risks diminishing the immensity of the phenomenon, which pervades popular commentary and the academic literature on world affairs alike. Yet, as will be explored in later chapters, the world is so vast, and the minds of eight billion people so difficult to fathom, that as soon as we posit a retreat from globalism, we find abundant evidence of the opposite. And we would do well to pause and consider it, if only to get a sense of the complexity involved in describing the retreat from globalism.

The percentage of people who think of themselves as citizens of the world has actually increased

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the Future of the Global Economy. W.W. Norton and Company. 2012; Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2017.

in recent years,[38] but it has increased fastest in developing countries. And, paradoxically, it has increased all the faster in many places that have elected authoritarian nationalist leaders. When the International Social Survey Program interviewed 45,000 people from 33 countries across the world about their identities as global citizens for the first and last time in 2013, their answers turned out to be myth shattering. Not only would 28 percent of Americans agree that they "feel more like a citizen of the world than my own country," 63 percent of Indians and 70 percent of Filipinos agreed. This was strangely counterintuitive insofar as it was a year before the election of India's ethnonationalist prime minister, Narendra Modi, and three years before the Philippines elected the rightwing nationalist Roderigo Duterte.

More than half of the population surveyed turned out to identify themselves first and foremost as citizens of the world. Meanwhile, the World Values Survey of 2016 found that 42 percent of people in rich countries and a rapidly surging 56 percent of people in developing countries identified themselves as global citizens, with ultranationalist China registering even higher rates of global citizenship than India.[39] Other surveys have mirrored the same findings, like that of the BBC's 2016 Globe Scan survey of 20,000 people in 18 countries, which found that for the first time in 15 years of carrying out the survey, just over half identified more as citizens of the world than the members of their own countries.[40] It was an extraordinary moment in the history of the global imaginary, but if the results of these surveys have any meaning at all, it was a moment whose significance was lost upon almost everybody.

Attempting to interpret the data would clutter this thesis with distractions, but it should make at least one thing clear: the world to which we feel ourselves bound as citizens is not the current international order. For while we might imagine ourselves possessing duties to the world itself, with its countless species and peoples, it is hard to conceive of what it would mean to carry out responsibilities to the current international order. The international order simply doesn't command that kind of allegiance. Nor do ordinary people who are not working directly with the

[38] Reysen, Stephen and Katzarska-Miller, Iva. *The Psychology of Global Citizenship: A Review of the Theory and Research.* Lexington Books. 2018.
[39] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism.* Allen Lane. 2019.
[40] BBC News. *Identity 2016:"Global Citizenship" Rising, Poll Suggests.* April 2016.

many organizations associated with the international order try to enact their duties to the world through it. But it is arguable that everyone now feels themselves in some way part of the world as such, and the survey data bears it out.

Thinking about our relationship to the whole of the world is not easy given its complexity, so the survey data alone cannot tell us much about what the people claiming to be citizens of the world are thinking and feeling. Still, these sorts of counterintuitive findings should lead us to question whether the retreat from globalism is as significant as recent writings on the matter tend to suggest, and all the more so given the remarkable consistency of the findings. If anything, the recent polarization we have seen in countries across the world suggests that more multicultural identities are being embraced about as much as they are being spurned.

Consider the United States where liberals have come to embrace a more multicultural society amid a resurgent rightwing nationalism and authoritarianism, and the United Kingdom where a mass movement tried to stymie the development of its increasingly multicultural society with Brexit. Indicators of a greater openness to difference, including support for same sex marriage and multiculturalism, are increasing in every major region of the world.[41] Hence, any explanation of the retreat from globalism needs to account for this countercurrent of rising openness and situate it within a global dialectic. A sea change may be taking place in the retreat from globalism, but it is occurring amid surging countercurrents and countless wavelets sloshing about unpredictably. And while a better grasp of the global imaginary might not be able to explain it, it can deepen our understanding of it, and it can provide some new tools through which we might transform it.

[41] Ingelhart, Ronald F. *Cultural Evolution, reprint edition.* Cambridge University Press. 2018.

The Methods of Inquiry

This thesis explores the changing conceptions of the world that are generating the retreat from globalism and the possibility of forging a stronger and more resilient global imaginary that is more apt to inspire meaningful collective action. In this way, it aims to explain the widely recognized rejection of globalism through the descriptive lens of the global imaginary, with the hope of yielding a richer understanding of the psychosocial forces driving it.

The expression psychosocial as used here refers to the interior experiences of individuals and groups, as opposed to the observation of their actions as viewed from the outside. It is used with some hesitation for lack of a clearer and more precise expression, as it suggests a kind of psychological analysis that will find little place in this thesis. The first chapter on the social imaginary will make clearer what is meant by interiority, or internal experiences, and how groups can share in these experiences. At this stage, we need only note that interior experiences like personal thoughts and feelings are essential to understanding the retreat from globalism because they are so vital to our motives and intentions, and they play such a critical role in the shaping of our identities. Yet, as this subsection will demonstrate, the thesis generally organizes these experiences through moral and political theory, as opposed to social psychology.

This view from the inside should not be confused with the kind of reified excrescence of experiences appearing in surveys. Descriptions of our interior experiences are seldom so neat and tidy as what we might learn of them through survey results. And they are rarely so easy to summarize, especially when dispersed among such a vast demographic as humanity itself, because our thoughts and feelings about an abstraction so immense as the world are bound to be unstable. Globalized public opinion polling is greatly informative, but it has also been carried out elsewhere,[42] so producing more of it may be of less comparative value to making sense of the retreat from globalism. And while it can tell us a lot about how people experience the world, it is not nearly so effective at getting at the substrate of conceptions from which their experiences

[42] Ingelhart, Ronald F. *Cultural Evolution, reprint edition.* Cambridge University Press. 2018; Reysen, Stephen and Katzarska-Miller, Iva. *The Psychology of Global Citizenship: A Review of the Theory and Research.* Lexington Books. 2018.

arise. Nor is it so easy to craft moral prescriptions out of such descriptive survey results, especially when it comes to institutions. Meanwhile, qualitative descriptions of internal experiences as depicted in the arts and literature tend to be too personalized and ambiguous to be of much help in articulating the foundations of a shared global identity. Rather, we need a framework that ties internal personal understandings to external global transformations, and an articulation of the global imaginary, as developed in the next two chapters and applied throughout the thesis, can help accomplish the task.

Social imaginaries are the shared ideas about who we are, what binds us together, and how we ought to live together.[43] In this way, they constitute the ideational basis of our shared identities and a repository of our collective social responses.[44] There are arguably social imaginaries for every community in which people share an identity and moral obligations to one another,[45] but the language of social imaginaries tends to be reserved for larger more coherent communities like nations and ethnicities. However, the coming chapters will demonstrate that, while the global imaginary has not commanded much attention,[46] it is essential to what it means to be human today, and that makes understanding it critical to sorting through our shared global challenges.[47] Somehow, we need to develop a framework that situates us in the world while inspiring us to care for it.

The global imaginary is made up of countless conceptions binding us together with the whole of humanity, and it provides sources of moral order that situate us in a world society and international system of states. In this sense, understanding the global imaginary is essential to finding our place in the world, but it is also critical to making sense of our conceptions of it.

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[43] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age, pg. 23.* Belknap Press. 2007.
[44] Castoriadis, Cornelius and Blamey, Kathleen. *The Imaginary Institution of Society.* MIT Press. 1998.
[45] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, pg. 6.* Verso. 1983.
[46] Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[47] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2007.

Social imaginaries might be conceived, among other things, in terms of the material forces that define their limits, the narratives that inspire devotion to them, the institutions that bring them into being, or the norms that engender conformity to them, as we will see in the upcoming chapter. But the global imaginary is unique in that it covers vastly more territory, it is conceived of by vastly more people, the people conceiving of it are vastly more diverse, and it is therefore more open to interpretations and far less stable than other social imaginaries. Thus, instead of seeking out a dominant theme that shapes the global imaginary, this thesis aims to construct a synoptic conception of it, based on a multitude of organizing principles.

It might be argued that this more integrative view of the global imaginary favors breadth over depth. Yet, it is only by capturing the true scale of the global imaginary, and the complexity of forces shaping it, that we can get at its essence. And it is precisely through confronting this more sprawling conception of the global imaginary that we force a reckoning with its challenges. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing the global imaginary is the difficulty of forging a unified conception of it. This leads to the further challenge of forging a greater sense of devotion to it. If we cannot conceive of a shared idea of the world, it will be difficult to inspire devotion to a global community. It will also be more difficult to forge stable global institutions, as we will see in the third chapter on the topic. In this sense, the greater breadth of the thesis is precisely what is required to engage the core challenges of the global imaginary in greater depth.

Whatever its precise structure, the global imaginary necessarily locates us first and foremost in the definitively demarcated sphere of the earth, and it is this material reality that will bring literal and figurative grounding to the global imaginary. But since social imaginaries can neither be seen nor felt, their precise contours cannot be demarcated, and this makes the articulation of their structures an interpretive endeavor, which can never be definitive. Since social imaginaries exist in the minds of their members, making sense of the global imaginary is largely a theoretical and speculative endeavor, which involves hypothesizing its role in shaping the sentiments of a shared humanity. That means exploring how events in the real world might have shaped our ideas about it, and conversely interpreting the way real world events are shaping our conceptions of the global imaginary. The influence goes both ways, with real world events shaping the global imaginary, and the global imaginary shaping real world events. The interpretive nature of the

research distinguishes the project as political theory, as opposed to political science. And theory can be critical to bringing conceptual coherence to seemingly disparate phenomena. However, the abstract nature of theoretical research tends to render its conclusions less definitive. And the vastness of the world, coupled with the pioneering nature of research into the global imaginary, render my own conclusions all the more interpretive.

The cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz believed that human societies are too complex to describe in their entirety. The best we can do is explain what is happening in them in greater detail.[48] This requires that we take note of ever more observations in the service of providing ever more comprehensive interpretations. For while we may not be able to definitively say what makes a society tick, we can always generate more meaningful insights about it. As the writings of Alexis De Tocqueville suggest,[49] the critical observations of outsiders often prove to be essential building blocks in the social imaginaries of the groups they observe. Meanwhile, the cultural criticisms of a Gandhi[50] or Tolstoy[51] can become integral to the development of their own peoples' social imaginaries as well.

The result is a kind of interpretive incompleteness, which relieves us of the burden of explanation, while demanding a richer compendium of observations. We do not have to say what makes a society distinct in order to recognize its independent existence, but we need to be clear about what we are referring to when we note its distinctiveness. This is another reason for building out a more synoptic conception of the global imaginary that is rooted in a multitude of organizing principles: it allows us to generate a richer compendium of observations, which might more closely approximate its reality, thereby tethering the conceptions of 8 billion people to a set of commonly shared observations of the actual world in which we live. But while this richer compendium of observations might yield a more integrative conception of the global imaginary, the interpretative incompleteness remains. It will always be a matter of well informed opinion, and all the more so given the complexity of the world.

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[48] Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Culture.* Basic Books. 1973.
[49] De Tocqueville, Alexis and Bevan, Gerald trans. *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America.* Penguin Classics. 2003.
[50] Gandhi, M.K. *Hind Swaraj.* Delhi Open Books. 2019.
[51] Tolstoy, Leo and Pevear, Richard trans. *War and Peace.* Vintage Classics. 2008.

There is something unsettling here, for it is hard to feel at home in a culture that lacks definition; and it is difficult to define ourselves through a group whose nature remains open to interpretation. And this starts to get at a discomfort we will see cropping up again and again with the global imaginary. As the scope of group membership grows wider, the interpretations can become increasingly fragmentary. For there are often as many perspectives on an event as positions from which it might be viewed, leading to the tendency of all events to become enveloped in a burgeoning spectra of interpretations—a daunting prospect in a world of over 8 billion people spanning hundreds, if not thousands, of cultures.

It is for this reason that the thesis adopts a maximally expansive conception of the global imaginary, as distinct from some of the more familiar conceptions of social imaginaries that will be explored in greater detail in the first chapter. It is simply requisite given the scale of the global imaginary, which might be articulated through any number of organizing principles. And it highlights the challenges of inspiring devotion to it. The vastness and complexity of the global imaginary complicates efforts to embrace it. Its size and complexity make it difficult for any single person to form a stable notion of the world, but they also make it hard to arrive at a shared conception of it. And this will help to explain the paradox of how ever increasing globalization comes coupled with a retreat from globalism.

Entering into the imaginations of eight billion people with the aim of grasping how they think of their shared relationships to one another can appear daunting. Yet, it is essential to understanding the retreat from globalism and of reconstructing a more compelling imaginary that might stimulate more effective global collective action. Doing so requires the support of political theory, which can help explain how disparate reactions to global events might fit together into a more general pattern. Political theory seeks to describe the role of politics in the life of humanity, and it uses the tools of logic to draw out the implications of observed political phenomena.

For instance, the observation that we live on a spherical planet that people and goods can travel freely around logically implies that events occurring in any one place are related to those in every other. But if we live on a single planet around which people and goods travel, then so do

ideas for they live in the minds of people, and so do institutions for they exist in the minds of groups, as will be explained in the first chapter on social imaginaries. And if institutions can travel around the world, then there is a global history to the spread of institutions, and the institutions that are spread are part of the shared inheritance of humanity, as are the technologies that so much of humanity takes for granted, like sheltered dwellings and eating utensils. In this way, we can use logic to start to get at the contents of the global imaginary, and we can use theories of international relations to make sense of how the contents of the global imaginary fit together, as we will see in the third chapter on global institutions.

Political theory is essential to constructing a more complete conception of the global imaginary. Yet, it is also critical to sorting through moral commitments to people on the other side of the planet, and of making normative recommendations concerning policies that impact people the world over. For theory helps us to understand the structures that bind us together and what is required of us to keep them from tearing us apart. In short, we cannot make sense of what we owe to humanity until we form a more complete understanding of our relationship to it. And that requires the possession of a theory about what binds us together globally, which in turn requires an articulation of the sort of identity that we imagine ourselves to share in common.

This is not the usual way we tend to think about generating more effective global action. So, before getting underway we would do well to look a little more deeply into what the global imaginary has to do with the more familiar framework of cosmopolitanism, which has more commonly been used to inspire greater global commitments. To ask how the global imaginary might be improved upon is to engage in a moral exploration that places our inquiry squarely within the cosmopolitan tradition.[52] There is now an ample body of literature on rising nationalism and authoritarianism, but comparatively little has been written on its impact on our sense of global citizenship. And even less has been written on the global imaginary on which this sense of citizenship is based.[53] This represents not simply a gap in the literature but rather a

[52] Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal.* Belknap Press. 2021.

[53] Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2009.

glaring omission in our explanation of the retreat from globalism, and it is my aim to fill it with the most robust and comprehensive articulation of the global imaginary to date in the service of generating a more rooted and effective cosmopolitanism, which will be saved for the conclusion.[54]

Moral cosmopolitans have pressed us to extend our spheres of moral concern to the whole of the world for the past two-and-a-half-millennia,[55] and political cosmopolitans have sought to influence the construction of global institutions that are able to channel these aspirations since at least the late eighteenth century, when Immanuel Kant wrote about the "league of democracies."[56] Insofar as this thesis seeks to inspire stronger global moral commitments, it might be looked upon as a work of moral cosmopolitanism; insofar as it explores what stronger global institutions might look like as a source of the global imaginary, it might be said to be a work of political cosmopolitanism.[57] But the focus on constructing a global imaginary places this work in the sparser and arguably younger field of cultural cosmopolitanism, which explores the way our identities and moral commitments are tied to an emergent global culture.[58]

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[54] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers. W.W. Norton and Company. 2007.

[55] Brown, Garrett Wallace and Held, David. *The Cosmopolitan Reader.* Polity Press. 2011; Pogge, Thomas. *World Poverty and Human Rights.* Polity Press. 2002; Singer, Peter. *One World Now: The Ethics of Globalization, revised edition.* Yale University Press. 2016.

[56] Grotius, Hugo and Campbell, A.C trans. The Rights of War and Peace. M. Walter Dunne. 1901; Kant, Immanuel and Humphrey, Ted trans. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays, pg. 107.* Hackett Publishing Company. 1983.

[57] Ulas, Luke. *Cosmopolitanism, Self-Interest and World Government.* Political Studies. (2016) Vol.64:15, 105-120.

[58] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2007; Appiah, K. Anthony and Camp, Sokari Douglas. *The Need for Roots.* African Arts. (2004) Spring Vol. 37, No.1, 26-31; Etzioni, Amitai. *The Emerging Global Normative Synthesis*. The Journal of Political Philosophy. (2004) Vol. 12, No.2, 214-244; Seki, Keiko. *Global Citizenship and Cultural Identities.* Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies. (1999) December Vol. 31, No.2; Nussbaum, Martha C. *Toward a Globally Sensitive Patriotism.* Daedalus. (2008) Summer Vol. 137, No.3; Waldron, Jeremy. *What is Cosmopolitanism?* The Journal of Political Philosophy. (2000) Vol. 8, No.2, 227-243.

Cultural cosmopolitans tend to see our moral and political commitments to the world as springing from our participation in a common global culture from which greater sentimentalities and solidarities might emerge.[59] And social imaginaries are essential to cultures, for they bind us together with narratives about the moral commitments and identities we share in common.[60] In this way, cultural cosmopolitans have tended to focus less on inspiring collective action and more on sorting through what it means to be a citizen of the world.[61] It is a salient question in an increasingly interconnected world, and all the more so given the increasingly multicultural nature of our societies. And we can hardly begin to inspire stronger moral commitments to the whole of humanity without saying something about how we are all bound together by the fate of our shared biosphere.[62] But it is probably not the best place to start if we want to inspire greater global collective action.[63]

Cultural cosmopolitanism has probably received more attention in recent years because, as this thesis seeks to demonstrate, we are becoming ever more globally interconnected, even amid rising nationalism and economic protectionism.[64] And as the second chapter on the global imaginary seeks to demonstrate, the idea of ourselves as bound together with the whole of humanity is becoming ever stronger, even as denials of this interconnectedness take center

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[59] Benhabib, Seyla and Post, Robert ed. *Another Cosmopolitanism*. Oxford University Press. 2008; Brown, Garrett Wallace and Hobbs, Joshua. *Self interest, transitional cosmopolitanism, and the motivational problem.* Journal of International Political Theory. (2023) 16:1, 64-86; February Etzioni, Amitai. T*he Emerging Global Normative Synthesis.* The Journal of Political Philosophy. (2004) Vol. 12, No.2, 214-244; Waldron, Jeremy. *What is Cosmopolitanism?* The Journal of Political Philosophy. (2000) Vol. 8, No.2, 227-243.

[60] Castoriadis, Cornelius and Blamey, Kathleen trans. *The Imaginary Institution of Society.* The MIT Press. 1998.

[61] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2007; Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal.* Belknap Press. 2021; Waldron, Jeremy. *What is Cosmopolitanism?* The Journal of Political Philosophy. (2000) Vol. 8, No.2, 227-243.

[62] Beck, Ulrich and Cronin, Ciara trans. *Cosmopolitan Vision.* Polity Press. 2006.

[63] Dobson, Andrew. *Thick Cosmopolitanism.* Political Studies. (2006) Vol. 54, 165-184; Pogge, Thomas. *World Poverty and Human Rights.* Polity Press. 2007.

[64] Ingelhart, Ronald F. *Cultural Evolution, reprint edition.* Cambridge University Press. 2018.

stage.[65] In this way, cultural cosmopolitanism speaks to our emergent identities as global citizens, and it helps us locate ourselves in a more complex and often confusing world. But it is only what might be described as a smaller subdiscipline of cultural cosmopolitanism that explores what motivates our global moral commitments, and it is within this subcategory of *sentimental cosmopolitanism* that this thesis might be said to be most thoroughly located.

Sentimental cosmopolitanism asks why it is so difficult to inspire moral commitments to people and causes in distant places, and it explores the sorts of feelings and experiences that might strengthen those commitments.[66] In this way, it corrects a blindspot in contemporary cosmopolitan discourse, which has tended to focus on the kinds of moral commitments we ought to make, while downplaying the question of how to get people to carry them out. Trying to convince people that they ought to give a certain portion of their incomes to the desperately poor in distant places, as recommended by Peter Unger, is all well and good, for instance;[67] and it is useful to formulate moral principles in light of the practical difficulties involved in giving, while providing personal strategies through which they might be overcome, as one often finds in the writings of Peter Singer.[68] But people are more likely to give if they feel compassion, and they are more likely to feel compassion if they experience themselves as personally bound to their beneficiaries, for instance. And there has been far less written on the moral power of these sorts of sentiments.

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[65] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism.* Allen Lane. 2019.

[66] Brown, Garrett Wallace and Hobbs, Joshua. *Self interest, transitional cosmopolitanism, and the motivational problem.* Journal of International Political Theory. (2023) 16:1, 64-86; Hobbs, Joshua. *Cosmopolitan Anger and Shame.* Journal of Global Ethics. (2021) *16:1, 58-76;* Long, Graham. *Moral and Sentimental Cosmopolitanism*. Journal of Social Philosophy. (2009) 40, no.3: 317–42; Woods, Kerri. *Whither Sentiment? Compassion, Solidarity, and Disgust in Cosmopolitan Thought*. Journal of Social Philosophy. (2012) Spring, Vol. 43, 33-49; Ulas, Luke. *Cosmopolitanism, Self-Interest and World Government.* Political Studies. (2016) Vol.64:15, 105-120.

[67] Unger, Peter. *Living High and Letting Die: Our Illusion of Innocence.* Oxford University Press. 1996.

[68] Singer, Peter. *Famine, Affluence, and Morality.* Philosophy & Public Affairs. (1972) Spring Vol. 1 No. 3, pp 229-243

Hence, sentimental cosmopolitans inquire, among other things, into what inspires the types of emotions that might deepen our bonds of solidarity with the beneficiaries of our charity.[69] In this way, sentimental cosmopolitans have hypothesized that concerning ourselves with not just the suffering but also the injustices suffered by people in distant places might make us more apt to work to improve their lives, for it engages both our hearts and our minds. Meanwhile, Joshua Hobbs has theorized that if we engage our anger at the sight of political injustices, we are more likely to find the motivation to follow through with taking a stand for justice.[70] Kerri Woods has suggested that a shared sense of vulnerability with the beneficiaries of our support might provide stronger motivations for it.[71] And Luke Ulas argues that global institutions can channel our self-interested sentiments toward a higher common global good.[72]

The debate over what sorts of engagement might be most effective in deepening our commitment to improving the lives of people in distant places is still relatively new. So, it is probably too soon for a consensus to emerge around a definite set of answers. Yet, sentimental cosmopolitanism is breaking new ground in applying a deeper grasp of moral psychology to cosmopolitan ethics. It has inaugurated a debate about how the relationships we imagine with people in distant places shape our moral commitments to them, and it is beginning to articulate the lineaments of a globally shared moral universe. What this thesis seeks to bring to the debate on sentimental cosmopolitanism is the stronger motivating force of a unified conception of the world and our place within it. If you really want to get people to enact commitments to the whole of the world, you need to show them what it is, how they are a part of it, and what it means to their lives. In this way, foregrounding the global imaginary places the fate of humanity at the center of our moral universes.

The following chapters seek to demonstrate that cosmopolitan commitments can be strengthened

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[69] Martha Nussbaum. *Cosmopolitan Emotions?* New Humanist. (2001) 116, no. 4.
[70] Hobbs, Joshua. *Cosmopolitan Anger and Shame*. Journal of Global Ethics. (2021) 16:1, 58-76.
[71] Woods, Kerri. *Whither Sentiment? Compassion, Solidarity, and Disgust in Cosmopolitan Thought.* Journal of Social Philosophy. (2012) Spring, Vol. 43, 33-49.
[72] Ulas, Luke. *Cosmopolitanism, Self-Interest and World Government.* Political Studies. (2016) Vol.64:15, 105-120.

by binding humanity together in a more coherent global imaginary, which motivates moral commitments in the same way national imaginaries inspire citizens to care for their fellow compatriots. In short, we are more likely to care and be moved to act on a wider sphere of moral commitments when we see ourselves as inextricably bound together with the rest of humanity, and all the more so when we see ourselves as tied to the same institutions. In this way, Hassan Damluji argues that cosmopolitans need to look to nationalists to learn how social identities can be put in the service of more expansive moral commitments.[73] But sentimental cosmopolitans have given comparatively less attention to the ways in which a shared global identity might motivate stronger global commitments, and even less to the role of institutions in binding together our global identities. Hence, this thesis aims to fill a substantial gap in the sentimental cosmopolitan literature while deepening the discussion around cultural cosmopolitanism.

Insofar as it delineates the social foundations of a shared global identity, the study of the global imaginary is a sociological endeavor, for it involves the examination of a social phenomenon. Hence, this thesis draws upon the sociological literature on globalization, which highlights the way it has compressed space and time, thereby bringing humanity closer together across the surface of the earth, as our actions today have come to have increasingly powerful implications for the distant future.[74] The literature emphasizes the way groups of people react to the process of globalization,[75] and this is essential to our examination of the ideas we form about the way the world works. And among sociological works on globalization, the most pertinent to this thesis are the pioneering writings of the sociologist Manfred Steger, whose work on the global imaginary illustrates its manifestation in a series of ideologies arising out of the process of globalization.[76]

Steger defines the global imaginary as a growing awarenessness of global connectivity, a tacit

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[73] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism.* Allen Lane. 2019.
[74] Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Polity Press. 1990.
[75] Robertson, Roland in Featherstone, Mike ed. *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity.* SAGE Publications Ltd. 1990.
[76] Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2009.

understanding that leads people to conceive of the world as a single integrated whole. And he suggests that this sense of connectivity is gradually replacing the nation state as the primary locus of social consciousness. But it remains an unfinished project with the global imaginary serving more as a destabilizing force in the life of nations, which eats away at the sense of inevitability that has tended to accompany national imaginaries. In this way, the global imaginary acts as a pre-reflexive background, which precedes formal political thought. It provides the common sense parameters through which individuals navigate a more connected world, and it represents the subjective recognition of the objective facts of globalization, thereby translating the material reality of global networks into a shared sense of intersubjective belonging. But it is the process of ideological formation, which springs from this deeper understanding, that is the focus of Steger's writings on the global imaginary.

Steger articulates a dialectical pulse, which moves from neoliberalism to antiglobalization, from globalized terrorism to global empire. In this way, he emphasizes the process by which ideologies, arising out of the process of globalization, vie for dominance in the global imaginary. The process is loosely analogous to a party system in which electoral force is met by counterforce, only for a third party to come along bringing into being its own coalitional counterweight. However, his writings on the global imaginary are sociological, while this is a work of political theory. And while he looks to ideology as a means of inspiring global collective action, this thesis looks to a plethora of forces, while focusing on institutions which might better channel our drives. This calls for a shift of focus from the external events driving the formation of ideologies to the internalized conceptions they evoke in our imaginations. Moreover, it calls for a theoretical interpretation of how they are bound together. In this sense, the conception of the global imaginary developed over the course of the following chapters, while maintaining a surface likeness to the work of Steger, turns out to be quite dissimilar in practice, as will be demonstrated in further depth in the first chapter on the social imaginary.

Yet, the framework established by Steger helps clarify a critical distinction between the global imaginary and the international order, with the global imaginary serving as a pre-reflexive layer of consciousness through which we identify with the world, and the international order being the product of our more conscious political navigation of the world, which is layered upon it. The

distinction is crucial insofar as the incipient nature of the global imaginary renders it unstable and amorphous, and leaves us liable to identification with the more institutional international order. But as we have seen, the international order could never begin to capture our hopes and fears and passions, nor our most mundane ideas about what it means to be human, that are associated with the emergent global imaginary. Thus, it is these pre-reflexive sentiments that will remain the focus on this thesis.

In summary, the thesis applies a sociological analysis to its articulation of the process of globalization and global institutional development, and it deploys a cultural cosmopolitan analysis to its exploration of the global imaginary. It utilizes political theory to explain the way shifts in the shape of the global imaginary drive the retreat from globalism, and it makes use of sentimental and political cosmopolitan arguments to articulate how we might craft a more resilient global imaginary that is more apt to inspire stronger global collective action. In this way, the thesis draws from a wide array of literatures in its effort to examine the structures and processes of a global imaginary whose study remains in its infancy. This makes it an interdisciplinary project whose conclusions open up a multitude of potential new areas of research, which we will explore in greater detail in the conclusion.

Now, let us turn to the structure of the argument.

The Logic of the Argument

The thesis is divided into three sections, which are laid out in more detail below. In short, the first section explains the global imaginary, the second tests and scrutinizes it through case studies, and the third reconstructs it.

The first chapter provides an overview of social imaginaries with an emphasis on their mutability. There is arguably no authoritative account of social imaginaries, with many of the

most well recognized works commenting on it through the particular imaginaries they seek to illustrate. However, this thesis draws heavily on the methods of Charles Taylor, who emphasizes the moral order at the heart of social imaginaries, along with their conceptual coherence, and the mutability of their structures.[77] It also makes ample use of Kwame Anthony Appiah's writings on identity, which tend to emphasize its openness to outside influences.[78]

Social imaginaries as we will see are typically contested, and they are always changing.[79] They are contested by each new generation, but they are also contested by newer and more marginalized group members. Meanwhile, their boundaries are constantly shifting, as are their demographic characteristics. And they must repeatedly adapt to an ever-changing world.[80] So, maintaining social imaginaries typically means creating them anew and reaffirming their relevance in ritual displays of commitment.[81] This helps us to understand some of the resurgence of nationalism today: national identities are being reasserted because social identities must be periodically reaffirmed if they are to last. But it also highlights the way identities are often asserted most strongly when they are most greatly threatened. And it suggests the need for more inclusive identities that might be more resilient to social and environmental changes. In this way, the first chapter sets the stage for understanding the dialectic of the global imaginary.

The second chapter digs into what constitutes the global imaginary, and this turns out to be a sprawling complex of ideas and associations, most of which are typically overlooked. Seldom do we give much thought to the way our shared biology might shape a common sense of humanity, or the way ancient technologies like cutlery and jewelry and housing are universal across cultures, for instance.[82] Nor do we tend to give much thought to the idea that we share a common

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[77] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* Belknap Press. 2007.

[78] Appiah, K. Anthony and Camp, Sokari Douglas. *The Need for Roots.* African Arts. (2004) Spring Vol. 37, No.1, 26-31; Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2007; Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity.* Liveright. 2019.

[79] Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries.* Duke University Press. 2003.

[80] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity.* Liveright. 2019.

[81] Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember.* Cambridge University Press. 1989.

[82] Brown, Donald E. *Human Universals.* Temple University Press. 1991.

planet, with clearly demarcated borders, and that ideas and goods circle freely around it, as Immanuel Kant pointed out.[83] But these are just the sorts of things making up the substrate of our shared humanity, whose salience is reinforced by institutions like the global economy and international system of states. As its many dimensions are rolled out, a richer and fuller notion of the global imaginary begins to take shape, and this highlights why national identities have come to seem so threatened. It also illustrates the need for a more expansive imaginary upon which to base our identities. Yet, the global imaginary that is articulated in the second chapter is probably too sprawling and expansive to be of much help in constructing a social identity upon which we might base stronger global collective actions.

Institutions shape our understanding of the world by channeling our practices into recognizable patterns. In this way, social imaginaries are largely shaped by institutions, which ground our notions of the way things work. But global institutions are relatively weak in comparison with the national institutions with which they are commonly compared. Hence, the third chapter explores how the global imaginary has contributed to and been shaped by global institutions. And it attempts to lay out a wide range of global institutions in an effort to round out our description of the global imaginary. The diversity of institutions is probably more extensive than most people think—including among other things human rights, diplomacy, humanitarianism, peacekeeping, statebuilding, development aid, the international economy, the international system of states, and an international society of diplomats and heads of state.[84] Laying out the full panoply of institutions in this way grounds the global imaginary in a set of practices while illustrating their relative hold over our imaginations. As the third chapter seeks to demonstrate, global institutions are surprisingly extensive and deeply embedded. Yet, they are also generally underdeveloped and poorly understood. Hence, we turn in the second section of the thesis to an examination of how three emergent global institutions have been shaped by and in turn shaped the way we conceive of the world.

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[83] Kant, Immanuel and Humphrey, Ted trans. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays, pgs. 121-122.* Hackett Publishing Company. 1983.

[84] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* Red Globe Press, 4th ed. 2012; Meyer, John W and Drori, Gill S. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer.* Oxford University Press. 2009; Ruggie, John. *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization.* Routledge. 1998.

The fourth chapter examines the way peacekeeping has been shaped by the global imaginary and in turn how it has shaped it, while the fifth does the same for statebuilding, and the sixth development aid. Each of these institutions emerges from a relatively rudimentary conception of the global imaginary; grounds the global imaginary by rooting it in institutional practices; deepens the global imaginary by focusing our attention on it; and strengthens the global imaginary by enacting it in global collective action. But the institutionalized practices that we examine also weaken the global imaginary by associating it with the insurmountable challenges these institutionalized practices aim to redress. And they fuel the retreat from globalism by highlighting the failures of global institutions. In this way, they display the dialectical ebb and flow of our attachments to globalism and our identification with the whole of humanity.

Each of these institutions takes on a seemingly impossible task that is necessary to the maintenance of a peaceful and prosperous world order. In the case of peacekeeping, it is the seemingly impossible task of preventing rival armies from fighting by placing another lightly armed military between them.[85] In the case of development aid it is fostering economic growth in the poorest countries on a shoestring. In the case of statebuilding, it is international bureaucrats carrying out a revolution in governance in countries they know little about. The institutions do tend to make things better,[86] as each of these chapters will argue in detail. But their limited effectiveness sets up the international community for failure, and this leads observers to associate world society and the international system of states with the very real failures they set out to ameliorate and in many cases instigate.

To simplify, peacekeeping becomes associated with crimes against humanity, development aid with poverty, and statebuilding with state failure. Thus, the disorders they seek to redress are commonly what people remember most about their work, often in the form of lasting traumas. And the institutions contribute to the emergence of a global imaginary that holds little appeal to

[85] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williams, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition.* Polity Press. 2010.

[86] Fortna, Virginia Page. *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices After War.* Princeton University Press. 2008; Kenny, George. *Getting Better: Why Global Development is Succeeding and How We Can Improve the World Even More.* Basic Books. 2012.

people in more stable developed states, thereby undermining a sense of global solidarity and paving the way for a retreat from globalism. The case studies demonstrate among other things how global cooperation is hampered by the lack of a shared global identity, which in turn stems from the lack of a more compelling global imaginary. Funding for global projects is hard to come by because too few people feel a stake in them, and the institutions in which they are embedded are weakened by the lack of a stronger moral order that might inspire greater global commitments. In this way, the case studies illustrate the need for a more resilient global imaginary that can meet the great global challenges of the twenty-first century.[87] But the case studies also demonstrate how the very collective actions that might bind us together globally often spur the retreat from globalism. Thus, they also illustrate the dialectics of the global imaginary.

The specific case studies were selected because peace, order, and development are essential, and in many ways central to the flourishing of human civilization. And it is perhaps for this reason that the institutionalized practices of peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid make up such a substantial portion of international activity. In this way, they help to flesh out a fuller conception of the global imaginary. They are also distinctive practices that might be criticized individually, so we can learn something different from an examination of each of them. Thus, their examination demonstrates a range of challenges confronted in the global imaginary. But they are also closely tied together through the process of peacebuilding, so examining them together helps provide a deeper understanding of the work of the international community. Finally, the incomplete development of these institutions provides us with the opportunity to inquire into how a more fully developed international system might transform the global imaginary.

The seventh chapter provides a synopsis of the case studies, exploring what they share in common and how the insights gleaned from their examination might help explain other global challenges like climate change and crimes against humanity. In this way, the chapter demonstrates in far greater detail why these particular case studies were chosen while highlighting the way in which they are microcosms of the difficulties confronted in a range of

[87] Beck, Ulrich and Cronin, Ciara trans. *Cosmopolitan Vision.* Polity Press. 2006.

global challenges like climate change and genocide. And it finishes with a look at how more participatory global institutions might help generate a cohesive global imaginary that provides the basis of robust global collective action. In short, it posits that institutions are the grooves through which humanity moves in tandem, and that generating a stronger sense of global citizenship will require that they be strengthened.

The thesis concludes with an exploration of how this sense of global citizenship might be strengthened through the construction of more participatory global institutions. In this way, the thesis goes from articulating the forces that bind humanity together, to asking how they have fueled a retreat from globalism, to exploring the way stronger global institutions might stymie the retreat, and thereby provide the wherewithal needed to take on the great global challenges of this century. It is an obviously ambitious project that seeks to articulate vast forces moving through us all, which tend to lie beyond the reach of our comprehension, in an effort to spur action on challenges that threaten the future of humanity. And it is in this sense unusual for academic projects, which tend to focus on specific areas of research that might incrementally advance our general understanding. But it is my hope that the grandiosity of its aims will not obscure the specificity of its focus on, what has remained until now, the blue ocean of uncharted territory in the global imaginary, and its unique contributions to our understanding of the retreat from globalism.

Chapter I: The Social Imaginary

Social groups distinguish themselves with countless markers: shared territories and historical narratives, common languages and religious practices, moral norms and social habits, myths and symbols, music and dance. And people tend to mix and match seemingly incompatible identities in such a way that humanity never seems to pause in its generation of greater cultural diversity. But what is it about the things we share in common with others that leads us to identify with them? Sociology might explain how groups of people interact, but the process by which we come to identify with one another cannot be explained by actions alone. So, how do social interactions produce shared identities, and how can we explain the persistence of shared identities in the absence of continuing social interactions?

Cornelius Castoriadis suggests that what is most essential about social identities is that they reside in the imagination.[88] Somehow, random strangers separated by thousands of miles and millions of fellow compatriots must come to imagine themselves as related, and in imagining themselves as related come to identify with one another. Kwame Anthony Appiah goes further, noting that identities must be recognized and seen as distinct by not just the members of a group but by nonmembers as well.[89] In this way, it is not enough to imagine ourselves as the bearers of identities. Others must recognize the identities we bear as well. But if shared identities exist in the imagination, how do we come to imagine them as stable when they are riven with contradictions and constantly changing?

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[88] Castoriadis, Cornelius and Blamey, Kathleen trans. *The Imaginary Institution of Society.* The MIT Press. 1998.

[89] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity, pg. 21.* Profile Books. 2018.

The markers of identity are seldom as constant as they appear. The criteria of citizenship shift arbitrarily,[90] national borders change,[91] 'traditional' foods pass out of fashion, generations die off. And yet, even as members come and go, and the conditions binding them together wash away in the rivers of time, identities can persist for millennia. Somehow, Canadians and Kurds, Catholics and Armenians, imagine themselves to possess much the same identities as seen by outsiders amid a perpetual flux of contradictions. Hence, the question that perplexed Castoriadis was where we might find the originary kernel of identity. When is it that groups mark themselves off from others, and what is it that allows their identities to persist centuries after every feature of them have been transformed?

This thesis seeks to answer why so many people have rejected more cosmopolitan identities at the very historical juncture in which such identities are becoming undeniable and indispensable. Yet, doing so requires us to get a better grasp of how people imagine themselves related to others through social imaginaries. And this chapter seeks to illustrate how we go about imagining shared identities and what it is about social imaginaries that allows them to persist even as the foundations on which they are premised are dissolving before our eyes. Answering these questions can help us understand how people the world over have reified national imaginaries and overlooked the global imaginary, even as our lives have become more globalized. And it can help us build up a grammar through which we might reconstruct a richer and more rewarding cosmopolitan vision. The first step begins with the surprisingly difficult task of defining the social imaginary.

Benedict Anderson's, *Imagined Communities*, invariably comes up in most every serious discussion of the social imaginary. Yet, it does not even venture a general definition of the expression, sticking instead to descriptions of the nation, which Anderson defines as "an imagined political community."[92] Anderson describes how nations came to be imagined through the capitalist relations of production, which bound together ever larger communities of workers in the production process; the development of print communications, which put these

[90] Kochenov, Dimitry. *Citizenship.* MIT Press. 2019.
[91] Nail, Thomas. *Theory of the Border.* Oxford University Press. 2016.
[92] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities, pg. 6.* Verso. 1983.

communities in touch with one another through shared literatures and newspapers; and the death of dialects, leading to the emergence of ever wider linguistic communities.[93] The conditions would lead millions of people, scattered about in societies the world over, to identify with one another as fellow compatriots of their respective nations. But it is far from clear how his insights concerning the emergence of national imaginaries might be applied to social imaginaries more generally, for there are countless ways in which groups of people come into being.

The foremost theorist of the global imaginary does not define the social imaginary in his main work on the topic either. Manfred Stieger's, *The Rise of the Global Imaginary*, is arguably the defining work on the global imaginary. Yet, Steger focuses the work almost entirely on ideology, and he defines ideologies as "comprehensive belief systems composed of patterned ideas and claims to truth."[94] Steger describes a dialectical process wherein ideologies like liberalism and nationalism, globalization and anti-globalization, compete for dominance in an increasingly globalized world. In this sense, the ideologies of globalization emerge from the deeper global imaginary. But he does not clarify precisely how ideologies differ from social imaginaries, which do not tend to operate at the level of the kinds of conscious truth claims that tend to be associated with ideologies.

In the closest he comes to a definition, Charles Taylor suggests that social imaginaries pertain to the ways in which people "imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations."[95] But none of this involves truth claims, and these are not the sorts of ideas we usually associate with ideologies, which tend to be propagated by elites as a means of legitimating their rule. Rather, they are the background conditions to shared practices and institutions, which are far more social and cultural than the politics of ideology. In short, Taylor is getting at the way groups of people come to identify with one another through shared practices, not the way they smooth over their

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[93] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities, pgs. 42-43.* Verso. 1983.
[94] Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror, pg. 4.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[95] Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries, pg. 23*. Duke University Press. 2003.

differences with diffuse belief systems justifying their existence. Social imaginaries might be akin to ideologies insofar as they both pertain to the way groups imagine themselves, but social imaginaries are expressive of a far wider array of forces, more deeply embedded in our identities.

John Thompson might be said to define the social imaginary as "the creative and symbolic dimension of the social world, the dimension through which human beings create their ways of living together and their ways of representing their collective life."[96] But in placing an emphasis on "the creative and symbolic dimension," he downplays the salience of social practices, just as Taylor's emphasis on social practices downplays the role of the imagination. This is probably the result of social groups being imagined in so many different ways, and it highlights yet another reason this thesis will seek to generate a more synoptic notion of the social imaginary, which accounts for the countless paths through which people might come to see themselves as sharing in an identity.

The literature is striking in its unwillingness to even venture a definition, and to encounter so many differences when it does. Yet, the lack of succinct definitions reminds us of the countless elements binding societies together, and this chapter will build out the list of potential binding agents. In actuality, there are a multitude of forces that might bind together a group, and each group imagines itself bound together in its own unique way. It also suggests something slippery about social imaginaries, which is tied to the fact that they ultimately exist in our minds, even as they emerge from a dialectic interaction with our practices. Social imaginaries emerge from social practices and in turn shape those same practices,[97] binding together groups through a dialectical process embedded in institutions, as we will explore in the third chapter.

The social imaginary might be most fruitfully defined as an intersubjective realm wherein people experience themselves as bound together by a shared sense of belonging; it exists in the hearts and minds of collectivities and takes shape in the ideas they possess about who they are and the things they share in common. While most groups are also bound together by concrete material processes, every group must imagine the ties that bind its members together. Anderson notes that

[96] Thompson, John. *Studies in the Theory of Ideology, pg. 6*. Polity. 1991.
[97] Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Duke University Press. 2003.

"all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined."[98] Meanwhile, social imaginaries can extend as far as the notions contained within them might spread; and since there is little limit to the spread of concepts, this thesis seeks to demonstrate that social imaginaries can bind together not simply the multitudes of a nation but also the people of the world.

And it all begins with making sense of how our subjective experiences are bound together with those of others in intersubjective social imaginaries.

Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity

Interiority refers to those aspects of experience, like thoughts and feelings, that are purely subjective. The interiority of the imagination can make talk of it sound nebulous, because it lacks an objective basis. Ideas exist in the minds of others, and the less rational they are, the more difficult they are to grasp. So, while we might be able to follow the rational train of thought of someone who has spelled out their logic, it is far more difficult to make sense of the amalgam of thoughts that pass through their minds, much less the myths and symbols that pull on their heartstrings and stir their sentiments. It is all the more difficult because, as the philosopher Thomas Nagel suggests, interiors are inviolable. In other words, the experiences of one person cannot be exchanged for those of the next; and the memories of one can never be handed over to another. As he points out, you can never climb outside your own mind and enter the mind of another; and you can never stop the stream of consciousness that unites your own past to the present.[99]

This may be putting it too strongly,[100] but it highlights the challenge of explaining intersubjectivity. The inviolability of human subjectivity means that shared identities exist

[98] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities, pg. 6.* Verso. 1983.
[99] Nagel, Thomas. *The View from Nowhere, pgs. 28-54.* Oxford University Press. 1989.
[100] Parfit, Derek. *Reasons and Persons.* Oxford University Press. 1986.

largely in the imagination. Yet, how can a world of solitary individuals, who cannot escape their own minds, create an imaginary world that binds them together with the fates of others? The problem of other minds is an ancient philosophical dilemma concerning the question of how we can know what's happening in the minds of others, and it is tied to a vast and deep literature. Yet, this thesis can flash no more than a passing glance at it, for what concerns us is not how individuals can climb into the minds of others, but rather how collectivities might imagine themselves as possessing their own minds. How is it that we imagine the groups of which we are members as having distinctive personalities with clear and impenetrable boundaries?

A number of mutually compatible theories help describe the way intersubjectivity emerges to bind social imaginaries together.

Herbert Blumer saw the ability to conceive of shared identities as rooted in the capacity to make ourselves the objects of our own actions.[101] This might seem a strange place to start, but beginning here helps demonstrate how subjectivity grows into the intersubjectivity of social imaginaries. By becoming the objects of our actions, he is referring to our ability to note what we are doing and change it. This might mean setting goals, regretting actions, focusing attention, or resolving to quit. Each involves taking stock of a situation and doing something different. The capacity is integral to autonomous action insofar as it allows us to direct our lives, but it is also essential to social engagement.

Human interactions are shot through with adjustments to language and tone, gesture and meaning; and making them requires that we note how we are relating to others and alter it in an ongoing effort to remain in sync. Michael Tomasello demonstrates in a remarkable series of early childhood development studies how this process of syncing up with others begins in infancy with following the gaze of primary caregivers, grows into taking on their perspective, and culminates in the recognition of a shared objective reality.[102] The ability is critical to the development of

[101] Blumer, Herbert. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method.* University of California Press. 1986; Mead, George Herbert. *Mind, Self, and Society.* University of Chicago Press. 1934.
[102] Tomasello, Michael. *Becoming Human: A Theory of Ontogeny.* Belknap Press. 2019.

empathy, which results from a recognition that others possess their own minds.[103] But syncing up with others seems to involve something more, and it starts to get at what binds us together in intersubjective imaginaries.

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann describe much the same process as a dialectic in which individuals internalize the external world then project their experiences back onto it. What they mean is that we never simply experience things as they are but rather attach our own meanings to the experiences. We read the news and give it our own spin in conversation, learn the skills of a profession and practice it according to our own values. And whether a person is responding to new information about climate change with, say, denial or moral fortitude, their responses are added to a stock of impressions that others might internalize. The process involves a sort of ricochet-effect in which social knowledge bounces from person to person and picks up new meanings along the way. The end result might be a green new deal that leads to vigorous social action or mass moral malaise, but whatever its nature it is an intersubjective construction that contributes to the shape of the social imaginary.[104] In this way, social groups generate their own symbolic universes, which are always unfolding and never complete.

We can start to see here how subjective experiences might culminate in the emergence of an imagined intersubjective lifeworld.

Jurgen Habermas formulated the expression communicative reason to describe the process of constructing a social imaginary through deliberative argumentation.[105] He is referring to the kind of debate that shapes the rules and norms of democratic polities, but the process can be applied to other sorts of societies as well. Communicative reason requires participants to follow a set of unspoken agreements around the use of language, the rules of communication, the structure of valid arguments, and the nature of reality. We can think of this in ideal terms as something people ought to do when engaging in the artificial construct of communicative reason, but we

[103] De Waal, Frans. *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society.* Broadway Books. 2010.
[104] Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality.* Anchor Books. 1966.
[105] Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms.* Polity Press. 1996.

can also think of it more prosaically as what people actually do when they want to win people over to their ideas. Playing by the rules of debate helps secure a wider acceptance of your arguments, so most people engaged in it adhere to arguments based on reason and commonly shared notions of reality, for instance. In this way, communicative reason affirms the existence of a shared lifeworld. But it also builds upon it in a process of giving and taking reasons, which Socrates described two-and-a-half millennia ago.[106]

In this sense, the dialectic looks a lot like that described by Berger and Luckmann, for it is building an intersubjective reality through social interchange. Yet, communicative reason accomplishes something deeper insofar as it encourages us to formulate more universal arguments, which might come to form the basis of public norms and institutions. Whether played out in courtrooms or parliaments, college classrooms or the opinion sections of papers, the arguments we formulate in a process of communicative reason tend to be more universal, because more universal arguments can appeal to a wider audience. It also tends to generate a consensus around the shared rules and norms lying at the heart of institutions, if only because it generates a common moral grammar. In this sense, it brings legitimacy to the social order, and it starts to get at how we might want to think about reconstructing a cosmopolitan imaginary in our final chapter.

These are all mutually compatible ways of describing the intersubjective reality at the heart of social imaginaries, for they each involve another dimension of the way meaning emerges from shared interactions. Yet, the linguistic philosopher John Searle believes there is an easier way to cut to the chase. Instead of seeking the source of intersubjectivity in the things they share in common, and how they are transferred from person to person, or in the agreements they build through argumentation, Searle looks instead to how people describe their own experiences. For when people refer to "our traditions," and "our achievements," they are referring to a group that possesses these things in common. And when several people use the same language to refer to the same shared identity, they are drawing attention to their membership in a group.[107]

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[106] Plato and Louise Gill, Mary et al. trans. *Parmenides, pgs. 79-81.* Hackett Publishing Company. 1996.

[107] Searle, John. *The Construction of Social Reality.* Penguin. 1996.

The first-person plural language of "us" and "our" doesn't simply refer to an identity but also declares it. They are in this sense performative statements, which J.L Austen defined as utterances that change social realities. To say, "I do" at the altar, or to swear an oath of office, is to declare a commitment. These are actions which commence social duties. Hence, when a first generation immigrant speaks of "our" nation, in reference to his adoptive homeland, he is declaring himself a part of it; and when he declares that "we must defend it," before entering the military, he is committing his life to it.[108] It is much the same when we bemoan the state of "our" world or ask what "we" are going to do about climate change. These are declarations of participation in the shared community of humanity, and this highlights the way cosmopolitan values can be rooted in the shared imaginary that this thesis is attempting to describe.

But if speaking of our role in a shared identity is a declaration of it, and declaring our identity is enough to make it real, it is a peculiar sort of reality. The world historian Yuval Noah Hariri succinctly observes that the objective world exists *outside* ourselves, independent of our thoughts and wishes; and the subjective world exists *inside* ourselves, in the recesses of our own imaginations; but the intersubjective world binds together our imaginations through communication, and it makes us most distinctively human.[109] Institutions like football and money, states and religions, are products of the intersubjective imagination. They exist in short because people believe they do, and Searle suggests that their reality consists in our beliefs about their purposes.

Money is not simply an intersubjectively shared idea but rather a set of ideas about its purpose in trade. It involves a set of rules about what constitutes money, what it can be used for, how it is to be exchanged, and how it is to be valued. And it is regulated by a multitude of supporting institutions, including states, police, and central banks. In this way, the intersubjective institution of money is embedded in a network of imaginary institutions. And what can be said of money can be said of parliaments, schools, hospitals, day care centers, human rights, and international

[108] Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things with Words.* Clarendon Press. 1962.
[109] Hariri, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, pgs. 29-39.* Harper Perennial. 2018.

treaties. They are all real, but they exist in the imagination, and they are embedded in a set of imaginary institutions, comprising a wider social imaginary.[110]

The next several chapters will explore how we internalize our impressions of the world and how the meanings we attach to global institutions shape the global imaginary. But if we are serious about constructing a more enduring global imaginary, particularly one aligned to a cosmopolitan vision, as we will be attempting in the final chapter, we will need to create a forum where humanity can debate its future. We will need to declare our membership in a shared humanity, and we will need to create institutions we can believe in, both aspirationally and imaginatively. In short, we will need to believe that in declaring our role in a wider global imaginary, we are participating in something that is real, however much it may spring from our imaginations. The global imaginary will need to situate us on a shared planet and galvanize our commitment to shared institutions. And turning to national imaginaries and their impact on our identities is a good place to start in understanding how they might do it.

National Imaginaries

Scattered individuals may participate in the same economic and civic institutions, share the same habits, and worry over the same threats, yet never see themselves as bound together in a single fate. This can be alienating, but it can also be dangerous, for cooperation in the face of common threats is seldom forthcoming among strangers. And humans cannot survive for long without cooperation.[111] Personal relationships may inspire cooperation in smaller groups, but the abstractions of the imagination are usually necessary for larger groups. This is why great leaders devote so much attention to stirring the imaginations of their nations, and it is why constructing a stronger global imaginary will mean building institutions capable of stirring commitment.

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[110] Searle, John. *The Construction of Social Reality.* Penguin. 1996.

[111] Aristotle and Saunders, Trevor J. et al trans. *The Politics.* Penguin Classics. 1981; Marx, Karl and Struik, Dirk J. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.* Lawrence and Wishart. 1973.

Anyone who would bind together a nation must look to the social imaginary, for it is through the myths and symbols of the imagination, and the sense of purpose shared by its members, that they might forge a national identity. But the individuals and communities who would come to think of themselves as Hungarians and Poles, in the late nineteenth century, for instance, were scattered across regions, each with its own customs and mutually unintelligible dialects. Hence, the question of how they came to see themselves as belonging to singular nations is essential to any understanding of the social imaginary. How is it that people who never see one another or interact directly come to imagine that they are the members of a shared lifeworld?

The answer for Benedict Anderson as we have seen lay in the emergence of a common language, embodied in a shared literature and national press. A shared national press, written in the vernacular, allowed disparate people to communicate across vast distances about national events. Through exposure to the same newspapers and periodicals, they could conceive of themselves as members of the same national community. The communities were imagined because their populations were too large, and their territories too vast, to be bound by more tangible relationships. Yet, they came to be cohesive because they imagined themselves sharing the same secular space and time.[112] And crucially, these communities existed first and foremost in the interior imaginations of their members, bound together by institutions like the state, which brought them recognition on the global stage.

Literature can convey the way distant people, say, a banker in New York and a longshoreman in Seattle, are bound together in a shared economy. It can show the way their sentiments are shared as they react to the same national upheavals and adjust their lives to the same legislation. And it can draw out social relationships that might otherwise remain obscure.[113] It also helps to build up a common stock of references and generate a storehouse of cultural meanings. It is not simply that disparate people, who might never encounter one another in life, or run in the same circles, experience the same economic crisis. They also reflect on it through reading the same literature, and they imagine how things might be different through reading the same news sources. In this

[112] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Verso. 1983.
[113] Ibid.

way, Anderson saw national presses and literatures as essential to national imaginaries. Through them people came to experience themselves as living in what Jurgen Habermas would describe as a common public sphere,[114] but also the same secular time, where events happen simultaneously for every member of society.[115]

Changes in communication mediums have come coupled with transformations in social imaginaries from time immemorial. Paleo-anthropologist Robin Dunbar theorizes that protohumans communicated through grooming, but as the size of their communities grew too large, they developed language in order to keep the peace.[116] The theory is speculative and non-falsifiable, but it reminds us of how rudimentary the process of binding people together with language can be. The written word would later bind together the first civilizations of the great Axial Age religions,[117] what the Qur'an would refer to as "Peoples of the Book."[118] And as Marshall McLuhan points out, the printed word extended the reach of human communities both spatially and temporally in the early modern era.[119] While it is far from clear whether changes in the medium of communication drive these transformations or changes in social organization spur the need for new mediums of communication, theories like these illustrate the importance of language in binding large groups of people together.

Yet, as we saw in the opening pages of this chapter, there are many ways to bind together a group of people, and there are countless forces binding together nations. Ernest Gellner describes nationalism as "a political principle which maintains that similarity of culture is the basic social bond."[120] And in his own comprehensive theory of nationalism, published the same year as

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[114] Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society.* The MIT Press. 1991.
[115] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities, pgs. 40-45.* Verso. 1983.
[116] Dunbar, Robin. *Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language.* Harvard University Press. 1998.
[117] Armstrong, Karen. *The Great Transformation: The World in the Time of Buddha, Socrates, Confucius, and Jeremiah.* Atlantic Books. 2007.
[118] Haleem, M.A.S. Abdel trans. *The Qur'an.* Oxford University Press. 2008.
[119] McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man.* University of Toronto Press. 1967.
[120] Gellner, Ernest. *Nationalism, pg. 3.* Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1997.

Anderson's, he would set forth a more material explanation that arguably transcended and included Anderson's more linguistic interpretation of the national imaginary.

The industrial revolution made it possible to span vast distances by rail and telegraph, according to Gellner. This helped spur trade within nations, and the increased trade generated new middle classes. Larger middle classes meant greater numbers of people with the same habits and tastes, laying the groundwork for consumer economies. Meanwhile, industrial economies required more educated workers, and increased trade made it possible to collect larger government revenues, which were put toward education for universal numeracy and literacy. Hence, mass education further contributed to the uniformity of middle-class habits and tastes. And national presses and literatures sprang up to satiate their intellectual curiosities. Suddenly, masses of people with much the same habits and tastes were able to communicate across vast distances about the same events. In this way, they came to conceive of themselves as sharing the same identities. And as they came to see themselves as the equal members of their respective national communities, they began to demand equal civic and political rights, linking their national identities to more democratic states.[121]

Comprehensive social theories of this sort can appear overdetermined. It is not as if every group of people that meets these conditions forms a nation, or that every nation meets these criteria. And even those groups that do meet these criteria do not tend to define themselves according to their material conditions. Thus, Eric Hobsbawm emphasizes the way the founders of nations have tended to simply grab at whatever organizing principle might bind their people together, whether it be race, religion, language, or ethnicity.[122] In this way, the sources shaping group identities are as endless as the bases upon which people come together in common cause. A people might be tied together through the shared institutions of state, the relations of production, technology, geography, history, religion, trade routes, custom, habit, diet, or taste. And as the nations of Europe came to be embodied in states, remainders who were left without a state like the Jews, and those just getting started like the Italians, began to concoct ever more imaginative

[121] Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism.* Cornell University Press. 1983.
[122] Hobsbawn, Eric. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.

narratives, reaching back to mythologized land claims in the case of the Jews,[123] and forward to an imagined fascist future in the case of the Italians.[124]

Hobsbawm highlights the randomness of nationalism, as if the founders of nations simply raid the historical archives in search of the props with which they stage their national dramas.[125] Meanwhile, Gellner treats nationalism as a superfluous growth of the industrial mode of production that is destined to pass away along with the productive wave on which it rolled in.[126] They are both constructivists, who believe nationalism rests on thin foundations, so their writings tend to be put in the service of deconstructing nationalism. Yet, Anderson is also a constructivist who believes that nationalism had a more noble function to play in its ability to help oppressed peoples throw off the colonial yoke.[127] We can see this purpose at work in the resistance of Palestinians and Ukrainians to imperialism today, so it remains a powerful organizing principle. Meanwhile, several contemporary theorists use nationalism to inspire more conscious moral action, and their arguments will inform our effort to generate a more effective global imaginary.

David Miller sees national identities as essential to propping up democratic institutions, for identifying with fellow citizens inspires individuals to serve the nation. This might be as commonplace as paying taxes or as momentous as giving one's life in national self-defense, but it leads him to promote "civic nationalism."[128] Similarly, blaming the decline of welfare states on rootless cosmopolitan elites, Yael Tamir argues for a liberal nationalism that would restore democratic polities and social welfare provisions alike.[129] Meanwhile, Richard Rorty believes

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[123] Kimmerling, Baruch. *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and Military.* University of California Press. 2005; Sand, Shlomo. *The Invention of the Jewish People.* Verso. 2010; Sand, Shlomo and Forman, Geremy trans. *The Invention of the Land of Israel: From Holy Land to Homeland.* Verso. 2014.

[124] Griffin, Roger. *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning Under Mussolini and Hitler.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2007.

[125] Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terrance eds. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge University Press. 1983.

[126] Gellner, Ernest. *Nationalism.* Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1997.

[127] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Verso. 1983.

[128] Miller, David. *Citizenship and National Identity.* Polity Press. 2000.

[129] Tamir, Yael. *Why Nationalism.* Princeton University Press. 2019.

that a sense of participation in an inspiring national story is necessary for the accomplishment of both national and global achievements.[130] Sounding a more conservative note, Roger Scruton sees national identities as rooted in an ontological sense of place, which is essential to the sense of common purpose without which it would be difficult to pursue the good life.[131]

So, while this chapter in many ways dismantles the foundations upon which national identities are constructed, in the service of reconstructing a more rooted cosmopolitan imaginary, we should not dismiss the benefits of participation in a strong national imaginary. Social imaginaries are inherently moral because participation in a commonly shared identity implies a commitment to reciprocal obligations. These might be conceived in terms of shared citizenship[132] participation in the same national discourse,[133] or the experience of the same global risks.[134] The idea is that shared participation brings about mutual interests and obligations. Sometimes these are legal and vital to the group's continued existence, as in the case of military conscription in wars of self-defense. But they also lie in our own moral intuitions, for when we see ourselves as part of a community, we tend to feel ourselves obligated to it in solidarity with others.[135]

And as we will see in the third chapter, a wider set of global institutions brings recognition to national identities by making them apparent to outsiders, in the manner described by Kwame Anthony Appiah.[136] In this way, we will find that a global system of states, which recognizes and shapes the very idea of nations, is integral to the development of national identities, thereby reminding us that it is not enough to simply conjure up social imaginaries in the minds of their members. They must also be recognized by outsiders.

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[130] Rorty, Richard. *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America.* Harvard University Press. 1999.
[131] Scruton, Roger. *Where We Are: The State of Britain Now.* Bloomsbury Continuum. 2017.
[132] Miller, David. *Citizenship and National Identity.* Polity Press. 2000.
[133] Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms.* Polity Press. 1996.
[134] Beck, Ulrich. *World at Risk.* Polity Press. 2008.
[135] Miller, David. *National Responsibility and Global Justice.* Oxford University Press. 2007.
[136] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity, pg. 21.* Profile Books. 2018.

Mythological Imaginaries

Nationalism is usually seen to be something extraordinary that arises in moments of crisis or social breakdown, but this overlooks its pervasiveness in our lives and its centrality to our moral commitments. Hence, Michael Billig emphasizes its everyday banality. Nationalist sentiments are reproduced through the placement of flags, pledges of allegiance, national holidays, war memorials, and the recounting of national histories. But they are also generated daily through more mundane reminders that it is "our" language that is being spoken, and through the framing of news stories emphasizing the fate of "our" people. And it is perhaps most central to our lives in the role it tends to play in our identities.[137]

Nationalism is a way of preferencing and prioritizing the nation and its citizens. Nationalist sentiments are ever present in the sense of national identity, which locates us in nations, situated in imagined homelands, referenced in patriotic songs and lyrical poems.[138] To belong to a nation is to be the bearer of an identity; to possess citizenship is to be protected from the vagaries of human existence.[139] And it is to partake in the vast undertaking of a social imaginary. Everyday nationalism is ultimately reliant on a rolling backdrop of myths and symbols, locating nations within the world and ourselves within nations, but it is perhaps most evident in the stories we tell about who we are as a people. In this way, everyday nationalism is related to its more grandiose counterpart of national myth making.

Myths tell us where we have come from and where we are going. They can take shape in a sort of "time out of mind," where events long past seem to be eternally present, in the words of Mircea Eliade.[140] But they typically find their source in historical realities, simplified and adapted for mass consumption. They often assume the guise of aphorisms and allegories, historical narratives and religious stories; but what they share in common is their tendency to bring the everyday into communion with a wider system of meanings. The timelessness

[137] Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism.* Sage Publications Ltd. 1995.
[138] Scruton, Roger. *Where We Are: The State of Britain Now.* Bloomsbury Continuum. 2017.
[139] Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism, pgs. 290-325*. Penguin Classics. 2017; Kochenov, Dimitry. *Citizenship.* MIT Press. 2019.
[140] Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion.* Harcourt Australia. 1959.

sacralizes the social imaginary, reifying the group, sanctifying its self-conception, and transmuting it into something for which people might give their lives. Yet, its historicity makes the social imaginary a sort of living document that might be fundamentally transformed in a crisis, and as we will see in coming chapters, this flexibility will be crucial to our ability to reconstruct the global imaginary.

Myths can bind up the loose ends of groups, forging a common purpose where diversity threatens fragmentation. There is always a danger that rival ethnicities will weaken states in their competition for power,[141] and all the more so that of a diverse world that is bound together by a more abstract global imaginary. So, the capacity to make up stories and invoke symbols that might foster a stronger sense of unity, which can extend the benefits of membership by increasing the scope of cooperative activity, is often critical to group survival. Meanwhile, the malleability of myths and symbols make them convenient building blocks in the construction of group identities.[142] And this may be most important when it comes to holding larger groups together, so we will be returning to it later when it is time to construct a more enduring global imaginary.

Robert Wright argues that wider systems of meaning, premised on more universal principles, make it possible to organize more inclusive communities in cooperative endeavors ranging from war making to statebuilding.[143] There is an evolutionary dynamic at work wherein larger communities bind themselves together with more inclusive myths and symbols in which we might seek the origins of nationalism. The same dynamic might be applied to religion, which can unite whole continents and civilizations.[144] So, we might want to think harder about myth making in constructing the global imaginary and any enduring transformation toward cosmopolitan solidarities. But in their capacity to inspire evil, myths can be a double-edge sword.

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[141] Bates, Robert H. *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa.* Cambridge University Press. 2015; Collier, Paul. *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places.* Harper Collins. 2009.

[142] Castoriadis, Cornelius and Blamey, Kathleen. *The Imaginary Institution of Society.* MIT Press. 1998; Thompson, John. *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*. Polity. 1991.

[143] Wright, Robert. *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny.* Vintage Books. 2001.

[144] Wright, Robert. *The Evolution of God.* Back Bay Books. 2010.

If national narratives can be adapted so as to better respond to the needs of a new era, they can also be weaponized by demagogues manipulating masses for their own ends. In mobilizing millions through myths and symbols, nationalism has always been something of an unchained beast. It routinely inspires ethnic cleansing and genocide, and it is a close cousin of fascism, which strips it of countervailing ideologies like liberalism and conservatism, infusing it with racism, sexism, militarism, and nihilism. It is simply bad faith to write about the virtues of nationalism while ignoring this pathological dark side as many contemporary authors do,[145] for the number of nationalistic regimes that engage in crimes against humanity is stunning. Meanwhile, the extremism that can emerge from nationalistic myth making serves as a reminder that it often divides as much as it unites. The same might be said for nationalism more generally, as can be witnessed in the divisions plaguing almost every society where the ultranationalist right has taken power, from Israel to India to Russia.

Constructivists see nationalism as a purely modern phenomenon. Yet, the historian Adrian Hastings notes a remarkable consistency in how the English often spoke of their nation as far back as the early Middle Ages; and he traces the roots of nationalism into the later Middle Ages for European nations like Belgium and France.[146] The religious historian Steven Grosby traces its roots still deeper into the origins of ancient religions, noting how modern states like Israel and Greece draw on scripture and history in forging their national identities.[147] But this is just another way of saying their identities have been constructed. And every time someone defends Israeli land claims in occupied territories through reference to scripture, they are reconstructing an imagined community whose ultimate roots must be sought, not in ancient scripture, but rather in the carefully cultivated minds of its members.

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[145] Eatwell, Roger and Goodwin, Matthew. *National Populism: The Revolt Against Liberal Democracy.* Penguin Random House. 2018; Hazony, Yoram. *The Virtue of Nationalism.* Basic Books. 2018; Mearsheimer, John. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2018; Tamir, Yael. *Why Nationalism.* Princeton University Press. 2019.

[146] Hastings, Adrian. *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism, pgs. 35-65.* Cambridge University Press. 1997.

[147] Grosby, Steven. *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford University Press. 2005.

The founders of a state might embellish ancient history, or else call on the moral imperatives of a shared religious tradition in a crisis, but they can also invent their own distinct symbols. The historian Anthony Smith notes a remarkable regularity in the symbols taken up by nations. Each assumes a proper name to express "the nation's distinctiveness, heroism and sense of destiny," as well as national flags and anthems, whose colors and patterns epitomize the nation. Every nation "sports a capital city, a national assembly, a national coinage, passports and frontiers, similar remembrance ceremonies for the fallen in battle, the requisite military parades and national oaths, as well as their own national academies of music, art and science, national museums and libraries, national monuments and war memorials, festivals and holidays, etc."[148]

These symbols are central to many national identities, and their invocation can muster up powerful emotional commitments. Yet, they are often in competition with more material forces like shared culture and trauma, history and citizenship. There are many ways to stir up the sentimental bonds of solidarity. And once again, we will find in coming chapters the diversity of sources upon which identities are based useful in reconstructing the global imaginary. We will also find that competition within the international system of states conditions nations to adopt these symbols, thereby situating some of their most moving displays of national identity within the context of a wider global imaginary. And this too will prove an essential building block in constructing a more resilient cosmopolitan imaginary.

The intellectual historian Daniel Boorstin suggests that the idea of the nation is reproduced through countless images and media events. Football games and terrorist attacks, presidential elections and natural disasters, are publicly commented upon, probed for meaning, and framed for consumption. They are looked forward to and reflected upon, and ultimately sensationalized on radio, television, advertising, and film.[149] In this way, the social imaginary of advanced industrial societies takes on a life of its own, becoming not simply a reflection of human sentiments, but a means of manipulating those sentiments in advertising. The postmodernist Jean Baudrillard notes something similar at work in simulacra, like the old west section of an

[148] Smith, Anthony D. *Nationalism, pg. 8.* Polity Press. 2010.
[149] Boorstin, Daniel. *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America.* Vintage Books. 1961.

amusement park, or the historic section of a city. All too often, these powerful historic symbols are simply replicas of replicas, and the culture itself an endless series of imitations.[150]

Roland Barthes saw popular culture as characterized by symbolic systems. The word "rose" may denote a kind of flower, but it also possesses a deeper connotation with romantic love.[151] Meanwhile, romantic love may refer to an intimate attachment between two people, but it also possesses a deeper connotation in the fulfillment of human longing. Barthes regarded these second order connotations as modern day myths, fed to us by the ruling classes of a mass consumer culture. Yet, whatever their ultimate purpose and source, in a competition for sentiments, it is far from clear that flags and memorials would win out over romantic comedies, chocolates, emojis, cat memes, lattes, roses, love songs, and the thousand other symbols of romantic consumer kitsch. For when we look to the most memorable moments of our lives, and the relationships for which we would give everything, they are all too often bound together by just these sorts of kitschy myths. They are often at the heart of what we think of when we talk about freedom, and it is at least partly in their pursuit that millions of immigrants risk their lives each year in dangerous journeys. But if these myths and symbols evoke such heartfelt allegiances, we would do well to ask ourselves why we ever placed so much attention on national identities in the first place.

Advanced industrial societies tend to generate their own myths and symbols; and each of these authors highlights a different aspect of their pliability. Meanings are created out of ephemera, a memorable line in a movie, a marketing campaign, a political slogan, a melody, a jingle, a fad. And suddenly, the whole culture riffs on it, adding layers of meaning, in new songs and media events, until the original is subsumed in a vast ecosystem of associations, like a playful saxophonist, quoting a fragment of an old blues melody, in a new jazz song, in a hip hop soundtrack, which suddenly goes viral, and later becomes a classic. It may not be the dialogical

[150] Baudrillard, Jean. *America.* Verso. 2010.

[151] Barthes, Roland and Howard, Richard trans. *Mythologies.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2012.

process of communicative reason,[152] or the dialectical construction of social reality,[153] but it is nevertheless an iterative process of meaning making. Yet, if so much of what we find meaningful in our social relationships is the end result of an iterative process of consumer myth making, national identities begin to look a whole lot more unstable. And this instability helps explain the desperate measures some groups have gone to in order to shore them up.

Groups can adapt their social imaginaries to suit the circumstances. They can be built up, torn down, played up, and played around with; they can be reified, reassessed, reconceived, reformulated, and rejected. Since they exist in the hearts and minds of collectivities, and their only limit is the imagination, they are unusually flexible; and the flexibility makes them powerful forces of social survival, which can be called on in a crisis, for existential threats can force groups to reconsider their purposes. And if the mechanisms binding them together are not flexible, they can be smashed to pieces in a storm. Yet, possessed of a resilient social imaginary, they can be more tightly bound together when most threatened with fragmentation. As Cornelius Castoriadis reminds us, "every symbolism is built on the ruins of earlier symbolic edifices and uses their materials—even if it is only to fill the foundations of new temples."[154]

Mytho-nationalists want to strengthen national identity by emphasizing its enduring features, but a more expansive look at the myths and symbols lying at the heart of national identities only highlights their ephemerality. We can go back to the first glimmers of national identification,[155] or ransack the religious storehouse of myths and symbols, in order to construct a more enduring national imaginary, as does the historian John Armstrong.[156] But this only raises the question: why those particular myths, why those symbols? And if the answer lies in the present purposes to

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[152] Habermas, Jurgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society.* Polity Press. 1984.
[153] Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality.* Anchor Books. 1966.
[154] Castoriadis, Cornelius and Blamey, Kathleen trans. *The Imaginary Institution of Society, pg. 120.* The MIT Press. 1998.
[155] Hastings, Adrian. *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism, pgs. 35-65.* Cambridge University Press. 1997.
[156] Armstrong, John A. *Nations Before Nationalism.* University of North Carolina Press. 1982.

which they are put, it only highlights their shakiness.

Perhaps the social anthropologist Paul Connerton comes closest to some irreducible minimum of collective identity in pointing to the way groups use founding rites, like Independence Day celebrations, to remind themselves of the identities they share in common. The ceremonies tend to evoke more powerful memories than textual scriptures and the historical record, because they involve somatic rituals, which tend to touch us more deeply than more mental processes.[157] The rituals are enacted through movements and often the retelling of stories, so they often become embedded in our muscle memories and unconscious minds. And we can see this same reification of national identity at work in the boisterous rallies of contemporary rightwing nationalists and fascists.[158] But as societies become increasingly complex so also does the range of traditions to which they refer in their rituals of remembrance. Meanwhile, no modern ritual goes without interpretation, whether for the purposes of ad revenue or academic publishing. So, as societies develop in complexity, the spectrum of social interpretations tends to explode, and this makes it more difficult to sustain social imaginaries that are not global, as we will see in the next chapter on the global imaginary.

This raises the question of whether we can build a halfway house between national and global imaginaries. As we have seen, religions can often bind together groups across continents, but they can be exclusive affairs. And they do not tend to lend themselves to crafting the kind of more aspirational moral creeds that would be required in a twenty-first century cosmopolitan order. Meanwhile, ethnicities can bind people together across borders, but they tend to fracture the solidary bonds of citizens.[159] Unfortunately, as we will see in the next subsection, the modern social imaginary is probably too fragmentary to bind us together, but an examination of it highlights the limits of national imaginaries, and the way they overlap with other imaginaries. It also builds out the list of principles upon which any social imaginary might be based.

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[157] Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember.* Cambridge University Press. 1989.
[158] Horesh, Theo. *The Fascism This Time: And the Global Future of Democracy.* Cosmopolis Press. 2020.
[159] Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations: And the Remaking of World Order.* Simon and Schuster. 1996.

Modern Imaginaries

The unfoldment of a new moral order is central to the story Charles Taylor tells about the dawn of modernity. According to this narrative, a secular moral order gradually emerged out of a hierarchical, religious order of correspondences. Each thing had its place in this order, in a sort of enchanted mandala of meanings.[160] Yet, over the long durée of modernity, the constellation of meanings gave way to a more secular order, based in science and a rational understanding of the universe. The old order broke down through a series of subtractions, wherein critical components of it were disassembled, with a resultant fracturing of social order, and the freedom of individuals, who were no longer bound by constraints.[161] But it was also often replaced by new forms, like an autonomous self, unmoored from social obligations, and yet possessed of the power to shape a life in accord with reason, and to live according to its own lights.

It was a moral order not so much inherent to any particular nation as it was indicative of modernity itself. Taylor suggests that what holds this order together is not so much a series of imagined national identities bound by the institutions of state, but rather a modern social imaginary bound together by a secular moral order.[162] This should make us think twice about the salience of national identities, as they are often elided with this modern social imaginary. Consider the question of whether, when you imagine France and Germany, or India and Brazil, you are thinking of their unique cultures or their particular stage in the modernization process. It could be either, depending on where your focus lies. And the same might be said of the different generations in the history of a nation, where the Japan of today is arguably likely to share more in common with dozens of developed nations than early twentieth century Japan.

The modern social imaginary is an imaginary because it is constitutive of a shared modern identity, invoked every time "we" speak of what makes “us" distinctive from premodern societies and what “we” share in common with other modern societies. But it is a social imaginary that is definitively bound by neither time nor space, as it is being gradually adopted across the globe;

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[160] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age, pgs. 37-41.* Belknap Press. 2018.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid. pgs. 189-218 and 244-245.

and the people sharing identities premised on this imaginary are far from agreeing upon whether it is a good thing to embrace. Yet, the order encompasses an array of perspectives through a shared public sphere, wherein each person might give voice to their concerns; and shared democratic institutions, wherein they might lend the weight of their preferences to the ultimate direction of their countries.[163] And the modern social imaginary ultimately divides different peoples up into nations, each with their own state. But once we delve into its specific contents, it begins to look increasingly incoherent.

The thinkers articulating the modernization project are as varied as they are contentious, and the ideals they espouse are as contradictory as they are incompatible. The norms and practices, habits and tastes, populating it are legion. And they are worked out in a series of debates, whose positions are tied to their own values and practices. Fundamentalists refer back to ancient scriptures, with eschatologies rooted in contemporary novels, eschewing science and reason in favor of what looks to outsiders like bad faith. Environmentalists refer back to Spinoza, with eschatologies rooted in the ecological movement, debating whether or not to reject science; and if not science, then technology; if not technology, then reason; if not reason, then civilization itself. Each position is tied to its own organizations, lifestyles, habits, and philosophies, proliferating through an endless series of subcultures. And it is much the same with anything a group of people might come to embrace in this vast and sprawling modern imaginary.[164]

Taylor is explicit that it is a story he is telling, and that there are other ways to tell it. And yet, the story itself plays a central role in the unfoldment of the modern social imaginary. As he points out, told differently, through the eyes of, say, an indigenous historian, a feminist literary critic, an environmental ethicist, or a postmodern deconstructionist, the story takes on new meanings. And as they are popularized, the weight of their alternative readings of history can transform the social imaginary; and then something like a paradigm shift occurs, wherein the weight of several anomalous discoveries, each drawing the dominant paradigm into question, overburdens the

[163] Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society.* The MIT Press. 1991.
[164] Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries, pgs. 473-504*. Duke University Press. 2003.

wider conceptual framework, resulting in a newer and more inclusive imaginary.[165] Yet, whatever story we tell, the way we tell it, and the importance we attach to its parts, is essential to who we believe ourselves to be. The Afghan historian Tamim Ansary goes so far as to suggest it is precisely this ability to tell stories about who we are and where we have come from that is definitive of our humanity.[166] But it is not as if the stories are generated ex nihilo.

A brief excursus into the working class imaginary as envisioned by Marx reminds us of how deeply social imaginaries can be embedded in material realities, but it also gives us a sense of some of the ways imaginaries tend to be embedded within one another. Karl Marx saw a similar process of historical unfoldment as does Taylor. However, the modern social imaginary was not central to it but rather arose out of it in his telling. According to Marx, dominant technologies shape the relations of production, which in turn shape the society itself. "The handmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam mill society with the industrial capitalist."[167] Hence, it is not so much dominant ideas that make history as dominant modes of production that make ideas. In this way, law, morality, and the arts, along with the whole speculative entourage of philosophy, and its accompanying academic disciplines, is but the abstract expression of a more concrete mode of production. Change the mode of production, and the ideas that hold sway will start to fall like bricks from a crumbling edifice.[168]

It was precisely this alienation that Marx sought to redress in economic relations. Somehow, the movements of hundreds of factory workers could be synchronized, with every worker playing a special role in generating the products of their labor, and all the workers in all the factories sharing a common set of interests, while they nevertheless failed to recognize themselves as the rightful owners of the fruits of their labor, the common membership of a great socioeconomic class, and the ultimate sovereigns over their shared existence.[169] In his earlier writings, Marx went so far as to suggest that this dissociation from the fruits of their labor alienated workers not

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[165] Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* University of Chicago Press. 1962.
[166] Ansary, Tamim. *The Invention of Yesterday: A 50,000 Year History of Human Culture, Conflict, and Connection.* Public Affairs. 2019.
[167] Marx, Karl. *The Poverty of Philosophy, pg. 92.* Lawrence and Wishart. 1941.
[168] Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich. *The German Ideology.* Lawrence and Wishart Ltd. 1987.
[169] Marx, Karl and Fowkes, Ben. *Capital: Volume I.* Penguin Classics. 1991.

simply from one another but also themselves.[170] For the work in which they shared, and the relations of production through which they were organized socially, were essential to their "species beings." Yet, they were alienated from the productive process, the fruits of their labor, their fellow workers, and their own natures as social beings, who find their essence in the free development of their labor.[171] Hence, were the workers of the world to unite, they might find it possible to not only meet their material but their human needs as well.[172]

In describing this alienation, Marx was seeking to bring a new social imaginary into being. We might think of it as a sort of alternate imaginary from a parallel modern universe, except for the fact that he largely succeeded. And it was not just an alternate modern social imaginary being brought into existence, but a largely global imaginary as well. Throughout the early part of the twentieth century, it was arguably workers who were most likely to be organized globally and bound together by a shared global imaginary, as opposed to the so-called cosmopolitan elites of today. However, Taylor might reply that this process of constructing alternate imaginaries is actually integral to the modern social imaginary itself, which includes and even encourages a burgeoning of alternate narratives. It is certainly central to the story Manfred Steger tells about "the rise of the global imaginary."[173]

It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking of social imaginaries as bound together by particular narratives, when in actuality they are always riven with contradictions and competing perspectives. The symbols that bind together a nation often pertain to counter-narratives, like Martin Luther King's Jr.'s March on Washington, or Henry David Thoreau's writings on Walden Pond, which involved profound criticisms of the nation that were ultimately canonized.[174] The counternarratives challenge dominant conceptions of the nation, fostering a wider and more inclusive national identity. But they also include doubts, whose mere inclusion can discharge

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[170] Marx, Karl and Milligan, Martin trans. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, pgs. 72-74.* Progress Publishers. 1959.
[171] Ibid. pgs. 69-84.
[172] Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich. *The Communist Manifesto.* Penguin Classic. 2015.
[173] Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[174] Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden.* Penguin Classics. 2016.

disaffections. And they can create space for a wider range of sentiments and more complex attachments, as the *Book of Job* arguably did for the Ancient Hebrews,[175] and the plays of Euripides did for Ancient Athenians.[176]

Every culture is possessed not simply of dominant and counter-narratives but a range of traditions that might be drawn from in crafting a life path. Robert Bellah et al. examine these traditions in a series of interviews, exploring the ways ordinary Americans cope with major life transitions. In sorting through their marriage troubles, they might draw from a therapeutic tradition, counseling authenticity and transparent communication, with roots in early self-help literature and nineteenth-century Transcendentalism. But they might also draw from an evangelical tradition, counseling hard work, commitment, and restraint, with roots in early American Protestantism. These and other more civic minded traditions are tied to comprehensive notions of the good life. Yet, individuals also foster new traditions, providing more relevant perspectives, in answering their own life challenges.[177] In the process, they build on existing traditions and invent their own, adding to the stock of the cultural imagination.

This process of drawing from multiple different traditions is integral to the modern social imaginary that Taylor articulates. It highlights the importance of social practices to sustaining social imaginaries. And it reminds us of the way social imaginaries emerge from a dialectical process in which the members of groups internalize events and lend them their own meanings, thereby contributing to a wider constellation of meanings, which are internalized by still others, as articulated by Berger and Luckmann. But as Cornelius Castoriadis reminds us, "It is impossible to understand what human history has been or what it is now outside of the category of the imaginary."[178]

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[175] Newsom, Carol A. *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[176] Euripides and Davie, John trans. *Medea and Other Plays.* Penguin Classics. 2003.
[177] Bellah, Robert and Madsen, Richard et al. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life.* University of California Press. 2007.
[178] Castoriadis, Cornelius and Blamey, Kathleen trans. *The Imaginary Institution of Society, pg. 160.* The MIT Press. 1998.

This is because myths and symbols are integral to institutions, and the imaginary components of institutions are far more pliable than their material foundations. "The central imaginary significations of a society, far from being mere epiphenomena of 'real' forces and relations of production," writes John Thompson, "are the laces which tie a society together and the forms which define what, for a given society, is 'real.'"[179] In this way, these authors see the social imaginary as an ideological force, bringing unity to social contradictions. The social imaginary provides a series of markers allowing one group to distinguish itself from another, lending purpose to otherwise random differences, but it also laces together the loose ends of an incoherent modernity with ideology.

Still, there is no single ideological imaginary, but rather a series of ideologies counterposed against each other. Manfred Steger organizes them dialectically, beginning with the French Revolution,[180] bringing flesh to Hegel's more abstract dialectic of history.[181] According to Steger, the latest moments in this dialectic, the unfoldment of globalization and its antiglobalization response, involve the first movements in a global social imaginary, which will be critical in coming chapters. Yet, the organization of imaginaries in a dialectic of history need not be orderly. We might just as well think of the multifarious range of imaginaries reviewed in this chapter as constituting a series of social choices, an emergent chaos, or a marvel of developmental complexity. If ideologies represent an effort to lace together the loose ends of the social imaginary, as suggested by Thompson and Castoriadis, and yet there are many weaves with which to bind those threads together, then even the most comprehensive social imaginaries will result in a constant counterposition of ideologies, rendering any single imaginary ultimately fissiparous.

Hence, it is to the dissolution of all imaginaries that we now turn, with an eye toward the ultimate aim of reconstructing a wider and more inclusive global imaginary in the conclusion.

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[179] Thompson, John B. *Studies in the Theory of Ideology, pg. 24.* Polity Press. 1984.
[180] Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2008.
[181] Hegel, G.W.F. and Rauch, Leo trans. *Introduction to the Philosophy of History.* Hackett Publishing Company. 1988.

Dissolving Imaginaries

Social imaginaries as we have seen strengthen the unity and resilience of groups by binding them together with shared identifiers. Nations are commonly bound by historical myths and religious faiths, ethnic practices and shared languages, but every group has its own unique identifiers. Meanwhile, few groups are so uniform as they appear on the surface, and most change faster than they are commonly assumed to. Even as the variations between groups tend to be rooted in real concrete differences, the boundaries that give them definition are usually more porous than we imagine. In this way, social imaginaries reify identities, making the porous appear impenetrable and the changing permanent. The result is the illusion of distinction amid a constantly shifting flux, which weakens less inclusive imaginaries like nations.

Kwame Anthony Appiah notes that the composition of groups change over time as their members come and go through birth and death, arrival and departure. People come to make a better life, others leave to do the same, refugees appear in desperation, others leave in fear for their safety; definitions of who is in and out change, new generations come of age, leaders die off, borders shift. Changes in membership undermine group unity, but they also challenge groups to reconceptualize what binds them together.[182] It is a task made all the more difficult by the changing contexts in which they find themselves immersed. Technological changes alter the socioeconomic conditions on which unity is premised. Environmental changes lead to population transfers, and changes in the relative might of nations force them to undergo periods of self scrutiny. In this way, social imaginaries must be continually transformed to account for a constantly changing world. But groups might also become more adaptive and complex, as their social imaginaries come to include a wider horizon of meanings. The result is a perpetual effort to infuse new meanings into ancient myths and symbols.

Still, the external properties defining groups change over time as well. As everything is in flux, everything upon which group identities are premised must be subject to change, lest the social imaginary become fixated on conditions long past, and answers long fallen into disuse. Institutions must be adjusted, new laws implemented, new defenses built, new strategies adopted.

[182] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity.* Profile Books. 2018.

And the adaptations become part of the social repertoire, objectified in living institutions, binding together the social imaginary. The end result is constant changes in the external characteristics lending groups definition.

In this way, we find that the composition of groups change over time, as do the contexts binding them together; the social imaginaries binding them together change, as do the properties lending the social imaginaries definition. And in a constantly changing world, where every group is in its own state of flux, each must redefine itself in relation to the others, which must redefine themselves in turn, in an iterative process of transformation that calls to mind the symbolic interactionism of Berger and Luckmann.[183] Later, we will see how systems of states are shaped out of just this sort of iterative process wherein each must adapt itself to the system. And in the final chapter, we will explore how a similar process might help us to construct a more enduring global imaginary through dialogue and debate. But what is important here is the way this constant process of adaptation leads to continuous changes in social imaginaries.

Consider the way social imaginaries can serve as a commonly shared repository for any group wishing to construct an identity.[184] They borrow the mediums through which other groups express their identities, as in the case of national myths, flags, and anthems. But they also borrow the content of these mediums, as in the case of their respective heroic stories, color combinations, and melodies. Sometimes a group will be inspired by the actions of another group, as in the case of colonized peoples freeing themselves from their colonial oppressors, who look to a liberator like Che Guevara or Yasser Arafat.[185] Yet, they can also learn from the experiences of other groups, as in the case of protesters tempering their demands after watching the crackdown on Syrian dissidents and still others in Ukraine doing just the opposite after seeing

[183] Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality.* Anchor Books. 1966.
[184] Brown, Garrett Wallace. *Grounding Cosmopolitanism: From Kant to the Idea of a Cosmopolitan Constitution.* Edinburgh University Press. 2009.
[185] Chamberlain, Paul Thomas. *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order.* Oxford University Press. 2012.

the successes of their counterparts in Serbia.[186]

Each of us possesses multiple identities, which are being constantly reprioritized, according to Amartya Sen. You can be an Indian, a father, a husband, a professor, and a cosmopolitan. And while your most salient identity may be that of an Indian when voting, it may be that of a moral cosmopolitan when you get back on the plane to Cambridge.[187] For the salience of identities changes with the context. Hence, the Lebanese social imaginary might remain constant while its salience is downgraded, as some citizens come to identify more with their ethnicities and others the world. People sharing a set of overlapping identities typically shift back and forth between them, for the salience of each identity tends to change with the context. Hence, Lebanese Shia may be induced, through financial incentives and religious pronouncements, to think of themselves less as Lebanese and more as Shia, or through war with Israel to become the proponents of a transnational anticolonial cosmopolitanism. It is all a matter of the shifting context in which their identities are imagined.

Lebanese might equally identify with their ethnicity, nation, modernity, or humanity. But stronger national identities, like the British and French, are usually given more attention in cosmopolitan debates. The idea is that only national identities can command the kind of moral commitments that might bind tens of millions of people together in common cause.[188] Yet, religious identities are also rooted in moral commitments and often command greater allegiance. In an epic study of religious warfare, Karen Armstrong argues that the great world religions were instituted both to legitimate warfare and contain its worst effects. For their moral injunctions inspired people to both sacrifice their lives and tame their most brutal passions.[189] And countless nations have been defined around a commonly shared religion, which is used in times of war to

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[186] Popovic, Srdja and Miller, Matthew. *Blueprint for Revolution: how to use rice pudding, Lego men, and other non-violent techniques to galvanize communities, overthrow dictators, or simply change the world.* Scribe UK. 2015.
[187] Sen, Amartya. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny, pgs. 18-39.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2007.
[188] Miller, David. *Citizenship and National Identity.* Polity Press. 2000.
[189] Armstrong, Karen. *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence.* Anchor Books. 2015.

bolster commitment to the nation.

Examples abound of the contingency of national identities and the ways they overlap. Ernest Gellner notes the way classes can bind together a nation through shared lifestyles and languages,[190] but the common lives of the middle classes are also shared across borders, and in many ways the world. Roland Barthes focuses on a consumer imaginary, which generates an experience of commonality that can contribute to national unity,[191] but which is also part of a globalized consumer economy. Karl Marx focuses on the class interests of workers, which have often been emphasized in organizing revolutionary national action, but that binds them as well to the workers of the world, with whom he spurs them to unite.[192] And finally, Charles Taylor shines a light on the modern social imaginary, which has been integral to the emergence of national imaginaries,[193] but which is also transnational, and contributes increasingly to a common global culture.[194] Each of these identities overlaps with the others, but as we will see in the coming chapter, they also overlap with and open up into a much wider and more inclusive global imaginary.

It might be argued that with so many bases upon which to formulate a particular social imaginary, it is not meaningful to speak of the social imaginary as a single concept. But the idea of social imaginaries helps us grapple with the multitude of ways in which any identity might be conceived. It might be argued that it is more straightforward to use social theory to describe the ways in which each group is organized functionally. But there is a process of imagining group identities that pertains to them all, and through focusing on it, we can begin to get a handle on how vast multitudes of people come to see one another as related. It might be argued that if identities are in a constant state of flux, there can be no one social imaginary tied to a group identity. But the notion of identities is not in question, and no two members of a group will ever conceive of their shared identity in the exact same way, while millions will always diverge substantially. Thus, to speak of social imaginaries is to invoke an intersubjective process through

[190] Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism.* Blackwell Publishing. 1983.
[191] Barthes, Roland and Howard, Richard trans. *Mythologies.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2012.
[192] Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich. *The Communist Manifesto.* Penguin Classic. 2015.
[193] Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Duke University Press. 2003.
[194] Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Polity Press. 1990.

which the members of all groups somehow come to identify with one another.

Delimited identities are subject to so many changes that wider groups, encompassing millions, might appear more like castles in the clouds, but for the apparent constancy of social imaginaries. Yet, their constancy is founded on an illusion, wherein over time, and in the longue durée,[195] it is often the case, as Kwame Anthony Appiah argues, that only the name remains. Even the salience of group names are subject to change, he suggests, as they rise and fall in importance, assuming more or less relevance, to the great challenges of the day. In the end, he notes that we may continue to call ourselves Walloons or Carolinians, even as the designations lose all hold on our sentiments,[196] and the rites of remembrance through which we continually renewed our membership fall into disuse;[197] and as the imaginaries once animating their sense of purpose are hollowed out into but a handful of historical curiosities, the names may die out, like a language that has run out of speakers.

But amid the flux of sentimental attachments, the need remains, to bind us together in cooperative activity, to lend meaning to our common struggles, to overcome our aloneness in a sea of strangers, and to fortify our sense of purpose when those purposes can spell the difference between extermination and survival. And it is to these arguably higher purposes, played out on an international stage, and in the inner recesses of an incipient global and potentially cosmopolitan imaginary, where the most vital matter is often the survival of humanity itself, that we will now turn our attention.

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[195] Braudel, Fernand and Mayne, Richard trans. *A History of Civilizations.* Penguin Books. 1995.
[196] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity, pgs. 151-152.* Profile Books. 2018.
[197] Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember.* Cambridge University Press. 1989.

Chapter II: The Global Imaginary

Critics of globalization typically argue that just about every aspect of it has been exaggerated. Geography is still essential to geopolitics.[198] It was always essential to development.[199] Trade is not nearly as global as we tend to think.[200] The vast majority of news is still national or local.[201] Social media networks are rarely global. Even the internet connects people mostly to sites in their own home countries.[202] Meanwhile, even where globalization is making real inroads, local customs are often revived to resist it.[203] Local identities are often counterposed against it.[204] Ressentiment over the insecurities it breeds leads to national populism.[205] Globalized technologies are adapted to local settings.[206] Globalization is enjoyed primarily by elites.[207] And

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[198] Porter, Patrick. *The Global Village Myth: Distance, War, and the Limits of Power.* C. Hurst and Co. Publishers. Ltd. 2015.
[199] Sachs, Jeffrey. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time.* Penguin Books. 2006.
[200] Greenwald, Bruce K. *Globalization: n. the irrational fear that someone in China will take your job.* Wiley. 2008.
[201] Ghemawat, Pankaj. *World 3.0: Global Prosperity and How to Achieve It, pg. 72.* Harvard Business Review. 2011.
[202] Zuckerman, Ethan. *Digital Cosmopolitans: Why We Think the Internet Connects Us, Why It Doesn't, and How to Rewire It, pgs. 38-74.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2015.
[203] Mishra, Pankaj. *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia.* Penguin Books. 2013.
[204] Krastev, Ivan and Holmes, Stephen. *The Light That Failed: Why the West is Losing the Fight for Democracy.* Pegasus Books. 2020.
[205] Eatwell, Roger and Goodwin, Matthew. *National Populism: The Revolt Against Liberal Democracy.* Pelican. 2018.
[206] Srinivasan, Ramesh. *Whose Global Village?: Rethinking How Technology Shapes Our World.* NYU Press. 2018.
[207] Calhoun, Craig. *'Belonging' in the cosmopolitan imaginary.* (2003) Ethnicities 3(4). pp. 531-553.

efforts to transport institutions across borders are failing.[208]

But insofar as the critics of globalization are setting the record straight, they are implicitly conceding that we imagine globalization to be ubiquitous. It is frequently imagined to pervade our lives, to shape our economies, to condition national defense strategies, and even to bring nationalist strongmen to power—whatever the reality might be. And in spite of so many dimensions of the world being less globalized than we tend to think as pointed out above, this chapter will show that globalization is actually embedded in the very fabric of human civilization, and that humanity is bound together by a global imaginary that shapes our identities and societies. It is really only the recent headline grabbing advances in globalization that are proceeding more slowly than most people think. As this chapter will seek to demonstrate, humanity itself has long been globalized.

It is often asserted that since there is no global state, saying you are a citizen of the world is meaningless.[209] But people are members of all sorts of groups with their own unique organizing principles, and citizenship itself is a social construction.[210] States are not needed to sustain identities.[211] Citizenship is not required to feel patriotism. There are many citizens for whom membership in a state is a mere matter of convenience.[212] And many people imagine themselves bound by duties to the whole of humanity bearing a striking resemblance to those of citizens.[213] In this way, the concept of global citizenship is both meaningful and comprehensible enough to characterize participation in the global imaginary. Yet, the study of the global imaginary remains little researched, underdeveloped, unstructured, and inadequate.

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[208] Krasner, Stephen K. *How to Make Love to a Despot: An Alternative Foreign Policy for the Twenty-First Century.* Liveright. 2020.
[209] Miller, David. *Citizenship and National Identity.* Polity Press. 2000.
[210] Kochenov, Dimitry. *Citizenship.* MIT Press. 2019.
[211] Sen, Amartya. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2006.
[212] Abrahamian, Atossa Araxia. *The Cosmopolites: The Coming of the Global Citizen.* Columbia Global Reports. 2015.
[213] Reyson, Stephen and Katzarska-Miller, Iva. *The Psychology of Global Citizenship: A Review of Theory and Research.* Lexington Books. 2018.

Saying that global identities are unviable because we are not globalized enough ignores the role of the imagination in shaping identities, and as we will see in the next subsection it conveniently overlooks the precariousness of national identities. It also overlooks the countless circumstances in which ordinary people refer to their participation in a shared global imaginary, like when they comment on what "we" are doing to the world, or what "we" have failed to do to stop, say, climate change or genocide. What matters to global citizenship is that people imagine they are bound together with others in a shared global identity implying commitments to the whole of humanity. Whether "citizenship" is the right word to describe this sense of identity is a semantic matter, which this thesis takes as having been settled by the Stoics over two millennia ago. It should be enough that people assert their membership in the global imaginary by referring to it as "global citizenship," in accord with such an ancient tradition.

What is seldom considered is the nature of the global imaginary upon which this global identity is premised. In seeking an answer, this chapter turns first to the material conditions of the biosphere, which lend shape to the global imaginary by situating it in the context of a shared planet. The biosphere binds humanity together materially, but we tend to overlook its interconnectivity because it is too vast to compass.[214] It also explores this interconnectivity historically, examining how several millennia of globalization have provided the foundations of human civilization,[215] which are overlooked due to a cognitive bias in favor of more recent developments.[216] Meanwhile, national imaginaries are shaped by the needs of an international system of states, yet we seldom consider the centrality of the global imaginary to the emergence of those states. In this way, the chapter develops a synoptic conception of the global imaginary, which resolves the tensions between different conceptions of the social imaginary by including some element of them all. The end result is arguably a more robust conception of the global imaginary, which more fully approximates the lived reality of globalization.

But if the global imaginary is so robust, why is it so easy to dismiss?

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[214] Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World.* University of Minnesota Press. 2013.
[215] Sachs, Jeffrey. *The Ages of Globalization: Geography, Technology, and Institutions*. Columbia University Press. 2020.
[216] Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking Fast and Slow.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.

The global imaginary is a lot like infrastructure in that its work lies mostly behind the scenes. So, we will be seeking it out in places where it tends to go overlooked, like the way it shapes our conceptions of nations and grounds our notion of "humanity," demonstrating in the process that critics of globalization miss its significance by examining the wrong things. This chapter demonstrates that even as national imaginaries became central to our self-conceptions, the global imaginary became essential to our lives. And it is through an examination of the breakdown of national imaginaries that we might best grasp its importance.

The story of globalization can appear sublime, but cultural mixing has often been brutal and oppressive. The purpose of this chapter is not to make moral judgments on what is largely a fait accompli, or to recommend a better approach to globalization, but rather to empirically establish the existence and salience of the global imaginary, and to demonstrate how it pervades our lives. A critique of the global imaginary will be reserved for the second section of the thesis while a moral evaluation of its purposes will be reserved for the third and final section. What is important now is to grasp its full scope and its paradoxical relationship to simultaneously weakening and resurgent national imaginaries.

The Crisis of the National Imaginary

National imaginaries have if anything proved remarkably resilient,[217] and identities are sticky in that they often remain long after the conditions that brought them into existence have passed. But almost every single condition that brought national identities into existence is being undermined. Meanwhile, related developments are strengthening the global imaginary, and this constitutes a crisis of nationalism that is probably fueling some of its resurgence. National imaginaries may be reconstituted in newer and more resilient forms in the foreseeable future, and they may come away from the crisis stronger. For as we saw in the first chapter, social imaginaries require

[217] Held, David and Young, Kevin. *Gridlock: Why Global Cooperation is Failing When We Need It Most*. Polity Press. 2013.

constant renewal through their ritualized reaffirmation, and there are a multitude of mechanisms through which national identities might be strengthened. Yet, this subsection will demonstrate that the crisis runs so deep as to make these developments look more like the last gasp of a drowning man.

National imaginaries emerged from a multitude of historical processes as we saw in the last chapter. Benedict Anderson established how rail and telegraph lines extended communication networks in the nineteenth century, thereby allowing for the creation of national literatures and presses.[218] Meanwhile, Ernest Gellner emphasized how industrial development homogenized consumer preferences while creating large middle classes sharing much the same interests and tastes. Industrial development resulted in wider tax bases, which brought in increasing state revenues, thereby strengthening state capacities. As the capacities of states expanded, so also did the demands placed upon them by citizens; as the expectations placed upon states increased, state institutions were increasingly democratized.[219]

An ever-increasing number of people were given the vote in order to generate greater social stability and economic development, and to deepen their commitment to the state in times of war.[220] Developed democracies accommodated the input of more citizens, and they catered to more of their needs. The increased opportunities for input, coupled with the security they provided, strengthened their sense of solidarity; meanwhile, the sense that everyone was in it together made states more responsive to the needs of their citizens.[221] All of this strengthened national imaginaries, which wove the dreams of citizens into the visions of founders, who sought to craft a sense of national purpose.[222] Most used state institutions to bring about linguistic

[218] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Verso. 1983.
[219] Gellner, Ernest. *Nationalism.* Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1997.
[220] Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D. 990-1992.* Wiley-Blackwell. 1992.
[221] Miller, David. *Citizenship and National Identity.* Polity Press. 2000.
[222] Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terrance eds. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge University Press. 1983.

homogeneity.[223] National flags and museums, monuments and narratives, anthems and heroes, were created in order to unite what were often disparate and diverse polities.[224] And thus, from the conscious efforts of founders above, and the daily practices of citizens below, national imaginaries were birthed into a modern world.

Yet, while national narratives continue to exert a powerful pull on the imagination, they are fragmenting in the twenty-first century. A globalized internet has in many ways supplemented or replaced Anderson's national press in all but the most authoritarian states, and most people have come to get their news from globalized social media. And while most news sites focus on events in the country where they are located,[225] just as most trade still occurs within states,[226] they are more likely than ever to speak to global audiences, and everyone reading them knows that a click of the mouse can take them across the world in an instant. The result has been a disruption of the common secular time that contributed to the first national imaginaries, and its replacement, in the words of Cass Sunstein, with "epistemological bubbles,"[227] each with their own causal narratives, and a fragmentation of temporality.[228]

Meanwhile, a globalized film industry has largely replaced national literatures, and the literature that is still read is now largely written in the lingua franca of English. Literate communities are increasingly cosmopolitan, and the literature they read tends to be written by a more racially and ethnically diverse set of authors, whose literary imaginations knit together the world. Literature

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[223] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities, pgs. 67-82.* Verso. 1983; Sand, Shlomo. *The Invention of the Jewish People.* Verso. 2010; Thiong'o, Ngugi wa. *Decolonizing Language: And Other Revolutionary Ideas.* Allen Lane. 2025.
[224] Smith, Anthony D. *Nationalism, pg. 8.* Polity Press. 2010.
[225] Ghemawat, Pankaj. *World 3.0: Global Prosperity and How to Achieve It, pg. 72.* Harvard Business Review. 2011.
[226] Greenwald, Bruce K. *Globalization: n. the irrational fear that someone in China will take your job.* Wiley. 2008.
[227] Sunstein, Cass R. *Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge.* Oxford University Press. 2008.
[228] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* Belknap Press. 2018.

has begun in short to speak to a cosmopolitan audience about their globalized lives.[229] Technological advances in translation have lowered the barriers to communication across borders, and they may soon eliminate them altogether through instantaneous voice-to-text translation, across a range of languages, centered around a simple and affordable ear-piece.

Meanwhile, the material forces binding national imaginaries together are also beginning to lose their grip. The middle classes that resulted from industrialization have been hollowed out by automation and economic globalization,[230] and the dissolution of the middle classes has been compounded by neoliberal economic policies further intensifying inequality.[231] National consensuses have thereby fractured, breaking down power hierarchies,[232] as new ones come to take their place. The inequality has resulted in the rise of immensely wealthy global elites,[233] whose power can seemingly only be tamed through global cooperation.[234] Meanwhile, nineteenth-century industrial economies have been gradually transformed into information

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[229] Kirsch, Adam. *The Global Novel: Writing the 21st Century.* Columbia Global Reports. 2017; Schoene, Berthold. *The Cosmopolitan Novel.* Edinburgh University Press. 2009.

[230] Milanovic, Branko. *Global Inequality: A New Approach for the Age of Globalization.* Belknap Press. 2016; Stiglitz, Joseph E. *The Great Divide: Unequal Societies and What We Can Do About Them.* Penguin Press. 2016.

[231] Gerstle, Gary. *The Rise and Fall of the Neoliberal Order: America and the World in the Free Market Era.* Oxford University Press. 2022; Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* Oxford University Press. 2007; Kutter, Robert. *Can Democracy Survive Global Capitalism?* W.W. Norton and Company. 2018; Payne, Kevin. *The Broken Ladder: How Inequality Affects the Way We Think, Live, and Die.* Penguin Press. 2017; Sandel, Michael J. *The Tyranny of Merit: Can We Find the Common Good?* Picador. 2020; Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2017.

[232] Naim, Moises. *The End of Power: From Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States, Why Being in Charge Isn't What It Used to Be.* Basic Books. 2014.

[233] Rothkopf, David. *Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World They Are Making.* Abacus. 2009.

[234] Milanovic, Branko. *The Haves and the Have-Nots: A Brief and Idiosyncratic History of Globalization.* Basic Books. 2012; Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the Global Economy.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2012.

economies,[235] as newer industrial powers are more thoroughly integrated into the global economy. Now, global economies bring together people from across the world, as the demands citizens once placed on states are increasingly focused on global threats, which call for international institutions that might coordinate global responses.[236]

The fragmentation of national imaginaries has been compounded by the fissiparous nature of social imaginaries more generally. Social imaginaries, as argued in the first chapter, are porous and constantly changing. The composition of groups changes, as do the contexts binding them together; the external properties defining them change, as do the intersubjective imaginaries holding them together. Social imaginaries hide things from view, borrow from other imaginaries, and are constantly being updated. Meanwhile, the myths and symbols that once sustained national and religious imaginaries are increasingly unbelievable in more educated and multicultural societies,[237] and they tend to pit people against one another in an increasingly globalized world.[238]

Social identities bring cohesion to groups, whose members need each other to thrive;[239] and they bring meaning to the experiences we share with others. The problem is that they tend to be reified, along with the identities of their members.[240] Thus, they tend to break down if they are not continually reaffirmed.[241] People believe their identities to be more solid than they are, so when change inevitably occurs, it is experienced as a threat to their existence. The experience of a fractured identity can be disorienting,[242] and many try to blunt the feeling through immersion in

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[235] Castells, Manuel. *The Rise of the Network Society: Information Age Economy, Society, and Culture.* Blackwell Publishing. 1996.
[236] Held, David. *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities.* Polity Press. 2010.
[237] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* Belknap Press. 2018.
[238] Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations: and the Remaking of World Order.* Simon and Schuster. 2011.
[239] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities, pg. 1-7.* Verso. 1983.
[240] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity.* Profile Books. 2018.
[241] Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember.* Cambridge University Press. 1989.
[242] Fromm, Erich. *Escape from Freedom.* Holt Paperbacks. 1994.

a more encompassing identity,[243] Hence, national identities are simultaneously becoming weaker and more resurgent. The conditions that led to their emergence are crumbling, but their proponents are trying to reconstruct them. It is in this sense that the retreat from globalism is dialectical.

Yet, sometimes the tensions involved in sustaining an identity become unbearable, and it becomes necessary to adopt a wider, more inclusive identity that transcends its contradictions. It is for just this reason that many have turned to more global identities rooted in a global imaginary,[244] and it is for precisely this reason that a richer and more holistic account of the global imaginary is so desperately needed.

The Planetary Imaginary

Anyone with a passing acquaintance of the modern world, or the most rudimentary education in the natural sciences, knows that humanity is spread across the surface of a rounded and delimited earth.[245] They know that outside of this sphere, nothing survives for thousands upon thousands of miles and is unlikely to in the foreseeable future. They recognize that the skies constitute the territorial limits of the earth, that the people living beneath them share a host of things in common, and that certain events like thermonuclear war present dangers to everyone living on the planet, along with the biosphere they share in common.[246] Their knowledge of these conditions may be fuzzy, and their notions of the biospheric threats facing humanity may be inaccurate, but they know that people and things commonly circle the planet just as surely as they know the earth is round, however much a tiny minority may wish to deny it. In this way, the

[243] Hoffer, Eric. *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements.* Harper and Row Publishers. 1951.
[244] Reyson, Stephen and Katzarska-Miller, Iva. *The Psychology of Global Citizenship: A Review of Theory and Research.* Lexington Books. 2018.
[245] Kant, Immanuel and Humphrey, Ted trans. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays, pgs. 121-122.* Hackett Publishing Company. 1983.
[246] Beck, Ulrich. *World Risk Society.* Polity Press. 1999.

rounded earth, its territorial limits, and the risks shared by the people living on it, along with their common sense of humanity, could be said to constitute the material basis of the global imaginary.

But the global imaginary shared by the vast bulk of humanity does not stop there.

Anyone familiar with the modern world is at least vaguely aware that people and goods travel around it and major events are felt across it. They are aware that the world's oceans are interconnected and the atmosphere runs together, so pollution dumped into the oceans and skies tends to circulate. They are aware that people travel across the oceans and through the skies for work and leisure, and still others do so to make a better life. And they are aware that economic goods travel across the oceans and through the skies, and their journeys are part of what has come to be called a global economy. Moreover, as was made clear by the Great Recession and Covid, they know that economic events on one side of the world somehow impact events on the other side of it. In short, people familiar with the modern world, whether citizens of industrial states or shanty-dwellers dreaming of a better life, know that through the movements of people and goods, their lives are linked with those of people across the world. Their awareness of these links may be faint, and they may rarely think about their implications, but they are nevertheless integral to their understanding of how the world works.

The logical implications of being even vaguely aware that the earth is round and bounded are extensive. If people travel around the world, then so also do their ideas,[247] myths,[248] stories,[249]

[247] Wright, Robert. *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny.* Vintage Books. 2001.
[248] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* Princeton Bollingen. 1972.
[249] Ansary, Tamim. *The Invention of Yesterday: A 50,000 Year History of Human Culture, Conflict, and Connection.* Public Affairs. 2019.

weapons,[250] religions,[251] technologies,[252] emissions,[253] institutions,[254] business practices,[255] literatures,[256] and diseases.[257] If all these circulate across the surface of the planet, then the world itself is empirically interconnected, and every imaginary pervasively penetrated by every other. And if this heavy cargo circulates as individuals make their way around the world,[258] it does so all the faster the more quickly they travel, and all the more often the more they travel.[259] Meanwhile, whatever might be repackaged as symbols and translated into bits circulates still faster. Hence, as more things move around the world, the interconnectivity between all things within it increases.[260]

Again, even the vague sense of these links is significant in that it is constitutive of our understanding of how the world works. An individual may not wish to think about them often and may sometimes hold contradictory views. It is only the rarest of individuals who is capable of working out a fully coherent ontological conception of the world, after all. Yet, insofar as their knowledge of the world's interconnectivity is established, it is foundational to their views on other matters, like the contingency of their countries, the relativity of their cultures, and the

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[250] Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies.* W.W. Norton and Company. 1999.
[251] Chanda, Nayan. *Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers, and Warriors Shaped Globalization.* Yale University Press. 2007.
[252] Srinivasan, Ramesh. *Whose Global Village? Rethinking How Technology Shapes Our World.* NYU Press. 2018.
[253] Gardiner, Stephen M. *The Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change.* Oxford University Press. 2013.
[254] Fukuyama, Francis. *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution.* Profile Books Ltd. 2012; Fukuyama, Francis. *Political Order and Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy.* Profile Books Ltd. 2015.
[255] Bernstein, William. *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World.* Grove Press/Atlantic Monthly Press. 2009.
[256] Kirsch, Adam. *The Global Novel: Writing the 21st Century.* Columbia Global Reports. 2017.
[257] McNeill, William. *Plagues and Peoples.* Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group. 1998.
[258] Chanda, Nayan. *Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers, and Warriors Shaped Globalization.* Yale University Press. 2007.
[259] Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Polity Press. 1990.
[260] Wright, Robert. *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny.* Vintage Books. 2001.

vague and passing sense that catastrophic events on one side of the world can seldom be contained. It will impact their views on the crimes against humanity that generate refugee flows. It will impact their positions on the drug trade, sex trade, terrorism, and interstate violence. It will influence how they envision the development of vaccines and the spread of transmissible diseases. And it will change the way they think about their own relative success in the world.

The global circulation of all things human could be said to constitute the basis of the global imaginary. Without some recognition of its flows, it would be difficult to make sense of most societies in the world today. We could not make sense of their economies, their ecologies, their demographics, or their geopolitics. We could not trace where their consumer goods come from or where the products of their labor are going. If they are rich countries, we could not understand where their newest members have come from, and if they are poor where their most vulnerable and most skilled members are going. Nor could we make sense of the economic and political models being pressed upon them by outsiders, or the cell phones that are a prominent part of even life in refugee camps. We could not even make sense of the way they assert their more local religious and national identities.

Astrophysicist Lord Martin Rees enumerates a multitude that are capable of ending civilization as we know it—from rogue biotechnology to asteroid strikes, artificial intelligence to nuclear holocaust—arguing that an international body is needed to identify and ameliorate the risks.[261] But the most easily predictable threats are environmental, and in many cases interlinked in a vicious circle. Water shortages contribute to desertification, desertification to food insecurity, food insecurity to overpopulation, overpopulation to greenhouse gas emissions, and greenhouse gas emissions to the rest, for example.[262] It is often difficult to tell where one threat ends and another begins, for in an interconnected world, systemic collapse in one place tends to ripple through every other place.[263] Thus, we are not simply discussing a multitude of discreet threats but rather concern for the fate of a global biosphere.

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[261] Rees, Lord Martin. *On the Future: Prospects for Humanity.* Princeton University Press. 2018.
[262] Brown, Lester R. *Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2009.
[263] Meadows, Donella H. and Wright, Diana. *Thinking in Systems: A Primer.* Chelsea Green Publishing. 2008.

The role of the biosphere in sustaining all life reminds us we are bound together in what Ulrich Beck has dubbed a *world risk society*.[264] A risk society is a demographic of people sharing the same risks. These may be health or national security risks, but they might also be global threats like climate change and nuclear holocaust. The risks shape our collective identities by reminding us we are in it together and challenge us with acting cooperatively on often vast scales. Risk societies are tasked with distributing the costs of action associated with inspiring disparate people to work toward common ends,[265] and if they can equalize the costs of action, they can mitigate the risks. Governments are instituted at the national level to share these costs, but global institutions tend to lack the needed powers of enforcement. So, while the global imaginary is largely shaped through shared risks, global institutions cannot do much about them—and yet, the global imaginary may be strongest where it binds humanity together in a world risk society.

Somehow, we have come to imagine ourselves members of a shared humanity, living on a commonly shared planet,[266] but as Timothy Morton observes, global events are too big to comprehend.[267] And where they can be comprehended, the variables involved tend to result in a shallow understanding of their nature.[268] Even as the shelves fill up with books on social and economic globalization, and moral and political cosmopolitanism, the charting of the global imaginary remains cursory.[269] It is to remedy this lacuna in the literature, speak to the imaginary bonds shared by people across the planet, and explain recent changes in the global imaginary that this thesis has been written.

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[264] Beck, Ulrich. *World Risk Society.* Polity. 1991.
[265] Olsen, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups.* Harvard University Press. 1974.
[266] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers. W.W*. Norton and Company. 2007.
[267] Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World.* University of Minnesota Press. 2013.
[268] Horesh, Theo. *Convergence: The Globalization of Mind.* Bauu Institute. 2014.
[269] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalists.* Allen Lane. 2019; Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2008.

The World Historical Imaginary

People could not imagine themselves bound together globally until they could first imagine themselves sharing the same planet. Nor could they imagine what it meant to be human until they acquired an idea of humanity. The global imaginary only emerged gradually as people began to learn about what was happening on the other side of the planet. Global histories highlight the ways in which humanity has been bound together for centuries, if not millennia, and they tend to emphasize the global forces of interdependence. They help us uncover the emergence of the global imaginary, but the histories themselves are also essential to its emergence. For through the narratives they foster, they lay down the lineaments of a global civilization that has been emerging for thousands of years and is just now coming to consciousness. So, in turning to global histories, this subsection aims to demonstrate another dimension of the deeper foundations of the global imaginary that is all too often taken for granted.

The cultures of the world were first tied together through "traders, preachers, adventurers, and warriors," in the words of global historian, Nayan Chanda.[270] They crossed borders in search of something remarkable, or simply to get away from the stultifying constrictions of their own small worlds. Where they appeared, they signaled the existence of strange and threatening peoples over the horizon. And when they returned home, they brought news of how people lived on the other side of the planet. Whether we look to the Greek Herodotus,[271] the Indian Bodhidharma,[272] the North African Ibn Battutah,[273] or the mythologized Sumerian Gilgamesh,[274] we find similar tales of discovery, conquest, and cultural interchange. Sometimes the journeys ranged across the world, sometimes simply beyond known maps. They often included the wanderings of refugees, like the fabled Jews of the *Bible* and the Romans of the *Aeneid*.

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[270] Chanda, Nayan. *Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers, and Warriors Shaped Globalization.* Yale University Press. 2008.
[271] Herodotus and Marincola, John M. trans. *The Histories.* Penguin Classics. 2003.
[272] Ferguson, Andy. *Tracking Bodhidharma: A Journey to the Heart of Chinese Culture.* Counterpoint. 2012.
[273] Battutah, Ibn and Mackintosh-Smith, Tim. *The Travels of Ibn Battutah.* Picador. 2003.
[274] Mitchell, Stephen. *Gilgamesh: A New English Version.* Atria Books. 2006.

Whole peoples sometimes ranged across continents, as in the case of the Native Peoples of the Americas and the Bantu of Africa. Commonly, as in the case of Marco Polo, and countless unnamed merchants, they left in search of the riches with which they returned. They brought back gunpowder, frankincense, potatoes, ivory, nutmeg, coffee, metals, paper, sugar, china, glass, mace, silk, tea, and a storehouse of other exotica, which would later form the basis of globalized consumer economies. Meanwhile, they spread their genes and germs,[275] weapons and scripts, domesticated crops and animals,[276] and with them countless ideas and practices.[277] They also spread their religions, which were commonly crafted to integrate the scattered ethnicities knit together by empires.[278] Taken together, this abundance of goods and practices represents an astonishing portion of our contemporary lifeworlds.

Global histories garner big popular audiences and make for exciting reading because they emphasize the hidden forces that lay behind otherwise mundane events. They uncover intercultural connections that have been suppressed by narrowly focused national narratives. They show us that what all too often appears ordinary is actually the result of impossible adventures in exotic locales—and given their globality, somewhere is likely to be exotic for just about everybody.[279] Meanwhile, they emphasize the way the forces of globalization, which often appear to be turning our lives upside down today, have actually been at work since the dawn of human history.[280] Historical narratives recounting the whole of human history grapple with the significance of our humanity,[281] and they demonstrate our global integration[282] through

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[275] McNeill, William. *Plagues and Peoples.* Anchor. 1976.
[276] Bernstein, William J. *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World.* Grove Press. 2009.
[277] Wright, Robert. *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny.* Vintage Books. 2001.
[278] Armstrong, Karen. *The Great Transformation: The World in the Time of Buddha, Socrates, Confucius, and Jeremiah.* Atlantic Books. 2007.
[279] Chanda, Nayan. *Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers, and Warriors Shaped Globalization.* Yale University Press. 2008.
[280] Frankopan, Peter. *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World.* Vintage. 2017.
[281] Cook, Michael. *A Brief History of the Human Race.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2005.
[282] Sachs, Jeffrey. *The Ages of Globalization: Geography, Technology, and Institutions.* Columbia University Press. 2020.

highlighting the interconnections among cultures.[283] They weave together a common origin story that might bind us all closer together.[284] In this way, global histories uncover a latent global imaginary while demonstrating the global roots of human civilization itself. Yet, some of the most significant forces of globalization have been the most obscure.

In an effort to understand what allowed some peoples to get ahead while others fell behind, Jared Diamond enumerated the crops and animals that might be domesticated in each region of the world prior to settled agriculture, concluding that few species of the sort existed in sub-Saharan Africa and the Western Hemisphere, and that their spread was limited by extreme climatic differences stretching north-to-south along longitudinal lines. Eurasian civilizations were therefore able to get a leg up on the ladder of development, because they could transfer crops and animals along vast latitudinal lines stretched across the continent, according to Diamond. In this way, human civilization was globalized from its inception, with domesticable crops and animals being transferred from one population center to the next across the giant landmass of Eurasia. Later, the same thing would happen with writing and the weapons of war, giving the cultures that were party to the transfers the ability to colonize the rest of the world. In this way, the most basic constituents of human civilization were arguably globalized from the start.[285]

The process of globalization might be said to predate history, but it received a major boost in the High Middle Ages, when Mongol conquests tied together Eurasia, and the Silk Road was opened to the spice trade.[286] The Silk Road was a series of trade routes crisscrossing Eurasia. It involved a far wider array of traded goods than just silk,[287] and it largely took place along the ancient trade

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[283] Christian, David. *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History.* University of California Press. 2004.

[284] Langmuir, Charles H. and Broecker, Wally. *How to Build a Habitable Planet: The Story of Earth from Big Bang to Humankind.* Princeton University Press. 2012; Swimme, Brian. *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era – A Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos.* Harper One. 1992.

[285] Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies.* W.W. Norton and Company. 1999.

[286] Bernstein, William J. *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World.* Grove Press. 2009.

[287] Hansen, Valerie. *The Silk Road: A New History with Documents.* Oxford University Press. 2016.

routes of the Indian Ocean.[288] Thus, Late Medieval cross-continental trade was more extensive than we tend to think, and the trade routes were significant because they initiated a period of cultural and economic exchange. Suddenly, a process of globalization that had been integral to human civilization from the start burst into the imagination through the writings of fabulist adventurers and merchants like the Italian Marco Polo[289] and the Moroccan Ibn Battutah.[290]

Opening the Western Hemisphere may have been more significant in knitting the world together. It initiated a centuries-long encounter with indigenous societies, reflected in the anthropological writings of thinkers like Michel de Montaigne[291] the speculative philosophy of John Locke,[292] and the cosmopolitan ethics of Bartolome Las Casas.[293] The encounter forced Western thinkers to grapple with completely alien cultures[294] and the possibility of entirely different ways of organizing society, explored in works of fiction like Thomas More's *Utopia*.[295] It challenged philosophers to think harder about what was universal and what was merely contingent, inaugurating a resurgence of the natural law tradition that would lay down the basic principles of international law.[296] And the interchange represented a seldom recognized openness to the world that would culminate in Enlightenment cosmopolitanism.[297]

It is commonly believed that Enlightenment thinkers overlooked the uniqueness of cultures outside Christian Europe. Instead of discerning their own unique organizing principles, they

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[288] Bernstein, William J. *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World.* Grove Press. 2009
[289] Polo, Marco and Latham, Ronald. *The Travels.* Penguin Classics. 2004.
[290] Battutah, Ibn and Mackintosh-Smith, Tim. *The Travels of Ibn Battutah.* Picador. 2003.
[291] Montaigne, Michel de and Screech, M.A. *The Complete Essays.* Penguin Classics. 1993.
[292] Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government.* Cambridge University Press. 1988.
[293] Las Casas, Bartolome and Griffin, Nigel trans. *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies.* Penguin Classics. 1999.
[294] De Vaca, Alvar Núñez Cabeza. *Chronicle of the Narvaez Expedition*. Penguin Classics. 2002.
[295] More, Thomas and Turner, Paul trans. *Utopia.* Penguin Classics. 2003.
[296] Grotius, Hugo and Campbell, A.C. *The Rights of War and Peace.* M. Walter Dunne. 1901.
[297] Osterhammel, Jürgen and Petersson, Neils P. *Globalization: A Short History.* Princeton University Press. 2009.

tended instead to see in them a failure to live up to their own standard of civilization.[298] Yet, Jürgen Osterhammel demonstrates through a close reading of travel literature, ethnography, and philosophical novels, like Baron de Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*,[299] that their differences were more often than not sources of fascination, which were used to draw European practices into question. And they were often carefully studied and traced through detailed descriptions, governed by recognizable conventions of analysis.[300] Insofar as the encounter highlighted the contingency of western practices, it contributed to their reconceptualization: insofar as it drew them into question, it contributed to their reconstruction.

Practices that were taken for granted as natural were suddenly revealed to be cultural by Montaigne;[301] meanwhile, the diversity of practices encountered in the exchange led Locke to do away with the idea of human nature altogether.[302] In this way, the encounter exerted an outsized influence on what is commonly believed to be quintessentially western thinking. But even the more conventional view of Enlightenment thinkers as cultural imperialists suggests their thinking was a response to the encounter, if only in that it led them to reify the idea of their own cultural superiority. Whatever cosmopolitan opening that occurred was largely curtailed by the first decades of the nineteenth-century as European colonialism picked up steam.[303] It is here where we start to see the kind of orientalism detailed by Edward Said, where ancient cultures were grouped together under the same homogeneous "oriental" category, while their inhabitants were patronized for their exotic curiosities.[304]

Cultural differences are often the result of centuries of interaction among raiders, traders,

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[298] Gong, Gerrit W. *The Standard of Civilization in International Society.* Oxford University Press. 1984.
[299] Montesquieu, Charles Louis de Secondat and Betts, C.J. *Persian Letters.* Penguin Classics. 1973.
[300] Osterhammel, Jürgen and Savage, Robert trans. *Unfabling the East: The Enlightenment's Encounter with Asia.* Princeton University Press. 2019.
[301] Montaigne, Michel de and Screech, M.A. *The Complete Essays.* Penguin Classics. 1993.
[302] Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government.* Cambridge University Press. 1988.
[303] Osterhammel, Jürgen and Petersson, Neils P. *Globalization: A Short History.* Princeton University Press. 2009.
[304] Said, Edward W. *Orientalism.* Vintage. 1979.

bandits, diplomats, spiritual seekers, borrowers, imitators, appropriators, adventurers, colonial administrators, religious missionaries, and ordinary soldiers. But if the process of globalization is so deeply embedded in human societies, and can look back on such extensive roots, how are we to explain so many remaining cultural differences? The early history of globalization highlights the dialectical process through which cultures defined themselves and were defined by others in the modern age. Genuinely distinctive practices often resulted from cultural encounters, sometimes from rejecting foreign influences, sometimes, as in the case of the Turkish Fez, from the effort to mimic their practices in a culturally distinctive manner.

Groups of people as we will see in the coming chapters have been defining themselves against one another since the dawn of history. It is a process of differentiation that the cultural anthropologist David Graeber refers to as schismogenesis.[305] In short, cultural differences often result less from a lack of contact than an excess of it. Sometimes the encounters bring real differences into relief, and sometimes they exacerbate them. Ethnographic accounts of Muslim veiling in the West, for instance, suggest that women who take up the veil are not maintaining their traditions but rather asserting their independence against cultural hegemony.[306] Meanwhile, the leisurely pace of self-reflexive French films may be less an expression of their cultural origins than their niche in the international film industry. In this way, what are commonly perceived to be unique cultural practices may actually be forged in dialectic with more dominant societies.

[305] Graeber, David and Wengrow, David. *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity, pgs. 56-57.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2021.
[306] Amer, Saher. *What is Veiling?* University of North Carolina Press. 2017.

The Multicultural Imaginary

National imaginaries were demonstrated in the first chapter to be more porous than we tend to imagine.[307] They are commonly fused together with other national identities in hybrid formations.[308] They typically overlap with religious and ethnic identities.[309] And the members adhering to them typically disagree over what makes their identities distinctive. National imaginaries are in fact highly contested, and differences over what makes them distinctive can often tear nations apart. In some cases, the end result is a legitimation crisis,[310] in others civil wars.[311] This is why nations bind themselves together against "the other"[312] with flags and anthems.[313] It is hard to bind millions of people together in a common identity, and leaders who would attempt it typically make use of whatever shared identifiers they can muster up, whether racial, ethnic, religious, or linguistic.[314]

Nations can often appear homogeneous from a distance, but on closer inspection they tend to weave together a more colorful tapestry. The metaphor of a tapestry suggests many strands coming together to make a bigger picture. The strands might include the narratives of marginalized minorities, fighting against entrenched traditions of discrimination. But they might also be ideological, philosophical, or religious. Each group within a society tends to define itself as both a part of the society and in some ways against it. The ambiguous relationships result from the amorphousness of social imaginaries. Since they can never be definitively defined, we can never fully defend them.

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[307] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity.* Profile Books. 2018.
[308] Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture.* Routledge. 1994.
[309] Sen, Amartya. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2007.
[310] Habermas, Jürgen. *Legitimation Crisis.* Beacon Press. 1975.
[311] Armitage, David. *Civil Wars: A History of Ideas.* Alfred A. Knopf. 2017.
[312] Hegel, G.W.F. and Miller, A.V. trans. *Phenomenology of Spirit.* Oxford University Press. 1997.
[313] Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember.* Cambridge University Press. 1989.
[314] Hobsbawn, Eric and Ranger, Terrance eds. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge University Press. 1983.

And yet, as national imaginaries are widened to include their own countervailing traditions, they don't just draw in their own inhabitants. Rather, the counternarratives are transfigured into the myths and symbols of a common humanity, which find their way into a wide array of cultures, and are added to its vast storehouse of meanings. In this way, anticolonial Africans might be inspired by Malcolm X, Gandhi by the writings of Henry David Thoreau, liberal nationalists by the Italian Mazzini,[315] and ethnonationalists by Vladimir Putin.[316] Thus, in the process of including all their members, national imaginaries contribute to a much wider and more inclusive global imaginary by building up a stock of symbols that might be used in support of any number of imaginaries.

The postcolonial theorist Edward Said enlarges the national imaginary in yet another way, pointing to what he calls its "contrapuntal" character. According to Said, European nations emerged out of a dialectical interplay between the home country and their colonies abroad. It was a relationship that was readily apparent in the constant references to a colonial backdrop in virtually every novel of the Victorian era, according to Said. Narratives of the home country existed side by side with wholly separate colonial imaginaries, which were woven together into their own distinctive, contrapuntal harmonies. In this way, nations defined themselves in relation to their colonies, and the colonies themselves were integral to the national imaginary.[317] But if the colonies were integral to national imaginaries, the origins of those imaginaries were actually global in scope, for they drew from sources stretched wide across the world. "No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind."[318]

Something similar might be said of national imaginaries that are defined against an alien other. If the Palestinian national imaginary is strengthened by symbols of resistance to Israel, then Israel is integral to it; and the same might be said of the "Arab" other, which plays such an outsized

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[315] Mazower, Mark. *Governing the World: The History of an Idea.* Penguin. 2013.
[316] Snyder, Timothy. *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America.* Vintage 2nd ed. 2019.
[317] Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism.* Vintage Books. 1994.
[318] Ibid. pg. 336.

role in the Israeli national imaginary. To remove the one would be to fundamentally alter the other.[319] It is much the same with the Russian national imaginary and Europe, the Indian national imaginary and Pakistan. These pairs might not be woven together in contrapuntal harmonies, but they are engaged in a sort of ritualized dance, wherein the loss of one partner would suddenly bring the dance to an ignominious end, and with it the social imaginaries of both partners, as currently conceived. The dance is actually enshrined in the internationalized institutions of statehood, as we will see in the next chapter. Sovereignty, territoriality, citizenship, and legitimacy, among other international institutions, each define nations against one another, but they are also integral to national imaginaries.

Homi K. Bhabha takes this reasoning a step further, arguing that identities are never fixed and always more or less hybrid.[320] The signature foods of Israel, falafels and hummus, are actually Arab,[321] as is the architectural style of its buildings.[322] Its control of Palestinian land in the occupied territories is facilitated by old Ottoman property codes;[323] its most scenic attraction in Old Jerusalem, replicated in postcards and travel promotions, is arguably the Muslim Dome of the Rock. Meanwhile, Palestinians have repeatedly adopted the same personal and national liberation strategies as their Jewish counterparts.[324] While every identity may draw from foreign sources, some are more hybrid than others, and as immigration increases, ever-more people are adopting hybridized identities.

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[319] Shipler, David K. *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land.* Times Books. 1986.
[320] Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture.* Routledge. 1994.
[321] Mendel, Yonaton and Ranta, Ronald. *Consuming Palestine: Palestine and Palestinians in Israeli Food Culture.* Ethnicities. 14(3), 412-435; Mendel, Yonaton and Ranta, Ronald.*From the Arab Other to the Israeli Self: Palestinian Culture in the Making of Israeli National Identity.* Routledge. 2018; Hirsch, D. *"Hummus is best when it is fresh and made by Arabs": The gourmetization of hummus in Israel and the return of the repressed Arab. American Ethnologist.* 38(4), 617-630.
[322] Weizman, Eyal. *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation, pgs. 25-55.* Verso. 2017.
[323] Benvenisti, Meron. *The West Bank Data Project: A Survey of Israel's Policies.* American Enterprise Institute. 2008; Shehadeh, Raja. *Palestinian Walks: Forays into a Vanishing Landscape, pg. 57.* Scribner. 2007.
[324] Said, Edward. W. *The Question of Palestine, pgs. 196-198.* Vintage Books. 1979.

Hybrid identities fuse racial, ethnic, religious, and national identities together, and they often result from the incomplete integration of newly arrived immigrants. However, they sometimes persist for generations. Hybrid identities are by their nature lacking in fixed reference points, and they are transitory and incomplete. They appear in artistic fusions and new cultural forms, and they serve as fountainheads of social experimentation.[325] They are the sources of exotic fascinations, which often find their way into wider national cultures. And counter-cultural identities often draw from them. In this way, they complicate national imaginaries by diluting their narratives and challenging their complacency.[326] The result is an opening to the wider possibility of a global imaginary.[327]

Hybrid identities can foster wider cosmopolitan affiliations by uniting immigrants across borders. Consider how immigrants and refugees the world over have to contend with racism and displacement. They have to learn to live between worlds, and they have to explain themselves wherever they go. They have to learn to make their way in strange new lands, and they often make sense of their experiences through those of immigrants in world literature and film.[328] Whether or not they think themselves citizens of the world is therefore irrelevant to the fact that their experiences are integral to the development of globalized identities.

Immigration is increasing in every major region of the world, for it has become easier to travel, transfer money, work from afar, and keep in touch with friends and family. Citizens of poorer states have also become increasingly exposed to wealthier states, and the income disparities between them have grown dramatically.[329] Thus, the perceived risks of emigration from poorer to wealthier states have decreased while the rewards have increased.[330] In this way, many nations are becoming global microcosms, and the globalization of their identities is most apparent in

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[325] Waldron, Jeremy in Benhabib, Seyla and Post, Robert eds. *Another Cosmopolitanism, pgs. 83-101.* Oxford University Press. 2006.
[326] Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture.* Routledge. 1994.
[327] Derrida, Jacques. *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness.* Routledge. 2001.
[328] Kirsch, Adam. *The Global Novel: Writing the 21st Century.* Columbia Global Reports. 2017.
[329] Milanovic, Branko. *The Haves and the Have-Nots: A Brief and Idiosyncratic History of Globalization.* Basic Books. 2012.
[330] Collier, Paul. *Exodus: Immigration and Multiculturalism in the 21st Century.* Penguin. 2014.

their biggest cities. National capitals tend to play an outsized role in defining national identities. They are the centers of national cultural life and major hubs of government and commercial activity. Yet, major cities tend to be global cities. Their populations are typically multicultural. They tend to share more in common with other major cities than their own national cultures. And in order for everybody to get along, they often define themselves against the wider national communities of which they are a part. Yet, when a country's most important cities are multicultural, the culture itself comes to appear more cosmopolitan as well.

Of course, national imaginaries can be defined around the embrace of diversity, as Singapore has done from the start and Australia did in the late twentieth century.[331] Yet, the embrace of diversity in a more expansive national imaginary can look a lot like cosmopolitanism insofar as it requires citizens to widen their circle of moral concern, open their minds to new cultural practices, and open their hearts to the alien other. And insofar as it entrains people in these cosmopolitan habits, it leaves them open to the adoption of a wider cosmopolitanism that stretches beyond the nation. In this way, the habits of the heart that are needed to bind diverse nations together can inspire the adoption of more cosmopolitan identities as well. Thus, some measure of cosmopolitanism may be required in order to sustain national imaginaries over the course of this century. In the meantime, the bonds sustaining more cosmopolitan communities may turn out to be much deeper than proponents of a stronger national identity tend to suggest.

[331] Diamond, Jared. *Upheaval: Turning Points for Nations in Crisis, pgs. 255-292.* Back Bay Books. 2020.

The Everyday Globalized Imaginary

Cosmopolitanism is typically conceived as reflecting a special kind of moral commitment to humanity, replete with its own special set of identity markers. Yet, as Jeremy Waldron reminds us, the reality is often far more banal.[332] Interconnections across borders are pervasive in economic institutions and technological infrastructure; and they even impact cultural practices and national identities. The interconnections result from deep historical processes, which have been taking place for hundreds, if not thousands, of years.[333] Cultural markers believed to be distinctive—like the noodles in Italian pasta, which were originally Chinese—have often been borrowed from other cultures. Intellectual endeavors believed to be native—like "western science," which was originally pioneered in Europe's Middle Ages by the Chinese[334] and Muslims[335]—are commonly borrowed from elsewhere. Successful economic institutions like double-entry bookkeeping and financial markets have usually been adopted wherever it has been possible.[336] Even the core attributes of national identities—like Indian democracy or Cuban communism—are commonly appropriated from other cultures.

However, the most distinctive thing about many globalized cultural practices is their utter banality. Michael Billig described banal nationalism as a panoply of everyday referents: flags waving in the distance, national holidays, veterans benefits, presidential addresses, national literatures, the prioritization of national news.[337] The referents embed us in national cultures that tend to go unrecognized, and they contribute to the strength of national identities. Yet, Jeremy

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[332] Waldron, Jeremy. What Is Cosmopolitan? Journal of Political Philosophy. (2000) 8 (2):227–243; Waldron, Jeremy. *Cosmopolitan Norms.* in Benhabib, Seyla and Post, Robert eds. *Another Cosmopolitanism, pgs. 83-101.* Oxford University Press. 2006.

[333] Sachs, Jeffrey. *The Ages of Globalization: Geography, Technology, and Institutions.* Columbia University Press. 2020.

[334] Needham, Joseph and Ronan, Colin. *The Shorter Science and Civilization in China, Volume 1.* Cambridge University Press. 1985; Needham, Joseph and Ronan, Colin. *The Shorter Science and Civilization in China, Volume 2.* Cambridge University Press. 2010.

[335] Starr, S. Frederick. *Lost Enlightenment: Central Asia's Golden Age from the Arab Conquest to Tamerlane.* Princeton University Press. 2013.

[336] Bernstein, William J. *A Splendid Exchange: How Trade Shaped the World.* Grove Press. 2009.

[337] Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism.* Sage Publications Ltd. 1995.

Waldron points out that there is a banal cosmopolitanism doing the same for global identities.[338] It is in this sense that the global imaginary starts to look a lot like infrastructure, which does most of its work in the background.

It is there in the clothes we wear, reaching us from across the world, thanks to laws of the sea regulating shipping. It can be discerned in international trade agreements, harmonizing packaging and workplace regulations. It is present in the standardization of shipping containers, which speed the process of cargo handling,[339] and the standardized weights and measurements, allowing us to assess shipping rates. It is maintained by hundreds of international professional associations, coordinating operating standards and harmonizing work.[340] It is there in the very knowledge that the products surrounding us have come from across the world,[341] and the fact that a good portion of our practices are carried out by people across the world.[342]

Banal cosmopolitanism can be witnessed in the globalization of cities,[343] financial panics,[344] corporations,[345] civil society,[346] terrorism, and the drug trade. It shows up in the ethnic diversity present in classrooms, sports teams, offices, and professions.[347] It is present in the quietly growing recognition that everything is interconnected—and now more than ever.[348] In fact, when

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[338] Waldron, Jeremy in Nussbaum, Martha. *For Love of Country? In a New Democracy Forum on the Limits of Patriotism.* Beacon Press. 2002, pgs. 93-119.
[339] Levinson, Mark. *The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger.* Princeton University Press, 2nd ed. 2016.
[340] Slaughter, Anne Marie. *New World Order.* Princeton University Press. 2005.
[341] Friedman, Thomas. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization.* Macmillan USA. 2012.
[342] Brown, Donald E. *Human Universals.* Temple University Press. 1991.
[343] Sassen, Saskia. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo.* Princeton University Press. 2001.
[344] Stiglitz, Joseph. *Globalization and Its Discontents.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2002.
[345] Korten, David C. *When Corporations Rule the World.* Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 3rd ed. 2015.
[346] Keck, Margaret E. and Sikkink, Kathryn. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics.* Cornell University Press. 1998.
[347] Friedman, Thomas. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization.* Macmillan USA. 2012.
[348] Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Polity Press. 1990.

we consider the full range of everyday objects and practices that have been globalized—from the words with which this thesis is written, to the computer on which they appear, to the table on which it sits, to the chair on which it is read, to the room in which it is situated, to the building in which the room resides, to the city in which it was built—what it is distinctive to specific cultures can begin to look like the exception to the rule of globalization.

Meanwhile, we are daily inundated by a range of global symbols: corporate logos of multinational businesses, marketing campaigns of nongovernmental associations, international heroes, like Nelson Mandela, and villains like Vladimir Putin. No symbol is so powerful a marker of globalism than the earth itself.[349] The image of the earth reminds us that humanity is in it together, that we all live on a single planet adrift in space, and that as a single entity the earth itself is vulnerable to a multitude of threats. We may dismiss its immediacy, overlook its salience, and trivialize its display. Yet, it nevertheless remains a self-contained image inclusive of the greater portion of forces penetrating our lives.

Perhaps this explains the growing strength of global ethical commitments. Ethical commitments to beings on the other side of the planet were previously the provenance of philosophers and saints. But over the past few decades, ordinary people across the world have begun to incrementally change the way they eat, the things they buy, and the places they go simply because of their planetary effects. Meanwhile, it has become not only possible to empathize with people on the other side of the planet but difficult to turn off their suffering.[350] These empathetic experiences and moral commitments may remain weak, but they are increasingly integral to our lives and organizations.

The banality of the global imaginary makes it easy to overlook. Since everyday cosmopolitanism is historically embedded, we do not tend to think about it much. We may be aware that the most rudimentary tools of human civilization resulted from thousands of years of trade, but we seldom consider it. We may recognize we are surrounded by goods from across the globe, but it is easy

[349] Cosgrove, D. *Apollo's Eye: A Geographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination.* Johns Hopkins University Press. 2001.
[350] Horesh, Theo. *Convergence: The Globalization of Mind.* Bauu Institute. 2014.

to forget. This results in part from a novelty bias wherein people take a greater interest in things that appear novel, in part from a recency bias wherein people take a greater interest in things they have recently been exposed to. Globalization may seem recent, but that's because we tend to focus on what's new about it. Look a little deeper, and our genes and germs, weapons and wares, national identities and institutions of state, are the result of thousands of years of globalization. It might even be said that the institutions of the family and religion, the military and political organizations, along with human bodies and minds themselves, have been globalized over the aeons.

Cognitive biases help explain why people emphasize things of little importance while downplaying those of greater importance.[351] People are generally biased against seeing background conditions, so they tend to overlook deeper structures. Yet, they are also biased against seeing the wider systems of which they are a part. The ecological philosopher, Timothy Morton, calls these systems *hyperobjects* and notes that vast systems too big to comprehend, like the internet and the biosphere, are an increasing part of our everyday experience.[352] However, while vast systems spanning the globe may pervade our lives, they usually fail to touch us deeply because they are so abstract.[353] Consider global trading networks.

It is difficult to influence the development and hard to connect with the meaning of a global trading network. The economist Dani Rodrik observes that global trade networks are difficult to influence because they are undemocratic.[354] Meanwhile, the political theorist Robert Dahl suggests that if they ever actually democratized, their size would water down each of our voices so much that they would be largely meaningless.[355] Global trade networks are also immensely complex and difficult to grasp. There are simply too many moving parts, and they are a lot like

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[351] Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking Fast and Slow.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.
[352] Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World.* University of Minnesota Press. 2013.
[353] Scruton, Roger. *Where We Are: The State of Britain Now.* Bloomsbury Continuum. 2017.
[354] Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox: Why Global Markets, States, and Democracies Can't Coexist.* Oxford University Press. 2012.
[355] Dahl, Robert. *On Democracy, pgs. 35-43.* Yale University Press. 1998.

rapid technological development, outlined half-a-century ago by the futurist Alvin Toffler,[356] in that they tend to paralyze us with the anxiety that results from confronting their complexity. And while the inequality unleashed by global trade deals may be exaggerated,[357] as is the extent of recent globalization itself,[358] the anxieties evoked by comparing ourselves with people on the other side of the planet may actually be understated.

What might be said of global trade networks might also be said of international law and the international system of states. When they touch us personally, it is usually hard to tell. They are just too vast and distant. Meanwhile, they are harder to influence than state institutions, and we rarely feel we have a stake in their outcomes,[359] however deeply they may affect us. And they are "too big to know," in the words of technological philosopher David Weinberger.[360] Hence, we are unlikely to grasp them in their entirety. They pervade our lives while remaining distant and abstract. Little surprise so many environmentalists turn to local systems closer to home,[361] while traditional conservatives reject globalism outright.[362] And yet, our lives are pervaded by global forces, and we are each integrated into a range of global networks. We can no more wish away these vast and distant systems than we can gain leverage over them through ignoring their dimensions. Thus, we turn in the next section to the global networks through which we imagine what it means to be globally related, for these demonstrate how the everyday global imaginary might begin to touch us personally and impact our identities.

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[356] Toffler, Alvin. *Future Shock.* Bantam Books. 1970.
[357] Greenwald, Bruce C.N. *Globalization: n. the irrational fear that someone in China will take your job.* Wiley. 2008.
[358] Porter, Patrick. *The Global Village Myth: Distance, War, and the Limits of Power.* Georgetown University Press. 2015.
[359] Miller, David. *Citizenship and National Identity.* Polity Press. 2000.
[360] Weinberger, David. *Too Big to Know: Rethinking Knowledge Now That the Facts Aren't the Facts, Experts Are Everywhere, and the Smartest Person in the Room is the Room.* Basic Books. 2014.
[361] Schumacher, E.F. *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered.* Harper and Row. 1975.
[362] Deneen, Patrick J. *Why Liberalism Failed.* Yale University Press. 2019; Scruton, Roger. *Where We Are: The State of Britain Now.* Bloomsbury Continuum. 2017.

The Globally Networked Imaginary

Global networks could be said to consist of groups of individuals affiliated with others across the world. The networks may be organized vertically or horizontally, in chains of connections or webs of interconnectivity. Yet, whatever their organizational structure, they put people in contact with one another across borders, and they often enrich the lives and societies of their members. David Singh Grewal points out that they also standardize, coordinate, harmonize, and regulate the activities of their members.[363] In this way, they contribute to an emergent global culture, converging on a shared set of norms and values. Most of us take part in a range of global networks. Anne Marie-Slaughter notes that they can be recreational, religious, cultural, regulatory, professional, judicial, or political[364] and argues that they constitute the fundamental social units of global society.

Yet, what concerns us here is less their makeup and more their pervasiveness in our lives. Global networks are far more ubiquitous than we tend to imagine,[365] and they are important to the global imaginary in that they personalize our relationship to it. They also provide us a forum in which to enact it. In other words, global networks provide us with global communities in which to perform our global identities. In this way, the presence of more global networks will tend to strengthen those identities while building a stronger global culture. It will also lead us to identify more with people on the other side of the planet, and perhaps the world itself, by binding us to them in concrete relationships. Hence, this subsection explores the panoply of global networks in an effort to get at their full force and effect in our everyday lives.

Global recreational networks may be the most prosaic. They are linked together around celebrated institutions like the World Cup, the Olympics, and Eurovision. But the networks span the arts and entertainment, sports and illicit substances, intellectual curiosities and subcultural

[363] Grewal, David Singh. *Network Power: The Social Dynamics of Globalization.* Yale University Press. 2009.
[364] Slaughter, Anne-Marie. *The Chessboard and the Web: Strategies of Connection in a Networked World, pgs. 1-29*. Yale University Press. 2018.
[365] Meyer, John W and Drori, Gill S. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer.* Oxford University Press. 2009.

celebrations. Drug cartels and New Agers and world travelers all partake in global recreational networks, as do the fans of any band that goes on a world tour, or the users of a video game whose membership is global. People typically participate in these networks because they are entertaining and enrich their lives. Most of us partake in an array of globalized recreational networks, but we seldom give much thought to the impact they exert on our notions of what it means to be a citizen of the world. Their significance lies in the way they link us to people across the world around activities we find enriching. In this way, they deepen our relationship to the global imaginary by making it meaningful to us personally, and they widen its reach beyond more serious newsworthy topics, like state failure and global terrorism, by making it central to our personal fulfillment.

Religious networks do much the same thing, only they touch us more deeply. These networks were typically established millennia ago by missionary and mercantile harbingers of globalization,[366] and the social imaginaries in which their members partake are typically universalized. In this way, religious networks tend to be global. Yet, religious imaginaries present us with a paradox, for they are at one and the same time integral to particular cultures and universal in scope. In other words, they lie at the heart of cultural norms and institutions while making moral and cosmological claims on all of humanity. Their storehouses of myths and symbols are also often drawn from in constructing national narratives.[367] Meanwhile, cultural practices typically transcend national borders while cultural networks are established through diasporas. Emigrants leave their homelands while the homeland never leaves their hearts. The result is often civilizational identities that transcend national borders but are not fully global.[368] In this way, religious imaginaries tend to strengthen national imaginaries through their particularism while diluting them through their universalism. And it is much the same with their

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[366] Chanda, Nayan. *Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers, and Warriors Shaped Globalization.* Yale University Press. 2007.

[367] Grosby, Steven. *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford University Press. 2005; Hastings, Adrian. *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism.* Cambridge University Press. 1997.

[368] Braudel, Fernand. *A History of Civilizations.* Penguin Books. 1995; Fernandez-Armesto, Felipe. *Civilizations.* Macmillan. 2000; Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon and Schuster. 2011.

networks of believers who tend to be thoroughly globalized nationalists.

A similar process is at work in global professional networks. Global regulatory bodies set standards in countless professions. They standardize and harmonize weights and measurements, postal codes and mail delivery, world wide web addresses and countless other everyday activities. Little attention tends to be given to these standards, which mostly arose in the late-nineteenth century.[369] Yet, they are essential to the smooth functioning of our lives and institutions.[370] They provide the institutional matrix that is critical to global commerce, but they also provide a common medium of communication across borders. In their absence, it would be difficult to discuss amounts of money and goods, the size of parts and geographical distances. It would be hard to verify treaty obligations, keep airplanes from crashing, and prevent navies from going to war over isolated atolls.

The process of standardization is reliant on globalized professional networks, setting standards for their respective industries and facilitating coordination across a range of professions. They develop best practices, share technologies, and contribute to a globalized culture of professionalism.[371] In so doing, they strengthen not just the global imaginary but national imaginaries as well. For they lead state and global institutions alike to function more efficiently, thereby legitimizing states and harmonizing global civilization. They also provide countless openings through which the global imaginary works its way into the functions of everyday life. In this way, they imbue the global imaginary with a sense of functionality while bringing to the idea of globalism a sense of necessity.

The standards set by globalized professional networks are often inscribed in law, but the work of setting global legal standards is dependent on its own networks of legal scholars and judges. Global legal standards are harmonized through judicial networks, which share legal information across borders. Many of these networks were established in the nineteenth-century when

[369] Mazower, Mark. *Governing the World: The History of an Idea.* Penguin Books. 2012.
[370] Waldron, Jeremy. *Cosmopolitan Norms.* In Benhabib, Seyla and Post, Robert eds. *Another Cosmopolitanism, pgs. 83-101.* Oxford University Press. 2008.
[371] Slaughter, Anne-Marie. *The Chessboard and the Web: Strategies of Connection in a Networked World*. Yale University Press. 2018..

international law first came into its own,[372] but they have grown with the pace of globalization. Judicial networks integrate legal principles across national domains, and they develop minimalist moral standards, forming the normative and legal basis of human rights law. Legal harmonization across borders is essential to trade, but it also increasingly protects the legal rights of tourists, workers, refugees, and diplomats. Hence, American Supreme Court Justice, Stephen Breyer, notes that due to its scattering of people and goods and wastes across borders, globalization increasingly challenges judges to account for the opinions of their counterparts on the other side of the world, and this requires them to communicate with one another about the reasons behind their decisions.[373]

Global networks remind us that national imaginaries and the global imaginary are often interlinked and mutually supportive. For example, Pope Francis leads the world in enlarging its heart while his church brings unity to predominantly Catholic nations like Ireland and Italy. The Fédération Internationale de Football Association brings structure to local and national football clubs alike. The Olympics challenges national athletes to excel at a higher international level, thereby globalizing their conception of themselves as representatives of their nations. Global networks of epidemiologists support national public health, global networks of judges support the administration of fairer local justice. Meanwhile, nationalist leaders like the nineteenth century Giuseppe Mazzini lead international networks of revolutionaries while advocating for a "cosmopolitanism of nations,"[374] whose purpose is an extension of rights everywhere starting with particular states.

Global networks deepen national imaginaries by lending them structure, skills, best practices, and support. They deepen the capacities of professionals, lend musicians creative inspiration, and show immigrants how to integrate into their adopted homelands without losing their sense of

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[372] Keene, Edward. *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism, and Order in World Politics.* Cambridge University Press. 2002.
[373] Breyer, Stephen. *The Court and the World: American Law and the New Global Realities.* Vintage. 2016.
[374] Mazzini, Giuseppe and Rechia, Stefano trans. *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations: Giuseppe Mazzini's Writings on Democracy, Nation Building, and International Relations.* Princeton University Press. 2009.

home. Perhaps it is for this reason that we seldom think of the globality of these networks. They just seem to be too ordinary a part of our everyday lives to think of them as global. Yet, their globality demonstrates that the choice between national and global communities is often a false dichotomy. The reality is far more integrated and mutually supportive. Meanwhile, the rapidly growing number of international organizations[375] suggests that the global networks they represent are also growing. Yet, the networks among political leaders may be the most important to the global imaginary, for they are central to an emergent international society and lend shape to the very idea of the state itself.[376]

The International Imaginary

Modern states are the products of an international system of states, which structures their identities[377] and encourages their conformity to a common model.[378] No state can stray too far from international norms of conduct in its internal affairs without suffering serious consequences, as we have seen with states like Libya and Iraq. But even states like Germany and Japan that are commonly viewed as more or less normal were profoundly shaped by the international society of states at critical historical junctures. Meanwhile, many postcolonial states were outright created by it. In this way, national imaginaries are in many key dimensions subordinate to the wider global imaginary, which structures the international system of states out of which they emerged.[379] But to say this is to challenge the core assumptions about the national identities of the vast bulk of humanity.

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[375] Barnett, Michael. *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism.* Cornell University Press. 2013.
[376] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* Red Globe Press, 4th ed. 2012.
[377] Kenneth N., Waltz. *Theory of International Politics.* Waveland Press. 1979.
[378] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* Red Globe Press, 4th ed. 2012.
[379] Keene, Edward. *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism, and Order in World Politics.* Cambridge University Press. 2002.

European states have been interacting in wider geopolitical systems since at least the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648,[380] and the system they fostered would eventually be globalized. Yet, state systems have been traced back at least as far as Ancient Sumer.[381] And there is little reason to think they were not present among hunter-gatherers as well. Every time a small tribe decked itself out in war paint to intimidate its enemies, its internal practices were shaped by interactions with rivals. Every time it organized itself under a powerful young chief for wartime protection, its government was shaped by its adversaries. And every time it adopted a new religion that might secure its unity against alien threats, the core of its social imaginary was shaped by its interactions with potential enemies. In this way, the ontological structure of national imaginaries weds them to a competitive global imaginary through the pageantry of national rituals and the public display of power from the start.

The subordination of states to a wider global imaginary can also be witnessed in how states take shape. New states are tasked with harmonizing customary, municipal, regional, and religious laws. This process has been dubbed polycentric law by the legal scholar Tom Bell, who argues that every state is challenged with it.[382] But the principles foundational to their legal systems typically originate from abroad.[383] They are commonly laid out in works of political philosophy whose readership is international and rooted in religious principles like natural law that know no borders.[384] Meanwhile, judges and juries, ballot boxes and secret votes, cabinets and constitutions, parliaments and supreme courts, are not naturally occurring facts of nature. Rather, they are institutional innovations, which have been emulated as their success has been proven, as

[380] Wight, Martin. *Systems of States, pgs. 110-152.* Continuum International Publishing. 1977.
[381] Watson, Adam. *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis, pgs. 18-24.* Routledge 2nd Ed. 2009.
[382] Bell, Tom W. *Your Next Government: From the Nation State to Stateless Nations.* Cambridge University Press. 2017.
[383] Armitage, David. *Declarations of Independence: A Global History.* Harvard University Press. 2008.
[384] Grotius, Hugo and Campbell, A.C. *The Rights of War and Peace.* M. Walter Dunne. 1901; De Vattel, Emer de and Hochstrasser, T.J. *The Law of Nations.* Liberty Fund Inc. 2008.

Francis Fukuyama observes.[385] They have been transplanted by colonial administrations and adopted by states seeking entry into the community of nations. In the process, they have contributed to a repository of state institutions from which the best have been diffused.[386] Thus, the most foundational legal principles governing even the most powerful states typically come from abroad, suggesting that the state itself is largely a globalized institution.

Today's states make little sense outside the wider international system of which they are a part, if only because it is the system itself that has largely leant them their shape.[387] The international system defines their borders, recognizes their sovereignty, forces them to act as singular governing entities, presses them to represent themselves to outsiders, and often shores up their institutions in moments of crisis. Even the principle of statehood is largely structured by interactions among a society of states. Each state possesses a cornucopia of symbols shared by virtually every other state, which on the face of things seem to be for domestic consumption, but as we have seen are also produced for outsiders in order to confer national legitimacy.[388]

State systems have been found to exist among the Greeks, Italians, Chinese, Indians, and Muslims.[389] But once you begin looking for state systems they tend to come up everywhere, from Sicilian city-states in the Peloponnesian War[390] to the tribes making up the Iroquois Confederacy. The existence of so many systems of states suggests more cooperation among states than we tend to imagine. States cooperate with one another to protect themselves from outside threats, but they also cooperate in shaping states that have broken down or are just getting started. The existence of so many systems also suggests a good deal of competition. And if the competition among

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[385] Fukuyama, Francis. *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2015.
[386] Keene, Edward. *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism, and Order in World Politics.* Cambridge University Press. 2002.
[387] Robertson, Roland in Featherstone, Mike ed. *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity.* SAGE Publications Ltd. 1990.
[388] Smith, Anthony D. *Nationalism, pg. 8.* Polity Press. 2010.
[389] Watson, Adam. *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis.* Routledge 2nd Ed. 2009.
[390] Thucydides and Warner, Rex trans. *History of the Peloponnesian War, pgs. 420-545.* Penguin Classics. 1972.

states plays a part in shaping societies, and states have been competing in state systems since time immemorial, then national identities are likely less autochthonous developments emerging from the ground up and more the products of this international competition, thereby subordinating national imaginaries to a wider global imaginary.

The international system of states shapes particular states through a more structural process as well. The neorealist scholar of international relations Kenneth Waltz argues that the international system structures state identities by initiating a competitive struggle for existence wherein those that can hold their own as unitary entities survive while those that can't perish.[391] It is a dubious assertion insofar as this kind of struggle for existence fails to account for the remarkable persistence of states over time and the presence of so many weak and vulnerable states in the international system today.[392] Would the Bahamas or Seychelles really last in a survival of the fittest states, after all? We have already reviewed several better explanations for the unification of national identities set forth by the scholars of nationalism who are the real experts on the matter.[393] Yet, Waltz also argues that states are unified through a process of socialization by which they are led to mimic the forms of other more successful states, and this is more readily observable in international society today.[394] It is also affirmed by countless observations detailed throughout this chapter.

The process of shaping national identities may actually look a lot more like the emergence of intersubjectivity that was explored in the first chapter.[395] According to Alexander Wendt, states assume roles to which other states must adapt in an iterative process of social learning[396] Thus, in

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[391] Kenneth N., Waltz. *Theory of International Politics.* Waveland Press. 1979.
[392] Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics.* Cambridge University Press. 1999.
[393] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Verso. 1983; Gat, Azar. *Nations: The Long History and Deep Roots of Political Ethnicity and Nationalism.* Cambridge University Press. 2013; Gellner, Ernest. *Nationalism.* Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1997.
[394] Kenneth N., Waltz. *Theory of International Politics.* Waveland Press. 1979.
[395] Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality.* Anchor Books. 1966.
[396] Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics.* Cambridge University Press. 1999.

a Hobbesian system of states, each state learns to act as an individual in a competitive struggle for survival by protecting itself against every other state, with each protecting themselves by learning to assume the same egoistic roles. Yet, in a Lockean system of states, each state learns to treat the others as rivals in a rules-based system of commercial rivalry. Meanwhile, in a Kantian system of states, each state assumes the necessity of a system of states and adapts itself to this more cooperative system while internalizing the norms of the international society. In this way, the identities of states are constructed in accord with the system of states in which they operate.

Thus, insofar as states lend shape to national imaginaries, national imaginaries are subordinate to the international system of states. This constructivist logic is evident in the wider system of states where we find states adapting their economies to the demands of global markets, their militaries to geopolitical threats, their laws to the expectations of allies, and their governments to diplomatic needs. The system of states can even structure personal dispositions, which are largely dependent on state security, which is in turn dependent on military strength. The transformations in the national identities of postwar Germany and Japan, postcolonial Britain and France, and post-Soviet Eastern Bloc states make more sense when viewed in this light. All of this points to the contingency of national imaginaries and helps explain dramatic alterations in national identities.

But if national identities are largely shaped by and rooted in wider global systems, then they are ultimately subordinate to a wider global imaginary.

The Dialectic of the Global Imaginary

We have just seen how the global imaginary is far more pervasive than we tend to think. So, why do so many people continue to prefer their national identities? The answer as we have seen lies in the access they provide to wider cooperative communities that might better meet their needs. Nations are often just big enough to build the kinds of states needed to protect us from hardship in a contingent world where financial struggles are often more threatening than war.[397] Sharing

[397] Tamir, Yael. *Why Nationalism.* Princeton University Press. 2019.

an identity tied to the state also allows us to define ourselves around participation in a deliberative process.[398] Aristotle argued that identities tied to a democratic state allow individuals to better express their full humanity as social creatures endowed with reason.[399] In this way, participation in a civic identity might meet a complex array of intellectual and emotional needs.

Martha Nussbaum suggests, the benefits of participation in a civic identity must be weighed against the psychosocially stunting effects of identifying with such a limited portion of humanity.[400] National identities can be tied to periodic outbursts of bigotry, culminating in racial violence and ethnic cleansing.[401] They bind us to cultures to which our personality styles may not be suited,[402] and they limit our freedom of association to a tiny portion of a much greater humanity.[403] Meanwhile, identities binding us to the whole of humanity are arguably richer and more rewarding because, as Kwame Anthony Appiah notes, they provide us with more meaningful life options.[404] In theory, the cosmopolitan self can go more places, befriend more people, pursue more interests, and choose from among more life paths. It can even be a better citizen in multicultural societies torn apart by ethnic rivalries, where binding together the nation requires an embrace of multiculturalism. But aren't cosmopolitan identities more sophisticated and harder to sustain?

Participation in a wider and better demarcated global identity is actually often easier to sustain because it is rooted in more recognizable biological commonalities with the rest of humanity and

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[398] Miller, David. *Citizenship and National Identity.* Polity Press. 2000.
[399] Aristotle and Saunders, Trevor J. trans. *Politics.* Penguin Classics. 1981.
[400] Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal, pgs. 18-63.* Harvard University Press. 2019.
[401] Mann, Michael. *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing.* Cambridge University Press. 2004.
[402] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity, pgs. 69-101.* Liveright. 2019.
[403] Aurelius, Marcus and Grube, G.M.A. trans. *The Meditations.* Hackett Publishing Company. 1983.
[404] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers. W.W*. Norton and Company. 2007.

more difficult to breach biospheric constraints.[405] There is nothing ambiguous about who your compatriots are if you declare yourself a citizen of the world. All you need to do is look for the telltale signs of their humanity. And given the risks of thermonuclear annihilation and catastrophic climate change, not to mention ordinary acts of war and insecure global food supplies, we are all arguably safer and more secure when we identify a bit more with the wider global community.[406] In this way, many people have found the adoption of global identities appealing because it promises them a richer life while others are drawn to it for its ability to sustain life itself.

But there is also a deeper reason to identify as a citizen of the world, which has repeatedly cropped up throughout this chapter: national identities are rooted in a set of myths and illusions, which leave their bearers vulnerable to the vagaries of existence. These illusions deny our connection to a wider humanity. They separate us from people with whom we are more alike than different. They make us vulnerable to war. They limit our life options. They force us into conformity with national imaginaries rooted in myths. They cut us off from a rich compendium of human wisdom. They fracture our societies with ethnic divisions. They lead us to look upon our neighbors as strangers. They deepen our insecurity in the face of planetary threats. National identities harm us in these ways, because they clash with the realities of our lived existence, which is vastly more globalized than almost everybody thinks.

This chapter laid out some of the key components out of which the global imaginary is constructed, demonstrating its robustness through the additive force of its components. It looked at the biospheric conditions binding us together with the whole of humanity and the historic conditions that wove our fates together over millennia. It explored the multicultural experience that defines life in a globalized world and the global networks of which so many of us are now members. It looked at the international system of states that has played such an outsized role in defining our national identities, and it explored the role of global risks like climate change in leading us to imagine ourselves bound together with the whole of humanity. The picture it

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[405] Kant, Immanuel and Humphrey, Ted trans. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays.* Hackett Publishing Company. 1983.
[406] Beck, Ulrich. *World Risk Society.* Polity Press. 1999.

painted was that of a holistic imaginary touching our lives in countless ways while often overlapping with and reinforcing more salient national imaginaries. Hence, the paradox of the global imaginary is that, while it shows itself to be seemingly everywhere, it remains in the background like the infrastructure of a major city.

In one domain after another, we find that our lives have been globalized while our imaginations remain national. The biosphere binds humanity together materially, but the world is too vast for most people to comprehend, so we tend to overlook its interconnectivity.[407] Several millennia of globalization have provided the foundations of human civilization,[408] but it is all overlooked as a result of a cognitive bias in favor of more recent events.[409] Networks of professionals go about standardizing a global infrastructure,[410] and networks of judges integrate it into law,[411] but few of us stop and consider what is required to sustain interactions across borders. National imaginaries are shaped by the needs of an international system of states, but somehow we almost never consider the centrality of the global imaginary to the emergence of states.

Yet, if the global imaginary is like infrastructure that lies hidden in the background, it might be argued that we cannot be said to *imagine* it. But this would be to confine the notion of imagination to only what we can picture in our minds. And as we have seen, people might affirm their relations with others through the stories they tell about themselves, the cultural practices they share, or the rituals that are periodically invoked to affirm their identities. In this way, social imaginaries are not limited to our "imaginations," but also include the background conditions that give shape to our worldviews. The question that will concern us in the next chapter is how the global imaginary is grounded in global institutions and, in the following case studies, how these in turn shape the global imaginary. And all the while we will explore how the

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[407] Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World.* University of Minnesota Press. 2013.
[408] Sachs, Jeffrey. *The Ages of Globalization: Geography, Technology, and Institutions.* Columbia University Press. 2020.
[409] Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking Fast and Slow.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.
[410] Slaughter, Anne-Marie. *A New World Order.* Princeton University Press. 2005.
[411] Breyer, Stephen. *The Court and the World: American Law and the New Global Realities.* Vintage. 2016.

discord between what global institutions fail to accomplish and what they need to achieve drives the retreat from globalism,[412] even as those same institutions complete the work of globalization.

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[412] Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the World Economy.* W.W. Norton and Company 2012.

Chapter III: Global Institutions

Global institutions are integral to the development of the global imaginary. They have been shaped by, and in turn shaped, our ideas about the way the world works for millennia.[413] And institutions as we saw in the first chapter are products of the imagination, which would disappear as soon as we cease to believe in them.[414] Seldom if ever do we hear the full story of global institutional development, though. Critics of globalization tend to emphasize the inequality and inaccessibility of global economic institutions,[415] but this is just a single dimension of global institutional life. Others emphasize the failures of American hegemony,[416] as if the imperial ambitions of a great power were somehow expressive of cosmopolitan moral commitments.[417] A more rounded view of globalization would account for the full range of its institutions and consider their roles in the shape it has taken. In so doing, it would expose a good portion of these criticisms as short sighted and blinkered simply as a result of how little they take into account.

More important for the purpose of this thesis is the fact that a more rounded view of global

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[413] Hariri, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind.* Harper Perennial. 2018.
[414] Searle, John. *The Construction of Social Reality.* Penguin. 1996.
[415] Barber, Benjamin. *Jihad vs. McWorld: Terrorism's Challenge to Democracy.* Ballantine Books. 1996; Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox: Why Global Markets, States, and Democracies Can't Coexist.* Oxford University Press. 2012; Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2017.
[416] Haas, Richard. *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order.* Penguin Books. 2018; Mandelbaum, Michael. *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era.* Oxford University Press. 2016; Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019.
[417] Cunliffe, Phillip. *Cosmopolitan Dystopia: International Intervention and the Failure of the West.* Manchester University Press. 2020; Porter, Patrick. *The Global Village Myth: Distance, War, and the Limits of Power.* Georgetown University Press. 2015.

institutions would provide us with a more complete picture of the world.[418] And it would give us a better sense of the extent to which institutions shape our ideas about the way the world works. Institutions are not things, as the first chapter suggested, but rather complex bundles of rules and norms, ideas and practices, that shape persistent patterns of behavior.[419] They exist in our imaginations, but our ideas about them are intersubjectively shared.[420] So, we are able to treat them as if they are as solid as skyscrapers. In this way, understanding their full impact on the globalization of our lives and cultures means exploring their intimate relationship to our imaginations.

Institutions are often confused with organizations,[421] which are formalized associations of people with a purpose. These might include specific businesses or nonprofits, governments or cooperatives. But institutions as the term will be used here, and as it is commonly used in the literature on institutions, refer to established patterns of behavior shaped by rules and norms and ideas.[422] The next subsection will explore what this means in greater detail, but it is important to recognize that you cannot step into the headquarters of an institution or identify its board of governance in the same way you can with, say, Amnesty International or the British House of Commons. Institutions are more abstract, and the principles keeping them going cannot be sought in a set of bylaws. It is perhaps for this reason that writings on global institutions are comparatively sparse.

Yet, as Christian Reus-Smit observes, there are now thousands of issue specific global institutions, like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which guide the behavior of states.[423]

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[418] Meyer, John W. and Drori, Gill S. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[419] Scott, Richard W. *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities, fourth ed, pgs. 59-85.* Sage Publications. 2014.
[420] Searle, John. *The Construction of Social Reality.* Penguin. 1996.
[421] Ruggie, John. *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization, pgs. 53-60.* Routledge. 1998.
[422] Scott, Richard W. *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities, fourth ed, pg. 57.* Sage Publications. 2014.
[423] Reus-Smit, Christian. *A Very Short Introduction to International Relations.* Oxford University Press. 2020.

Hence, it might also be the result of the sheer abundance of global institutions. Somehow, global institutions have become essential to our lives and cultures while often downplayed by the vast bulk of humanity. They establish the principles upon which humanity constitutes itself, and shape our ideas about what it means to live in the world. Yet, they are seldom discussed by ordinary people, and when they are it often involves venting frustrations. How is it that global institutions are so essential and yet so neglected?

A range of global institutions will be explored in this chapter, from the pre-modern international law and balance of power,[424] to the modern free trade[425] and humanitarianism.[426] We will explore the idea of legitimacy[427] and partially institutionalized practices like climate regulation. A full inventory of global institutions might include sovereignty, diplomacy, territoriality, human rights, colonialism, collective security, antiterrorism, nuclear nonproliferation, peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid. These institutions are often mutually supportive of one another and therefore constitute a sort of global institutional architecture. The complex of institutions is in turn sustained by an array of global organizations like the World Bank, the United Nations Children Fund, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and perhaps most importantly the United Nations itself.

Deciding what to include in a master list of global institutions depends on how institutions are defined. Yet, the number of candidates reminds us that the process of globalization is more extensive than even most experts seem to imagine, as evidenced by the limited scope of their writings.[428] It also reminds us of all the issues global institutions are created to redress. Global institutions are growing in number and function because they are necessary to social stability in a globalized world. As we saw in the last chapter, they are also essential to sustaining the functions

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[424] Wight, Martin. *Systems of States.* Continuum International Publishing. 1977.
[425] Slobodian, Quinn. *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism.* Harvard University Press. 2020; Wolf, Martin. *Why Globalization Works.* Yale University Press. 2005.
[426] Barnett, Michael. *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism.* Cornell University Press. 2013.
[427] Clark, Ian. *Legitimacy in International Society.* Oxford University Press. 2005.
[428] Meyer, John W. and Drori, Gill S. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer.* Oxford University Press. 2009.

of states.[429] Finally, the lengthy list is suggestive of how much cooperative activity can occur without the institutional support of a sovereign possessing the powers of law enforcement.[430] International law is generally lacking in the powers of enforcement, but it elicits and coordinates a significant portion of global activity.

How do institutions with so little formal power accomplish so much?[431]

Global institutions are essential to our lives because globalization has brought everything closer together by compressing space and time,[432] and institutions are needed to coordinate our behavior.[433] They are also more stable than they appear because ideation is more integral to institutions than most people think,[434] and as we saw in the last chapter the global imaginary is quite pervasive.[435] But the growth of global institutions has been more haphazard than that of the global imaginary, because they have all too often been crafted to minimally impact the interests of great powers.[436] There has typically been no power of taxation to sustain their activities,[437] and their constituencies have been too broad and diverse for them to win much support.[438]

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[429] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* Red Globe Press, 4th ed. 2012.
[430] Franck, Thomas. *The Power of Legitimacy Among Nations.* Oxford University Press. 1990.
[431] Ostrum, Elinor. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.
[432] Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Polity Press. 1990.
[433] North, Douglass C. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.
[434] Scott, Richard W. *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities, fourth ed, pgs. 67-70.* Sage Publications. 2014; Searle, John. *The Construction of Social Reality.* Penguin. 1996.
[435] Meyer, John W. and Drori, Gill S. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[436] Kennedy, Paul. *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations.* Vintage Books. 2007.
[437] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism.* Allen Lane. 2019.
[438] Olsen, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups.* Harvard University Press. 1971.

Hence, this chapter looks at the circumstances shaping global institutions, the contradictions they generate in the global imaginary, and the tensions this has led to in the experience of globalism. This sets the stage for a deeper exploration in the second section of the thesis on the impact of the institutions of peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid on the global imaginary. Somehow, we have come to imagine a globalizing world only marginally rooted in global institutions, even as global institutions have come to regulate an ever greater portion of our activities. How is it that so many global institutions, possessing such an outsized influence on the shape of world affairs, have received so little attention?

The Nature of Institutions

Institutions channel behavior in such recognizable and persistent patterns that they are often spoken of as things, as in "the breakdown of *the* family."[439] But institutions are actually complex social processes whose origins can be quite mysterious. The mystery lies in how they are able to repeatedly inspire people to perform valued actions that would never happen if not for their existence. For instance, how does the institution of peacekeeping repeatedly inspire people to thrust themselves in between rival armies in order to stop conflict from breaking out, and to do so under the auspices of multiple different international organizations? Few would think to do it on their own, and only a saint would be able to go through with it. Yet, somehow the institution is able to inspire large numbers of soldiers to take on the job without complaint and for onlookers to accept it as a natural dimension of conflict between armed groups.

Hernando De Soto points out a similar phenomenon in his book, *The Mystery of Capital*.[440] Noting that trillions of dollars of assets have failed to be recorded in developing countries across the world, he observes that the process by which assets are tracked and recorded and put to use

[439] Searle, John. *The Construction of Social Reality.* Penguin. 1996.
[440] De Soto, Hernando. *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else.* Basic Books. 2000.

as capital in the developed world has largely gone unnoticed. Somehow, through a multitude of agencies tracking their existence, recording their value, and stipulating the means by which they might be transferred, dead capital is brought to life. And all of a sudden, as if by an act of magic, what once had no value can be used to create value. In this way, the "mystery of capital" highlights the mystery of institutions, which are able to bring whole worlds into being through collective acts of the imagination. Could it be possible to do the same with global institutions and identities?

Robert Keohane defines institutions as "persistent and connected sets of rules, formal and informal, that prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations."[441] On the face of things, it is hard to know what exactly that means, given the number of moving parts in the definition. But the convolutedness of it highlights the complexity of the subject. Institutions use rules to guide behavior and shape social outcomes, but his reference to informal rules reminds us of their dependence on norms. We follow institutional rules not simply because we have to but because we believe we ought to. Hence, to function effectively institutions must be seen as legitimate,[442] and to the extent they are, they tend to be integral to the maintenance of social norms. His definition also reminds us that institutions have an array of functions, and they tend to be so embedded in cultures that they often seem to arise out of them.

In short, there is a lot more to institutions than we tend to think—and Keohane only starts to hint at it all.

Douglass North, whose work on institutions won him a Nobel Prize in economics, defines them similarly as persistent patterns of recognizable social behavior constrained by rules and norms.[443] The institution of marriage fits this definition, as does the institution of states, for each consists of patterns of social behavior constrained by rules and norms. It doesn't matter so much where

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[441] Keohane, Robert O. *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory, pg. 3.* Westview Press. 1989.
[442] Weber, Max and Tribe, Keith trans. *Economy and Society: A New Translation, pgs. 338-488.* Harvard University Press. 2019.
[443] North, Douglass C. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance, pg. 3.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.

the rules come from—state constitutions, statutes, common law, or even bylaws.[444] What matters is that they coordinate behavior by directing people how to proceed amid a multitude of options. In this sense, they are a bit like rules of the road: it doesn't matter so much whether people drive on the right or the left side just as long as they stay in their lane. Anyone who has ever purchased a home can attest to the multitude of hoops that must be jumped through in order to complete the transaction. It is institutions that keep us from having to consult the neighbors and construct a history of its owners and environmental risks on our own.[445]

But, of course, rules do more than just coordinate behavior: they also help to maintain order. Institutions shape the social environment by bringing everyone into alignment around the purposes they pursue, and they constrain behavior and channel it in predictable patterns. In this way, marriage, family, education, humanitarianism, international law, and statebuilding each bring our behavior into focus in their own ways, for their own specific purposes. And they help us do things that might otherwise seem unmanageable without the help of institutional rules and norms. Effective institutions also bring constancy to our lives and cultures.[446] Hence, they allow people to peaceably sustain cooperative relations over long stretches of time.[447] They also tend to generate a cumulative momentum that allows them to persist where the power to enforce their rules is lacking.[448] But the social agreements that are formalized also protect us from anxieties associated with the vagaries of existence.[449] This makes global institutions a powerful force in integrating humanity into a single global culture.

The literature on institutions tends to focus on rules and norms and ideation, but their most

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[444] North, Douglass C. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance, pg. 46-47.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.
[445] De Soto, Hernando. *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else.* Basic Books. 2000.
[446] Habermas, Jurgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society.* Polity Press. 1984.
[447] Ostrum, Elinor. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.
[448] Ikenberry, G. John. *After Victory. Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars, pgs. 3-79.* Princeton University Press. 2019.
[449] Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition.* University of Chicago Press. 1958.

powerful tool to compel action may simply be payments.[450] Few doctors would treat patients, and few ministers would minister to them, if they did not receive a salary, after all—and these are typically construed as the service professions. It is much the same with soldiering, administering, teaching, peacekeeping, statebuilding, counseling, and even governing. Without the ability to use payments to incentivize action, most of the world's institutions would simply collapse. Of course, the payments might come from the state, in which case we would need to ask why governments choose to pay them, and they might be arranged informally through tribal networks. There are lots of ways to get people money when it is needed to sustain vital social functions. But most of these payments typically occur in markets, and in these cases the payments are simply a matter of supply and demand, as shaped by the rules of the market, with all its usual accompanying distortions. In short, a significant portion of institutionalized action is simply inspired by the fact that people are willing to pay for it while others are willing to provide it. This will prove critical to our final chapter on reconstructing the global imaginary, where the ability to levy taxes may prove essential to strengthening global institutions.[451]

Yet, the role of payments in sustaining institutions should lead us to ask why people want the services they sustain in the first place?

Samuel Huntington points out that "institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability."[452] Even when they break down, people tend to find ways of putting established institutions back together again. Institutions also allow us to do things we might not otherwise accomplish on our own. Just imagine the chaos of burying the dead without the institution of funerals or saving a life in an emergency without the institution of medicine. Hence, they are integral to the maintenance of complex societies and the higher values they often

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[450] North, Douglass C. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance, pgs. 36-53.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.
[451] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism, pgs. 100-121.* Allen Lane. 2019.
[452] Huntington, Samuel P. *Political Order in Changing Societies, pg. 12.* Yale University Press. 1968.

pursue. They also tend to generate path dependencies which lock groups into directions[453] that can impact political and economic development for centuries.[454] They coordinate behavior, condition responses, attract people with social and economic goods, and shape the imagined horizons of social possibility. In this way, they set the terms of debate for the deliberative processes guiding social evolution. Lawyers debate how they should be implemented, and civil society how they should be reformed, in an ongoing process of institutional regeneration that shapes the social imaginary.[455]

The norms that help sustain institutions are maintained through the rituals that bring them into being and the narratives that sustain identification with them.[456] In this way, norms emerge out of societies and are often only tangentially related to consciously crafted rules, but they are sustained by the stories we tell about them and their constitutive role in our identities. The recognition of the need for rituals that bring institutions into being, along with the narratives that sustain our identification with them, undermines materialist and functionalist accounts that reify institutions into concrete legal architectures[457] and neoliberal accounts subsuming them to the rational interests of their members.[458] Institutions are not simply the conscious creations of legislators, nor the mere vehicles of collective action. Rather, they are an expression of collectively shared norms,[459] which establish intersubjective realities, immersing individuals in the social universes they co-create together. In short, they are the culmination of the iterative

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[453] Arthur, Brian W. *The Nature of Technology: What It Is and How It Evolves, pgs. 215-216.* Free Press. 2011.
[454] Acemoglu, Daren and Robinson, James A. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty.* Crown Business. 2012.
[455] Habermas, Jurgen and McCarthy, Thomas. *Communication and the Evolution of Society.* Beacon Press. 1979.
[456] Franck, Thomas. *The Power of Legitimacy Among Nations.* Oxford University Press. 1990.
[457] Meyer, John W and Drori, Gill S. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[458] Keohane, Robert and Nye, Joseph Jr. *Power and Interdependence, Fourth ed.* Pearson. 2011.
[459] Reus-Smit, Christian. *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations.* Princeton University Press. 2009.

process of communication that brings shared symbolic universes into being that was discussed in the opening pages of the first chapter.[460]

This reminds us of their close relationship to social imaginaries. Institutions exist in the imagination and are wholly dependent upon it.[461] Institutions like laws and money, sovereignty and the family, as we saw in the first chapter, cease to exist if belief in them vanishes.[462] Just imagine the way family ties would deteriorate if the relations of father, wife, sister, and daughter, for instance, were to come to be treated as meaningless fictions. The importance of social imaginaries to sustaining institutions means that the more strongly people believe in them, the more stable they tend to become, and the more stable the institution the stronger its pull on the social imaginary. Thus, whatever else might be said of them, institutions are persistent patterns of social behavior rooted in the imagination.

Institutions shape social imaginaries more generally, but it is easy to overlook their specific role in the global imaginary. There are an increasing number of global institutions as we have seen. Yet, few of them are stable, and their instability can complicate our understanding of the global imaginary, as a number of examples in this chapter will seek to illustrate. More importantly, global institutions are essential to our ultimate aim of reconstructing the global imaginary, because they might ground it in valued concrete behaviors. And this might help us get a better handle on its development. In this way, better institutions might provide the constitutional groundwork for the development of a cosmopolitics,[463] an overarching architecture to global governance.

The institutionalization of global activity ultimately embeds the process of globalization in rules and norms channeling behavior into recognizable and purposeful patterns that are replicated over

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[460] Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality.* Anchor Books. 1966.

[461] Castoriadis, Cornelius and Blamey, Kathleen trans. *The Imaginary Institution of Society.* The MIT Press. 1998.

[462] Searle, John. *The Construction of Social Reality.* Penguin. 1996.

[463] Brown, Garrett Wallace. *Grounding Cosmopolitanism: From Kant to the Idea of a Cosmopolitan Constitution.* Edinburgh University Press. 2009.

time. In this way, it shapes behaviors and transforms our conceptions of the world, creating the rudiments of a world society that has the potential to socialize people into becoming global citizens. We may not always identify ourselves as citizens of the world, but our lives are nevertheless shaped by global institutions; and as is often the case with institutions, we experience them as molded by forces of which we are only dimly aware. Global institutions have grown with the increasing interdependence of the world.[464]

Levels of Institutionalization

Up to this point, global institutions have generally been taken en masse, as if each is equal in importance to the others. But some like territoriality have deeper roots, and some like free trade have greater influence. So, we should be careful not to lose sight of the most foundational institutions that might be playing an outsized role in the global imaginary. Dividing them up into different types of analysis can help bring a sense of order to the global imaginary. In this way, English School scholars of international relations point to three distinct levels of global organization: systems of states, international society, and world society,[465] to which we might add the biosphere. Each level of analysis has its own institutions, and the institutions at each level have been growing in number, size, reach, and scope. So, we will turn to them now, beginning with the most long standing and extensive.

Systems of states take shape where multiple states have come together to coordinate their actions and recognize their legitimacy. They typically arise to keep the peace among their members, sometimes through balance of power realism,[466] and sometimes through collective security

[464] Meyer, John W. and Drori, Gill S. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[465] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics, Third Edition.* Columbia University Press. 2002.
[466] Kissinger, Henry. *Diplomacy.* Simon and Schuster. 1995.

arrangements, where several states pledge to come to the aid of others in the event of attack.[467] But systems of states can pursue a range of objectives, including the preservation of autocracy, as in the case of the Concert of Europe, which was established in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815,[468] or conversely the spread of democracy, as in the case of the European Union today.[469] States influence the system by pressing it to take on purposes like trade or the promotion of human rights; state systems in turn influence the shape of states by generating institutions to channel their behavior.[470] Thus, norms of legitimacy, like those established by the Helsinki Accords, have often come to shape the very states that brought the institutions into being in ways they neither wanted nor expected.[471] Yet, as Terry Nardin suggests, systems of states are not simply bound together in the pursuit of common purposes but by a deeper shared morality forming the basis of international law.[472]

Christian Reus-Smit notes that each state system is characterized by a bundle of prescriptive norms specifying how they "'ought' to resolve their conflicts, coordinate their relations, and facilitate their existence."[473] The emphasis on what they "ought" to do highlights the moral dimension of state systems. Under our current international system of states, which has taken shape under the auspices of the United Nations, for instance, states ought to refrain from using nuclear weapons and making land grabs. More generally, they ought to respect the sovereignty of other states and the human rights of their citizens. Of course, none of this is guaranteed. It is just how we expect states to behave. The debates over moral principles might be aimed at settling questions like the appropriateness of intervention in the affairs of other states or the use of force against minorities. And we can see just these sorts of questions animating contemporary debate

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[467] Buzan, Barry and Weaver, Ole et al. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis.* Lynne Reiner Publishers. 1997.
[468] Kissinger, Henry. *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1818-1822.* Echo Point Books and Media. 1957.
[469] Ikenberry, G. John. *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crisis of Global Order.* Yale University Press. 2020.
[470] Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics.* Cambridge University Press. 1999.
[471] Clark, Ian. *Legitimacy in International Society.* Oxford University Press. 2005.
[472] Nardin, Terry. *Law, Morality, and the Relations of States.* Princeton University Press. 1983.
[473] Reus-Smit, Christian. *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations pg. 3.* Princeton University Press. 2009.

in our own international system of states. Whatever their content, the conversations take place in a commonly shared moral grammar with the aim of achieving a higher normative consensus.[474] At stake is the legitimacy of states, their standing in international society, and the moral principles of the wider system.[475] But more important to this study is the way norms are institutionalized and later globalized through such dialogues.[476]

Systems of states have existed among other places, as we saw in the last chapter, in Ancient Greece, Renaissance Italy, the Muslim Middle East, and now the whole of the planet.[477] The states in most of these systems were able to reference the same myths and scriptures, and they could refer to the lessons of the same shared history. Their variety reminds us of the diversity of cultures from which they arise and the multiplicity of purposes to which they might be put. Systems of states are concerned with the rules and norms governing sovereign states acting as individuals in an international system.[478] States are a congeries of often contradictory forces changing from one situation to the next as we saw in the first chapter, but state systems reify them as atomistic individuals with sovereign rights and their own self-determination.[479] State systems are bound together by agreements crafted around diplomatic customs, territorial rights, the rules of war, and the like.[480] Yet, they are also sustained by common myths and religions, norms and expectations. Systems of states are able to achieve collective security and engage in commerce because they share overarching cultures, sometimes referred to as civilizations,[481]

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[474] Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms.* Polity Press. 1996.
[475] Clark, Ian. *Legitimacy in International Society.* Oxford University Press. 2005.
[476] Habermas, Jurgen. *The Postnational Constellation.* Polity Press. 2015.
[477] Watson, Adam. *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis.* Routledge 2nd Ed. 2009.
[478] Wight, Martin and Wight, Gabriele ed. *International Relations: The Three Traditions.* Leicester University Press. 1994.
[479] Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Relations, pgs. 139-193.* Cambridge University Press. 1999.
[480] Wight, Martin. *Systems of States.* Leicester University Press. 1977.
[481] Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations: and the Remaking of World Order.* Simon and Schuster. 2011.

which tend to be regional in scope,[482] but which have now been globalized.

Whereas systems of states are concerned with the interactions among states acting as individuals, international society is concerned with the interactions among individuals acting on behalf of states.[483] These might include heads of states, foreign ministers, diplomats, or government bureaucrats participating in global networks. International society is like any other society in that it is composed of people cooperating in the pursuit of shared ends, according to commonly accepted rules and norms. Its members contribute to the shape it takes, and like any other society, it is animated by its own special customs.[484] Hence, the behaviors of diplomats and heads of state are governed by long standing protocols, hemmed in by detailed pomp and ceremony, symbolic of power hierarchies and the salience of the occasion.[485] The study of these protocols may look like a marginal sociological niche when tracing the customs of pre-modern diplomats and heads of state,[486] but as the system of states takes on more functions,[487] it appears increasingly integral to an emergent world society,[488] which constitutes its own distinct level of analysis.

World society concerns the rules and norms governing the relations among untethered individuals and non-state actors across borders.[489] As we saw in the last chapter, people from across the world have come to participate in a wide array of global networks whose functions are increasingly institutionalized.[490] The institutions of world society are commonly seen as less

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[482] Buzan, Barry and Waever, Ole. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security.* Cambridge university press. 2003.

[483] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* Red Globe Press, 4th ed. 2012.

[484] Jackson, Robert. *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States.* Oxford University Press. 2003.

[485] Marshall, Capricia Penevac. *Protocol: The Power of Diplomacy and How to Make it Work for You.* Ecco. 2021.

[486] Wight, Martin. *Systems of States.* Continuum International Publishing. 1977.

[487] Kennedy, Paul. *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations.* Vintage Books. 2007.

[488] Buzan, Barry. *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalization.* Cambridge University Press. 2010.

[489] Burton, John W. *World Society.* Cambridge University Press. 1972.

[490] Slaughter, Anne-Marie. *A New World Order*. Princeton University Press. 2005.

entrenched than those of international society and its system of states. Yet, as we have seen, they are growing in number, size, reach, and scope, and the most entrenched global practices tend to be the least visible. Trade has been governed by its own unique norms and customs as we saw in the last chapter, and it has taken place across cultures since the beginning of recorded history.[491] Meanwhile, institutions like global postal services sustained by the Universal Postal Union, and universal measurements maintained by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures, have carried out much the same functions for roughly a century-and-a-half.[492]

Hence, the extent to which institutions have become entrenched in world society is due for reconsideration, for it may constitute a far more substantial basis for the global imaginary than its critics recognize. But many of the global institutions examined in this chapter, like human rights and international law, are largely sustained by the social movements composed of individuals acting in world society. In this way, the world we imagine shapes the global institutions that arise in the real world, just as the performance of global institutions in the real world shapes the global imaginary. Thus, just as the interactions of individuals generate the intersubjective lifeworlds we examined in the first chapter on the microcosmic level of human society, the macrocosmic interactions of individuals and groups in world society generates the global imaginary.

A fourth level of analysis might be posited concerning the rules and norms governing social behaviors related to the earth's biosphere. The biosphere is maintained by a delicate balance of greenhouse gasses which trap just enough heat to sustain life on earth. Set their levels too low and humanity will find itself living on a cold and lifeless planet; set them too high and large swathes of the planet become too hot to inhabit. The biosphere evolved to maintain life before humanity had an impact on it.[493] Its evolution was punctuated by radical swings in temperature

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[491] Mauss, Marcel and Cunison, Ian trans. *The Gift: Forms and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies.* Cohen and West. 1954; Wolf, Eric R. *Europe and the People Without History.* University of California Press. 1982.

[492] Mazower, Mark. *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present.* Penguin Books. 2013.

[493] Hazen, Robert M. *The Story of Earth: The First 4.5 Billion Years, from Stardust to Living Planet.* Penguin Books. 2013.

involving several mass extinction events over hundreds of millions of years.[494] Human civilization did not actually come into being until temperatures stabilized at the close of the last ice age around eight thousand years ago, but humans have been releasing greenhouse gasses through deforestation, controlled burns, animal husbandry, and rice cultivation for thousands of years.[495] In the process, civilizations have often collapsed due to the changes in climate their release generated.[496] Emissions have skyrocketed since the industrial era when fossil fuels became essential to production. Yet, the biosphere is also dependent on an array of gasses that exist in smaller quantities but trap more heat. Rice production and the reclamation of marshes for agriculture has probably raised temperatures for thousands of years now due to its release of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas. Meanwhile, the release of hydrochlorofluorocarbons would have raised temperatures dramatically over the course of the last few decades due to the hole it caused in the ozone layer if not for their regulation.[497] And the use of nuclear weapons in a major war could release enough soot to block the sun and cause a nuclear winter that kills off much life on earth,[498] though some studies suggest that the dangers of nuclear winter may have been greatly exaggerated. All of this suggests that the removal of humanity from the biosphere would dramatically transform it, as would a major shift in humanity's course of development.

Climatic stability is dependent on keeping peace among the great powers and the sanity of their heads of state.[499] Just imagine what a lifelong Bolsonaro dictatorship in Brazil might do to the Amazon, and what its release of stored carbon might do to global temperatures. Climatic stability is dependent on preventing the use of nuclear weapons by aggressor states like Israel and Russia

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[494] Zalasiewicz, Jan and Williams, Mark. *The Goldilocks Planet: The 4 Billion Year Story of Earth's Climate.* Oxford University Press. 2012.
[495] Fagan, Brian. *The Long Summer: How Climate Changed Civilization.* Basic Books. 2004.
[496] Fagan, Brian. *The Great Warming: Climate Change and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations.* Bloomsbury Press. 2008.
[497] Lovelock, James. *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning, pgs. 159-186.* Basic Books. 2010.
[498] Ehrlich, Paul R. and Sagan, Carl et al. *The Cold and the Dark: The World After Nuclear War.* W.W. Norton and Company. 1985.
[499] Lifton, Robert J. *The Genocidal Mentality: Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Threat.* Basic Books. 1990.

and maintaining the Montreal Protocol governing the use of ozone-depleting chemicals.[500] Finally, it is dependent on tens of millions of scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, and climate advocates working to create a carbon free future.

Climate change may be the greatest moral challenge ever faced by humanity in that it constitutes "a perfect moral storm" requiring a dramatic reconsideration of duties to future generations, non-human life, and people on the other side of the planet, with each having received little attention in moral philosophy until just the last few decades.[501] Biospheric institutions are just beginning to emerge out of these considerations. Meanwhile, humanity is already geoengineering the planet by restricting the emission of greenhouse gasses through countless rules and norms, across almost every area of human activity, in what appears to be an increasingly institutionalized climate system.[502] And the most astonishing thing about it is that its reach across space and time is so vast, and there are so many pieces to it, that almost no one can see it.[503]

The Deep History of Global Institutions

Human activity has been globalized for far longer than most people think, and where patterns of activity persist, institutions typically arise to lend them a sense of stability. Hence, we might find that a closer examination of global activity yields a greater wealth of global institutions than we had previously imagined. What follows in this subsection is a series of speculations into the origins of the earliest global institutions with the aim of illustrating their pervasiveness and persistence over time. Speculative theoretical reasoning is necessary because there exists less

[500] Lovelock, James. *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning.* Basic Books. 2010.
[501] Gardiner, Stephen M. *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change.* Oxford University Press. 2013.
[502] Flannery, Tim. *Here on Earth: A Natural History of the Planet.* Atlantic Monthly Press. 2011.
[503] Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World.* University of Minnesota Press. 2013.

than half-a-century of research into these institutions,[504] which has often been criticized for its lack of precision.[505] And while the earliest global institutions will be demonstrated to predate recorded history, and quite possibly the emergence of humanity, the people studying them have tended to rely on written records, which obviously do not exist prior to this period. Hence, the evidence they need to document their existence has rarely been available.

Meanwhile, students of global institutions have seldom cross-referenced their historical studies with the research of anthropologists, archeologists, paleontologists, and evolutionary biologists. Yet, scholars in each of these fields commonly suggest that many of what we are referring to here as global institutions have been integral to the emergence of human civilization and the very evolution of humanity.[506] If the precise nature of the institutions that regulated interactions between groups prior to recorded history cannot be determined at this time, we should not jump to the conclusion that they did not exist. Just think how little we would know about the Ancient Greek system of states if not for Thucydides, and imagine how much more we would know about it if he had focused less on battle scenes and more on the precise customs of diplomatic envoys,[507] or consider what might have been written about the norms governing warmaking among East African tribes by a contemporary anthropologist 30,000 years ago. History might tell us nothing about these institutions, but political theory can tell us a lot.

To the extent we can get a handle on the primordial history of global institutions, we can begin to grasp their strength and durability today. But we can also strengthen our understanding of the deeper structures governing the global imaginary. If humans have been guided by a set of incipient global institutions since time immemorial, and our current crop of global institutions

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[504] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics 4th ed.* Red Globe Press. 2012.
[505] Buzan, Barry. *An Introduction to the English School of International Relations: A Societal Approach.* Polity Press. 2013.
[506] Brown, Donald E. *Human Universals.* McGraw Hill. 1991; Diamond, Jared. *The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal*. Harper Collins. 1992; Ehrlich, Paul R and Ehrlich, Anne H. *The Dominant Animal: Human Evolution and the Environment.* Island Press. 2008; Wilson, Edward O. *The Social Conquest of Earth.* Liveright. 2013.
[507] Kagan, Donald. *The Peloponnesian War.* Penguin Group. 2004.

emerged from these more primordial patterns of behavior, then the global imaginary may be discerned in the very constitution of humanity. And that would make the great clashes around globalism today look more like tiny wavelets sloshing about in a much deeper ocean indeed.

Territoriality is arguably the oldest global institution in that it predates humanity.[508] It is common for mammals to mark their territories with urine, and they will often fight to defend them. Meanwhile, even the most rudimentary societies recognize their own sacred lands,[509] which often mark the outermost bounds of their territories. Humans have marked off their territories for thousands of years before recorded history with fences, corrals, palisades, ramparts, and walls. The experience of borders distinguishing "us" from "them" has also been essential to the development of group identity in the most rudimentary societies,[510] and it continues to shape identities to this day.[511] The assertion of relational boundaries is also critical to human cooperation,[512] and it has arguably played a major role in the evolution of humanity.[513]

Territoriality has typically been associated with warmaking, and there have been moral constraints on warmaking for as long as it has been recorded. The terms of surrender, enslavement, proportionality, victory, honor, and who it is acceptable to kill have all been codified and constrained far back in the annals of history.[514] The high prevalence of warmaking among clans has in many places made the constraints that have been placed upon it, as well as the meanings attributed to it, simply a part of the cultural grammar. The art of diplomacy has commonly been a part of this grammar because where war is costly in lives and resources, those who might restore the peace are usually valued. Ritualized acts of diplomacy have been observed in numerous tribal societies, where diplomats have been granted special status protecting their

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[508] Diamond, Jared. *The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal, pgs. 327-343.* Harper Collins. 1992.
[509] Cook, Michael. *A Brief History of the Human Race.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2003.
[510] Nail, Thomas. *Theory of the Border.* Oxford University Press. 2016.
[511] Brown, Wendy. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty.* Zone Books. 2017.
[512] Axelrod, Robert. *The Evolution of Cooperation.* Basic Books. 1984.
[513] Wright, Robert. *The Moral Animal: Why We Are the Way We Are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology.* Vintage Books. 1995.
[514] Walzer, Michael. J*ust and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations.* Basic Books. 1977.

persons and negotiations alike.[515] The rituals and their more modern secular protocols are important to overcoming cultural differences. Meanwhile, the special status attributed to diplomats protects them from becoming the targets of warmaking.

Balancing power against a stronger rival is yet another primordial institution. Scholars trace the balance of power in our contemporary system of states at least as far back as the Concert of Europe in 1815.[516] Yet, states can be observed balancing power in Thucydides account of the Peloponnesian War.[517] The Indian philosopher and geostrategist Kautilya discusses using diplomacy to forge coalitions among states, which often involved balancing power, in the Fourth Century B.C.E.[518]And Chinese Legalists were discussing the advantages of balancing power in the Period of Warring States, prior to the rise of the Han Empire in the Third Century B.C.E.[519] Given its importance in protecting weak states from powerful states, it is hard to imagine that such a natural response to hegemony has not been instituted repeatedly throughout history. The logic behind it is so obvious that realist scholars of international relations tend to treat it almost as a law of nature.[520] Yet, whatever its prevalence, the option of finding a balance of power is usually available and commonly seized upon. Chimpanzees have even been observed balancing power within their troupes,[521] and it is but a short leap of the imagination to figuring out how to do it among multiple different groups. In this way, balancing power among groups may have evolved as part of the ontological structure of human civilization.

The philosophical underpinnings of international law are commonly traced to the writings of natural law theorists like Hugo Grotius, Samuel Pufendorf, and Emmerich de Vattel, following

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[515] Ellis, Elizabeth N. *The Great Power of Small Nations: Indigenous Diplomacy in the Gulf South.* University of Pennsylvania Press. 2024; Nicholson, Harold. *Diplomacy, pgs. 7-10.* Thornton Buttworth. 1939.
[516] Kissinger, Henry. *Diplomacy.* Simon and Schuster. 1995.
[517] Thucydides and Warner, Rex trans. *History of the Peloponnesian War.* Penguin Classics. 1972.
[518] Kautilya. *The Arthashastra.* Penguin Classics. 2000.
[519] Watson, Adam. *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis, second edition. Routledge.* 2009.
[520] Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2014.
[521] De Waal, Frans and Macedo, Stephen et al. *Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved.* Princeton University Press. 2016.

the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.[522] Meanwhile, international law is generally not thought to have come into prominence until the mid-nineteenth century. Still, Roman cosmopolitans were commonly lawyers and their conceptions of the law tended to be universal.[523] The historian of religion, Karen Armstrong, traces the rudiments of international law even further back in time to the axial age religions, which arose in the last millennium B.C.E. In an epic study of war and religion across the three Abrahamic faiths, she concludes that scriptures indicate the founders of these faiths took a strong interest in regulating warfare. Meanwhile, the normative and legal principles embedded in the faiths quickly came to be used both to justify war and mitigate its worst abuses.[524]

Fernanda Pirie's epic study of the history of law points to a multitude of legal systems that were closely tied to the moral teachings of religions while being rooted in common law as well.[525] These systems were rudimentary, but their grounding in religious traditions meant their geographical scope could be quite vast. The earliest recorded instance of international law can be dated as far back as the third millennium B.C.E. in Ancient Mesopotamia.[526] And given that written records barely date this far back, there is little reason to believe it is the first instance of it in history. Moreover, we have seen how legal systems within states commonly draw from the laws of the multiple polities and jurisdictions they bring together.[527] Law is in many ways a universalizing process, which seeks abstract concepts that might integrate an array of principles, customs, arguments, codes, and legislation.[528] Thus, we would do well to look for the origins of international law at least in ancient societies and quite possibly further back in time.

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[522] Grotius, Hugo and Campbell, A.C. *The Rights of War and Peace.* M. Walter Dunne. 1901; De Vattel, Emer de and Hochstrasser, T.J. *The Law of Nations.* Liberty Fund Inc. 2008.
[523] Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal.* Harvard University Press. 2019.
[524] Armstrong, Karen. *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence.* Anchor. 2015.
[525] Pirie, Fernanda. *The Rule of Laws: A 4,000 Year Quest to Order the World.* Basic Books. 2021.
[526] Shaw, Malcolm. *International Law.* Encyclopedia Britannica. 2020.
[527] Bell, Tom W. *Your Next Government? From Nation States to Stateless Nations.* Cambridge University Press. 2017.
[528] Habermas, Jurgen and Rehg, William trans. *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy.* MIT Press. 1998.

Of course, the institutions of territoriality, warmaking, diplomacy, international law, and the balance of power did not span continents before the ocean-going vessels needed to travel between them were even invented. Globalized institutions bridging the gulf between cultures probably played some part in the evolution of human civilization as these speculations suggest, but the territories where they held sway were highly circumscribed. Given that the first pack animals were domesticated about 5,500 years ago,[529] and prior to animal transport people were bound by the difficulties of finding water,[530] the territories over which these institutions held sway could not have been very large. So, we should not exaggerate their globality; nor should we exaggerate their level of institutionalization. To balance against a stronger power is not to institutionalize the balance power; to mark territory is not to institutionalize territoriality.

However, given their prevalence and the cultural bonds shared by clans and tribes,[531] it is reasonable to presume these activities were institutionalized in many places, and that the groups institutionalizing them fared better. The institutions are likely to have been adopted in tribal state systems because they shared common root cultures. The groups adopting them are likely to have fared better because, like most institutions, they encourage cooperation. They were global insofar as they spanned human cultures and could be found in all parts of the world, and institutions that work in one place tend to be replicated in others, especially when the groups implementing them enjoy adaptive advantages.[532] Yet, if this is the case, then their institutionalization was likely integral to the development of human civilization itself; and to the extent that human civilization is dependent on global institutions, the global imaginary is more essential to human societies. In this way, the early roots of global institutions appear to add to the case that the global imaginary is far more essential than even its strongest proponents tend to suggest.

Institutionalization involves establishing cooperative relations among entities that might

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[529] Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies, pgs. 157-175.* W.W. Norton and Company. 1999.
[530] Reader, John. *Africa: A Biography of the Continent, pg. 5.* Penguin. 1998.
[531] Cook, Michael. *A Brief History of the Human Race.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2003.
[532] Wright, Robert. *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny.* Vintage Books. 2001.

otherwise resort to competitive self-interest.[533] Cooperative behavior has been demonstrated to be far more prevalent than previously believed through countless recent studies in evolutionary psychology,[534] economics,[535] game theory,[536] and sociology.[537] What these cursory speculations into the origins of the first global institutions tell us is that humans have been grappling with the challenge of institutionalizing cooperative relations between groups from the start. And while any more than this passing glance would set us too far afield from the main thesis, the likelihood that these institutions are at least partially embedded in the development of human society should transform our thinking on global institutions and their role in sustaining national societies. What this suggests is that global institutions are far more entrenched, and a lot more stable, than the scholars championing them tend to suggest. It also suggests that cosmopolitanism is an integral feature of human civilization itself.

The Modern History of Global Institutions

Premodern institutions like diplomacy and international law that were explored in the previous subsection shape the behavior of states, but they only touch the lives of ordinary people through their states. To be sure, territoriality shapes identities, and the rules of war are critical to the level of trauma experienced by people subject to it, so their personal impact can be considerable. But modern global institutions like human rights and humanitarianism tend to transform our ideas about the way the world works. They shape our conceptions of the good life. They tell us what we are capable of accomplishing, what we deserve from our societies, and how we are related to

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[533] Keohane, Robert. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy.* Princeton University Press. 1984.
[534] Ehrlich, Paul R. *Human Natures: Genes, Cultures, and the Human Prospect.* Penguin Books. 2002; Wilson, David Sloan. *Does Altruism Exist? Genes, Culture, and the Welfare of Others.* Yale University Press. 2015; Wilson, Edward O. *The Social Conquest of Earth.* Liveright. 2013.
[535] Benkler, Yochai. *The Penguin and the Leviathan: How Cooperation Triumphs Over Self-Interest.* Currency. 2011.
[536] Axelrod, Robert. *The Evolution of Cooperation.* Basic Books. 2006.
[537] Wilson, James Q. *The Moral Sense.* Free Press. 1997.

people the world over. In this way, they reach into our imaginations, transform our conceptions of the world, and change the way we live. However, their philosophical and legal history is much like that of the premodern institutions explored in the last subsection in that it is far richer than their proponents tend to suggest.

The origin of the idea that all people are equally endowed with basic human rights, regardless of the accidents of their birth, can be traced at least as far back as the axial age religions. The idea can be found in the teachings of the Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Mohammad, and later Jewish Prophets like Isaiah.[538] It can be found in the Jewish theological writings of Philo of Alexandria,[539] who is often treated as a precursor to Jesus, and ancient cosmopolitans like Marcus Aurelius.[540] Each of these thinkers and prophets promulgated an idea of moral equality that was at least occasionally extended to the whole of humanity. Roman cosmopolitans and Christian theologians would develop these concepts into a metaphysical idea of moral equality, which proponents of natural rights like Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolome de Las Casas would use to argue for the rights of indigenous peoples.[541] Similar sentiments would be echoed in China among neo-Confucian scholars like Zhu-Xi and Wang Yangming of the West's Late Medieval period, but their humanism culminated in neither the notion of natural nor human rights.[542] However, early modern thinkers like Grotius[543] tended to associate natural rights with a metaphysical concept of humanity as the equal progeny of God,[544] and this caught on.

The idea was that we are all equal in that we all come from God, but we are also equal in the

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[538] Armstrong, Karen. *The Great Transformation: The World in the Time of Buddha, Socrates, Confucius, and Jeremiah.* Atlantic Books. 2007.
[539] Philo of Alexandria and Winston, David. *The Contemplative Life, Giants, and Selections.* Paulist Press. 1980.
[540] Aurelius, Marcus and Grube. G.M.A. *The Meditations.* Hackett Publishing Company. 1983.
[541] Bartleson, Jens. *Visions of World Community.* Cambridge University Press. 2009.
[542] Puett, Michael. *The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us About the Good Life.* Simon and Schuster. 2017.
[543] Grotius, Hugo and Campbell, A.C trans. *The Rights of War and Peace.* M. Walter Dunne. 1901.
[544] Nussbaum, Martha C. *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach.* Belknap Press. 2013.

eyes of God, and this suggested that we all deserve a sort of equal respect. It was not a popular idea at the time, but over the centuries it would contribute to the unfolding of a more secular notion of human rights, which is more likely to focus today on the capabilities every human being has the right to exercise[545] and the freedoms they might express.[546] The historian Lynn Hunt observes that, suddenly, around the middle of the eighteenth-century human rights had become self-evident to a large portion of the world as a result of increasing empathy, associated among other things with the rise of literature.[547] It was an empathy born of engagement with the real conditions in which people lived, not moral principles concerning the way they ought to live. Yet, it would institute an idea of rights that would transform the lives of people across the world.

Once it began to become self-evident, the idea of human rights was able to animate the passions behind the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 and the French Revolution in 1789. But the more secular conception of human rights expounded in these documents was a product of the imagination, and it would only gradually be enshrined in law. The institutionalization of human rights began to assume a form with which we are now familiar with the abolition of the slave trade through a British act of Parliament in 1833.[548] It was familiar in that it was preceded by the same kind of activism and campaigning accompanying anti-torture and sex-trafficking campaigns today.[549] The activism challenged people to empathize with the victims of the slave trade and to recognize their humanity. It was also more grounded in the concrete experiences of slaves than the idea of rights expounded in, for example, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*. It was a thoroughly internationalized effort that was enacted through law. And while it would be another half-century before slavery was made illegal in outliers like the United States and Brazil, the greater part of the world would eventually assent to its abolition. In this sense, the abolition of slavery represented a major advance in the realization and institutionalization of human rights.

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[545] Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal.* Belknap Press. 2019.
[546] Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom.* Oxford University Press. 2001.
[547] Hunt, Lynn. *Inventing Human Rights: A History.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2007.
[548] Barnett, Michael. *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism, pgs. 57-75.* Cornell University Press. 2013.
[549] Keck, Margaret E. and Sikkink, Kathryn. *Activists Beyond Border: Advocacy Networks in International Politics.* Cornell University Press. 1998.

However, it was only with the *U.N. Declaration of Human Rights* that the idea of human rights became integral to the internationalized system of states.[550] While human rights began to be institutionalized within states in the late-eighteenth century, the document began the global process of institutionalizing them in the world at large. Suddenly, states across the world found themselves agreeing to respect the human rights of their citizens and subjects in spite of the fact that many states relied on human rights abuses to sustain their power. Meanwhile, the citizens of these states began to demand their rights as if doing so were part of the natural order of things. And it was much the same with the European empires, whose citizens often led these campaigns for human rights, and the United States in confronting its own system of legalized segregation. Suddenly, people across the world began to use a westernized conception of rights against the very powers that controlled their lives.

Human rights campaigning did not take off until the early seventies when major human rights groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch acquired a mass following,[551] and the process of decolonization was nearly complete. Since that time, state legitimacy has been premised among other things on the willingness to honor basic human rights. It simply became unacceptable to openly engage in torture, mass rape, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and other crimes against humanity, and the states that did ran the risk of becoming pariahs, sanctioned and cast out of major global organizations.[552] Their soft power was diminished,[553] as was their access to loans, trade agreements, the cooperation of allies,[554] and the respect of international society.[555]

Of course, that doesn't mean that the United States and other powerful countries are not able to

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[550] Mazower, Mark M. *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations.* Princeton University Press. 2013.
[551] Moyn, Samuel. *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History.* Belknap Press. 2012.
[552] Clark, Ian. *Legitimacy in International Society.* Oxford University Press. 2007.
[553] Nye Jr., Joseph S. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics.* Public Affairs. 2005.
[554] Keohane, Robert O., and Nye Jr. Joseph S. *Power and Interdependence, 4th ed.* Pearson. 2011.
[555] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* Columbia University Press. 1977.

occasionally get away with these sorts of abuses; that states like Russia and China are able to carry them out as others are paralyzed with inaction; that the last several years have not seen substantial challenges to this norm; or that the State of Israel has not been able to institutionalize most of these abuses while sustaining the steadfast support of the very states most known for promoting human rights. But for a time it appeared that these were simply the exceptions and that human rights had been instituted globally. The end result was a substantial decline in human rights abuses and with it an increasing sense of freedom and security among vulnerable populations the world over,[556] which arguably began to be reversed around 2014, with Russia's land grabs Ukraine, Israel's crimes against humanity in Gaza, Assad's ongoing crimes against humanity in Syria, the Yezidi Genocide at the hands of Isis in Iraq, the beginnings of the Uyghur Genocide in China, and the election of a Hindu Nationalist war criminal in India.[557] In the meantime, the spread of humanitarianism accompanied the institutionalization of rights.[558]

Humanitarianism might be defined as the promotion of human welfare across borders. It can involve caring for the victims of famine, war, hunger, disease, or genocide. It can involve feeding, housing, educating, or vaccinating vulnerable populations. And its work might be carried out by states, nonprofits, or individuals acting of their own accord. In this sense, humanitarianism has many objectives, carried out by a range of actors. Yet, it is distinguished from development aid, which we will explore in the sixth chapter, in that development aid is primarily focused on alleviating suffering by spurring economic development. Meanwhile, it is distinguished from charitable work in that it does not simply reach across class lines, but also state borders and national identities, to aid the poor and needy. In short, while humanitarian commitments are shared with real people living in particular places, they might be applied to the whole of humanity. In this way, humanitarianism springs from cosmopolitan sentiments while enacting cosmopolitan commitments.

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[556] Bellamy, Alex J. *World Peace: (And How We Can Achieve It).* Oxford University Press. 2019; Pinker, Steven. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined.* Penguin Books. 2012.

[557] Horesh, Theo. *The Holocausts We All Deny: The Crisis Before the Fascist Inferno, revised edition, pgs. 1-8.* Cosmopolis Press. 2022.

[558] Barnett, Michael. *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism.* Cornell University Press. 2013.

The great axial age religions were humanitarian insofar as they promoted ethical commitments to all people. However, distant cultures could not be accessed in ancient times without undertaking substantial risks. The risks were perhaps best exhibited by the multiple shipwrecks of Paul of Tarsus, but the hazards only begin to get at the limitations an ancient humanitarian mission might have faced. Missionaries might have traveled to distant lands to seek out new converts whom they sometimes educated,[559] but they seldom possessed the goods and skills needed to carry out anything resembling the humanitarian work of today. Nor would the work of humanitarians have been likely understood by recipient populations. Since the masses of virtually every society lived in grinding poverty, there was little need to travel halfway around the world to find it.[560] Meanwhile, language barriers and safety concerns would have been extremely difficult for humanitarians to surmount. Even late-nineteenth century pioneer humanitarians like Albert Schweitzer faced extraordinary difficulties and dangers.[561]

And yet, there are enough examples of humanitarianism from the ancient world to conclude that it was widespread across many cultures. At least two documented cases of humanitarian aid being provided in ancient Greece suggest it was a common practice. Thucydides wrote of how, following a devastating earthquake suffered by Sparta in 464 BCE, Athens sent 4,000 soldiers to help.[562] And Polybius wrote of how the city states of Greece provided humanitarian aid to Rhodes following a devastating earthquake in 227 BCE.[563] Similarly, the Rock Edicts of the Indian Emperor Ashoka note how he provided famine relief to other peoples in the third century BCE.[564] In spite of the risks Paul faced in his travels, he nevertheless relates how the early Christians of Antioch, located in the south of modern Turkey, took up collections for famine

[559] Spence, Jonathan D. *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci.* Penguin Books. 1985.
[560] Deaton, Angus. *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality.* Princeton University Press. 2015.
[561] Moorehead, Alan. *The White Nile.* Harper and Row Publishers. 1960.
[562] Thucydides and Warner, Rex trans. *History of the Peloponnesian War, Book I, Chap. 102.* Penguin Classics. 1972.
[563] Polybius and Waterfield, Robin trans. *The Histories, Book V, Chaps. 88-90.* Oxford University Press. 2010.
[564] Thapar, Romila. *The Penguin History of Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300, pgs. 174-209.* Penguin Books. 2002.

relief in Jerusalem.[565] Meanwhile, as Islam was just getting started in Mecca, and the first followers of Mohammad were being starved in a narrow valley they had been corralled into, non-believers frequently offered famine relief.[566] And when the community was better established, the second caliph, Umar, organized mass famine relief during the Year of the Ashes for Muslim and non-Muslim communities throughout the Arabian Peninsula.[567] The legendary relief provided by Native Americans to the early New England Pilgrims, which is celebrated in the United States as Thanksgiving, coupled with much the same famine relief provided to the starving settlers of Roanoke Virginia, arguably the two most widely featured early English colonies to the Americas, suggests that providing aid to the victims of famine may have been a common practice among some indigenous tribes of North America.

And these are just some of the better known cases of humanitarian aid, commented on by celebrated authors, or else carried out by iconic historical communities. We can only speculate on the aid that might have been provided by prehistoric human communities, but if its prevalence is as great among less documented peoples as it is among these communities, it was extensive indeed. Meanwhile, an endless stream of videos, which document mammals providing help to needy members of other species, suggest it is common for even humanity's predecessors on the evolutionary tree to at least occasionally aid the needy, whoever they might be, without any benefit to themselves. In any case, there are enough examples of ancient and indigenous humanitarian aid to conclude that at least the roots of humanitarianism are prehistoric, and that this fundamental global institution is far more entrenched than many of the better known histories of humanitarianism suggest.[568] But if humanitarianism has such ancient and quite possibly primordial roots, why do modern histories tend to treat it as a unique outgrowth of modernity? On the one hand, this may be the result of a racist bias in favor of the societies whose

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[565] National Council of Churches of Christ. *New Revised Standard Version Bible, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15, Romans 15:25-27.* Oxford University Press. 1995.
[566] Jebara, Mohamad. *Muhammad, the World Changer: An Intimate Portrait, pgs. 99-108.* St. Martin's Essentials. 2021.
[567] Al Tabari and Yarshater, Ehsan ed. *Volumes 1-40, Volume 15.* State University of New York Press. 2007.
[568] Barnett, Michael. *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism.* Cornell University Press. 2013.

members are writing these histories; on the other hand, the modern humanitarianism that we are discussing is distinctly modern and far more institutionally rooted than these more ancient practices, which often appear more spontaneous and sporadic.

It was not until the founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1863[569] and the first Geneva Convention in 1864 that the international humanitarian movement began to take off.[570] These dates at the height of the American Civil War highlight the close relationship between the human rights and humanitarian movements. But the advances they represented pertained mostly to caring for wounded soldiers and prisoners of war. In the meantime, humanitarian missions in foreign countries were a close cousin of colonialism. They typically took place within colonial regimes, if only because the vast majority of poor states were the colonies of richer states in the late-nineteenth century. But humanitarianism also provided the ideological justification for imperialism. Hence, Belgian King Leopold II was able to carry out perhaps the worst atrocities of the late-nineteenth century in the Congo under the cover of a scientific and educational mission, whose aims were portrayed as humanitarian.[571] American aid often played a similar role in the Cold War when it helped prop up dictators.[572]

Humanitarian aid today is better scrutinized by the general public and more closely analyzed by researchers. It is more likely to originate from non-governmental associations and private foundations, which work closely with government aid agencies. The people providing it are far more likely to be secular and motivated by humanitarian ideals, and there are vastly more people involved in providing it. For these reasons, it is less likely to be used as a cover for more nefarious purposes, and it is arguably more likely to be effective in alleviating real suffering. That does not mean there are not a host of problems associated with it, and we will examine them in greater depth in the sixth chapter on development aid. Yet, it does suggest that

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[569] Barton, Clara. *Story of the Red Cross: Glimpses of Field Work.* Appleton and Company. 1904.
[570] Barnett, Michael. *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism, pgs. 49-56.* Cornell University Press. 2013.
[571] Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa.* Houghton Mifflin. 1999.
[572] Darden, Jessica Trisko. *Aiding and Abetting: U.S. Foreign Assistance and State Violence.* Stanford University Press. 2019.

humanitarianism has been more thoroughly institutionalized on a global scale, that the values animating it are more cosmopolitan, and that it plays a greater role in the global imaginary than previous endeavors.

The institutionalization of humanitarianism is evident in the rapid mobilization of aid organizations in response to famines and refugee crises.[573] And it shows up in the widespread belief that horrendous events like famines should no longer be possible in the world today—in spite of their widespread occurrence. Humanitarianism transforms the expectations of the desperately poor and the comfortably secure alike, and it institutionalizes compassionate action in world society. In this way, it exercises a profound hold on the global imaginary, for it provides a practical and effective venue through which ordinary individuals might galvanize cosmopolitan commitments. Meanwhile, it is embedded in an array of postwar global economic institutions and an international system of states, which have all come to support the implementation of humanitarian ideals.

The United Nations and Institutional Failure

The close of the Second World War marks a critical juncture in the development of the global imaginary because the war demonstrated threats shared by people the world over. The war was fought on several major continents because many of its principal contenders possessed empires that spanned the globe. The increased capacities of military technologies also gave them more global reach. Naval carriers acquired greater speed and the ability to transport fighter jets while the distances traveled by those jets and their firepower increased. Nuclear weapons did not yet possess the capacity to span continents, but that was only a matter of time. Hence, the reach and destructiveness of military technologies, along with the damage wrought in two world wars, as

[573] Polman, Linda. *The Crisis Caravan.* Picador. 2010.

well as the looming threat of a global nuclear showdown, prompted calls for international organizations capable of providing collective security for the whole of the world.[574]

The Second World War also bankrupted the imperial powers. This rendered their vast overseas empires unsustainable and prompted calls for a more inclusive international organization than the League of Nations. It was generally agreed that the League of Nations had failed,[575] though the reasons for its failure were debatable. Some believed it was the notion of collective security that had been a failure while others believed the organization, which never numbered more than 58 member states, was not inclusive enough.[576] In the end, the Roosevelt administration doubled down on the idea of collective security, generating an array of stronger and more inclusive global organizations. Hence, the close of the Second World War witnessed a flurry of global institution building.

The effort was led by the United States, which was the least damaged among the war's winners, and the institutions it built would bear the stamp of its interests.[577] The most essential institutions were arguably rule by great powers, as exhibited by the UN Security Council, and a permanent assembly of states, represented by the UN General Assembly. This was an unusually inclusive system of states, and for the first time in history it would eventually come to represent every state in the world. G. John Ikenberry observes that the victors of major wars typically seek to build orders that further their interests by satisfying the needs of subordinate states, and the postwar order did so by promoting freedom, development, and, to a more limited extent, democracy.[578]

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[574] Ikenberry, John G. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Constraint, and Rebuilding Order After Major Wars.* Princeton University Press. 2019; Mazower, Mark M. *No Enchanted Place: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations.* Princeton University Press. 2013; Sayle, Timothy Andrews. *Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order.* Cornell University Press. 2019.

[575] Carr, Edward Hallett. *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939.* Harper Perennial. 1964.

[576] Mazower, Mark M. *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations.* Princeton University Press. 2013.

[577] Ikenberry, G. John. *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crisis of Global Order.* Yale University Press. 2020.

[578] Ikenberry, John G. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Constraint, and Rebuilding Order After Major Wars.* Princeton University Press. 2019.

But the system of global governance it created was far from fair, and it would later be hobbled by its lack of legitimacy.

The number of major global organizations created at this time was stunning. The UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly, the UN Children Emergency Fund, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control, the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the World Trade Organization all had their start in this era. The world around us would probably change dramatically if these organizations ceased to exist, but it is for precisely this reason that if they did cease to exist, other organizations would likely arise to take on their functions. Would we really stand for a world without major international lending institutions if the World Bank and International Monetary Fund were to vanish, after all? It is as hard to imagine as a world without major human rights groups if Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch were to vanish. Somehow, the order they brought would be re-established, and that is why it is best to think of their activities as having been institutionalized.

Unfortunately, the global organizations set up in the aftermath of the Second World War were established under contingent circumstances. They bear the marks of political compromise, with all of its attendant contradictions and improvisations.[579] Perhaps the most frustrating limitation was the need to reach a consensus among great powers. If the victors of the Second World War could not agree on the postwar order, there was a risk of renewed fighting breaking out between the capitalist West and the communist East. Yet, the need for agreement all too often meant that the postwar order would be minimalist and therefore hinder the ability of major states to cooperate on the issues that mattered most.[580] Serious cooperation would therefore be limited to a core set of institutions, like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the precursor to the World Trade Organization, which were all dominated by developed democracies.[581]

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[579] Meisler, Stanley. *United Nations: A History.* Grove Press. 2011.
[580] Kennedy, Paul. *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations.* Vintage. 2007.
[581] Ikenberry, G. John. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Constraint, and Rebuilding Order After Major Wars.* Princeton University Press. 2019.

The result was that the United Nations might facilitate dialogue in a crisis,[582] but it had no leverage in the nuclear standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nor could it be harnessed in peacemaking among their third world clients, which all too often found themselves at war.[583] Hence, it quickly acquired a reputation for weakness and ineptitude as the great powers turned from collective security arrangements to more traditional power balancing.[584] It could not get much done because most major actions required a consensus of the Permanent Five members of the Security Council: France, China, Russia, America, and Britain. In the meantime, it focused on a series of what to most people would have appeared marginal humanitarian concerns, like vaccinations and child hunger, which would come to take on an ever larger role in its operations[585] and the global imaginary more generally.

However, the United Nations is perhaps best known for its peacekeeping work, which we will examine in greater depth in the next chapter. It has taken on 71 peacekeeping missions since its founding,[586] but most of these have been smaller observer missions, which have been underfunded and highly constrained. Peacekeepers were seldom given the training, equipment, or mandates needed to enforce the peace, and there were often too few peacekeepers to bear witness to all that was taking place in their observer missions.[587] Meanwhile, they tended to be stationed in small, obscure countries, with complex problems and multiple factions, amid fluid political structures and a lack of stable institutions, which made it difficult for all but the experts to understand what was going on The result was that peacekeeping was cast into the hands of expert bureaucrats whose efforts were routinely stymied by great powers.

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[582] Sherwin, Martin J. *Gambling With Armageddon: Nuclear Roulette from Hiroshima to the Cuban Missile Crisis.* Alfred A. Knopf. 2020.
[583] Westad, Odd Arne. *The Cold War: A World History.* Basic Books. 2017.
[584] Kissinger, Henry. *Diplomacy.* Simon and Schuster. 1995.
[585] Kennedy, Paul: *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations, pgs. 125-153.* Vintage Books. 2007.
[586] Duursma, A., Bara, C., and Wilen, N. *UN Peacekeeping at 75: Achievements, Challenges, and Prospects.* International Peacekeeping. 30:5 653-650.
[587] Doyle, Michael W. and Sambanis, Nicholas. *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations.* Princeton University Press. 2006; Sitkowski, Andrzej. *Peacekeeping: Myth and Reality.* Praeger. 2006.

The United Nations was also highly involved in reconstructing states at the close of civil wars, which we will examine in the fifth chapter. This was in many ways an unavoidable counterpart to peacekeeping. Weak state institutions contributed to the outbreak of civil wars, so keeping the peace meant reconstructing the state, and this meant importing the best practices from other states.[588] But since institutions are normative and exist in the imagination, reconstructing states required the transformation of cultures, which tended to take more time than peacebuilders were afforded.[589] It also took a tremendous commitment of resources, which were seldom on offer.[590] Hence, statebuilding tended to reproduce the weak state institutions it was meant to replace. The result was all too often weak states, governed through patrimonial ties of kinship and tribalism, under the shell of democratic institutions.[591]

The result was disappointed ideals and a retreat from globalism as well.[592] People who considered themselves citizens of the world failed to identify with its most prominent institutions while others mounted a sustained critique of its failures.[593] Insofar as the global imaginary was tied to the United Nations, it was all too often tinged with a sense of failure, obscurity, weakness, and drift. But it also began to be associated with impossible ideals. Poorly funded peacekeeping and statebuilding missions, carried out by badly trained troops and highly mobile civil servants, tended to bring less competence and more disorder to the tasks at hand.[594] And this tinged the

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[588] Fukuyama, Francis. *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century.* Cornell University Press. 2004.
[589] Paris, Roland. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict.* Cambridge University Press. 2004.
[590] Doyle, Michael W. and Sambanis, Nicholas. *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations.* Princeton University Press. 2006.
[591] Acemoglu, Daron and Robinson, James A. *The Narrow Corridor: How Nations Struggle for Liberty.* Penguin Press. 2020.
[592] Chandler, David. *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2017.
[593] Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019.
[594] Autesserre, Sererine. *The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World.* Oxford University Press. 2021.

global imaginary with a sense of ineptitude, which would lead many to favor the work of states over that of global organizations.

Providing effective development aid scarcely proved any easier, as we will see in the seventh chapter. Development aid was typically used to bring stability and stimulate development in poorer states, often in the wake of brutal civil wars and crimes against humanity.[595] The problem is that it was extremely difficult to measure its success, for it tended to be distributed to the least functional and most dangerous states. Hence, it tended to show poor results—and not just in formal studies of its effectiveness. Practitioners watched the same fiascoes unfold time and again, producing repeated rounds of humanitarians-turned-critics.[596] Meanwhile, the US was lavish in the aid it bestowed on dictators to keep them from allying with the Soviet Union during the Cold War.[597] Yet, it was far less forthcoming with less pivotal states like Malawi.[598]

Peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid are commonly paired together in peacebuilding missions after civil wars. Yet as we will see over the next three chapters, they are each distinctive practices, which generally failed to deliver their promised returns for their own specific reasons.[599] In this sense, they were a lot like elections, free trade, humanitarianism, and a host of other global institutions. Each involved opening up recipient states to foreign influence and thus infringing on their sovereignty. Each involved an effort to shape states through the importation of foreign institutions that were too often incompatible with the cultures into which they had been imported.[600] And each typically involved interventions in far away, difficult to

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[595] Collier, Paul. *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places.* Harper Perennial. 2010.
[596] Easterly, William. *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics.* MIT Press. 2002.
[597] Wrong, Michela. *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz: Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu's Congo.* Harper Perennial. 2002.
[598] Sachs, Jeffrey. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time, pg. 17-42.* Penguin Books. 2006.
[599] Goertze, Catherine. *The Distinction of Peace: A Social Analysis of Peacebuilding.* University of Michigan Press. 2017.
[600] Badie, Bertrand and Royale, Claudia trans. *The Imported State: The Westernization of Political Order.* Stanford University Press. 2000.

reach, and even harder to comprehend places. They illustrate a deeper problem with global institutions in a rapidly globalizing world.

Global institutions have neither developed to meet the most pressing global challenges nor to express the most salient global relationships.[601] In this sense, they are like most other institutions. They are subject to lock-in, drift, feedback-effects, cognitive biases, and powerful social influences. Once established, they are hard to change because they organize social life. Hence, changing institutions means changing society, but societies are hard to change. They are also by definition never established under ideal conditions but rather the rough-and-tumble of contingent circumstances. Since institutions can be difficult to change, they often fail to address the most pressing matters, and they are often unsettling to our identities. And even when the right institutions are established for the right reasons, they can fail to evoke the right responses in our hearts. However, global institutions are harder to change than most because the world is vast and difficult to comprehend.[602] Hence, they are less subject to conscious control and more prone to bureaucratic capture.

Anne Marie-Slaughter characterized the cumulative impact of global institutions as we have seen not as global government but rather global governance. Global governance is the idea that a wide array of overlapping institutions govern the world.[603] The problem with global governance is that all too many issues slip through the cracks, and there is no overarching government with the resilience and resources to take them up. Meanwhile, as the process of globalization intensifies, the international community is confronted by an increasing backlog of issues to take up. Drug trafficking, sex trafficking, natural disasters, refugee crises, famine relief, and, of course, climate change each became more pressing. In the meantime, a multitude of environmental threats like rainforest destruction, aquifer depletion, desertification, and the collapse of fisheries continue to worsen. As an increasing array of issues calls for global action, the international arena appears increasingly lacking in effective institutions. Action on these issues tends to be underfunded,

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[601] Hale, Thomas and Held, David et al. *Gridlock: Why Global Cooperation is Failing When We Need It Most.* Polity Press. 2013.
[602] Horesh, Theo. *Convergence: The Globalization of Mind.* Bauu Institute Press. 2014.
[603] Slaughter, Anne-Marie. *A New World Order.* Princeton University Press. 2004.

overly specialized, and dependent on organizations lacking roots. Meanwhile, the moral commitment to action is unclear.

What concerns us here is the impact of these institutions on the development of the global imaginary. Since the global imaginary is the social imaginary binding the whole of humanity together, it must compete with countless other imaginaries for allegiance and attention. And while the prevalence of global institutions might make the global imaginary more salient, dysfunctions within these institutions make it less compelling. The end result is all too often necessary jobs badly done and an ever increasing dissatisfaction with the idea of an integrated world, which fuels the fragmentation of the global imaginary and the inevitable retreat from globalism. Hence, we turn next to the crisis of global institutions and their impact on the global imaginary through an examination of the institutionalized practices of peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid.

Chapter IV: Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping involves placing troops amid warring parties to keep them from fighting. It is one of a number global institutions helping to establish and maintain peace, including diplomacy, statebuilding, development aid, and grassroots conflict resolution.[604] It is in this way a supplement to a constellation of peacemaking institutions.[605] But it is essential to most UN interventions, and it is often imagined to be the linchpin to peace. Peacekeepers are the most visible commitment of the international community to preventing outbreaks of violence, and they take up the greater part of UN budgets,[606] while being increasingly utilized by regional organizations.[607] And each of these reasons, in addition to those cited in the introduction, contributed to its selection as one of the case studies examined in this section. As will be explained in this chapter, the presence of peacekeepers in the midst of conflict exercises an outsized role on the global imaginary, as if they were the eyes of the world and its agents of peace.

Yet, peacekeepers tend to be sent to poorly understood states with weak institutions that are troubled by conflict.[608] States where they are sent, like Syria, Somalia, and the Central African Republic, often have multiple centers of power and no monopoly on the use of force, and this

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[604] Bellamy, Alex J. *World Peace: And How We Can Achieve It.* Oxford University Press. 2019; Goertze, Catherine. *The Distinction of Peace: A Social Analysis of Peacebuilding.* University of Michigan Press. 2017.
[605] Cavalcante, Fernando. *Peacebuilding in the United Nations: Coming Into Life.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2019.
[606] Kennedy, Paul. *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations.* Vintage Books. 2007.
[607] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williams, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition, pgs. 307-330.* Polity Press. 2010.
[608] Jett, Dennis. *Why Peacekeeping Fails.* Middle East Policy. Spring 2019 Vol. XXVI, No. 1.

makes it difficult to tell who is in charge and where order lies.[609] Meanwhile, the missions peacekeepers are sent on are commonly plagued by contradictory objectives[610] while being vastly more complex than almost everybody expects them to be.[611] The end result has been a string of mass atrocities, which have lingered in the public imagination, and a barrage of criticisms that have put the institution at risk.[612] The bad publicity has only been compounded by the fact that peacekeepers have no natural constituency or organization to advocate on their behalf. So, it is often difficult for distant observers to tell what they are up to and why it is necessary. Peacekeeping missions as we will see tend to be highly successful in accomplishing their own stated goals,[613] but their missions are often highly constrained as well,[614] leaving the results of their missions unimpressive in the public imagination. Hence, major successes are often seen to be failures, or in the absence of observers on the ground, they are simply overlooked. If peacekeepers are the eyes of the world in conflict zones, as this chapter seeks to demonstrate, they nevertheless struggle to convey what they have seen.

What concerns us in this chapter is not peacekeeping's record of success or the most up to date evolution of its best practices, though these will be touched upon in order to help demonstrate its impact on the global imaginary. Rather, the purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the

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[609] Autesserre, Severine. *The Crisis of Peacekeeping: Why the UN Can't End Wars.* Foreign Affairs. Vol. 98 no.1, January-February 2019; Lombard, Louisa. *State of Rebellion: Violence and Intervention in the Central African Republic.* Zed Books. 2016.

[610] Lipson, Michael. *Peacekeeping: Organized Hypocrisy?* European Journal of International Relations. Vol. 13(1): 5-34, 2007; Williams, Paul D. *The Security Council's Peacekeeping Trilemma.* International Affairs 96: 2 479–499, 2020.

[611] Autesserre, Severine. *The Crisis of Peacekeeping: Why the UN Can't End Wars.* Foreign Affairs. January-February (2019) Vol. 98 no.1.

[612] Paris, Roland. *Saving Liberal Peacebuilding.* Review of International Studies (2010), 36, 337–365.

[613] Fortna, Virginia Page. *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents Choices After War.* Princeton University Press. 2010; Hultman, Lisa and Jacob Kathman et al. *United Nations peacekeeping and civilian protection in civil war.* American Journal of Political Science. (2013) 57(4): 875–891; Walter, Barbera F and Howard, Lisa Morje et al. *The Extraordinary Relationship Between Peacekeeping and Peace.* British Journal of Political Science (2021), 51, 1705–1722.

[614] Jett, Dennis. *Why Peacekeeping Fails.* Middle East Policy. Spring 2019 Vol. XXVI, No. 1.

cumulative effect of the public perception of peacekeeping on the global imaginary over time. This means that the recent history of the international practice of peacekeeping, and the more deeply embedded social practice of keeping the peace will both be explored, for both impact the shape of peacekeeping in our imaginations.

The chapter is a microcosmic case study of how the global imaginary is being shaped by global institutions and practices. It will be followed by the two related case studies of statebuilding and development aid, which provide different lenses for exploring how the global imaginary is shaped. The practices are tied to one another so the case studies are cumulative, and they provide a sense of how images acquired through one practice might impact the others. Thus, through examining such an ecosystem of globalized practices, the case studies have the advantage of both exploring three separate microcosms and helping to flesh out the wider macrocosm of the global imaginary in which they are situated. Each of the case studies is a practice, but they meet many of the conditions of institutions. Hence, the context determines whether they are referred in this thesis as practices, institutionalized practices, or institutions.

They are related to Charles Taylor's conception of social imaginaries insofar as the practices they generate help to establish the global imaginary.[615] Like the modern social imaginary, the global imaginary is made up of a multitude of practices associated with being global. The practices are related to Benedict Anderson's conception of social imaginaries insofar as they spring from a world that sees itself as bound together, and they are tied to a global debate concerning the shape of the geopolitical order.[616] But they might also be seen, in light of Manfred Steger's idea of the global imaginary, as constitutive of an ideological conception of how we ought to be global.[617]

In this way, the case studies help to further establish the existence of the global imaginary. But they also help to illustrate how it emerged from actual globalized practices, and how it evolved in a dialectic with those practices. It is possible that modern peacekeeping might have emerged

[615] Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries.* Duke University Press. 2003.
[616] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Verso. 1983.
[617] Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2009.

from regional concerns with outbreaks of potentially devastating violence, like that of the First World War in Europe. But it is harder to imagine how peacekeeping might have assumed its contemporary internationalized form, and how it might have been used to tamp down conflicts across the world, without the motivating force of a global imaginary shaping its emergence. In any case, a more fine grained analysis of how these practices appear to have shaped our ideas of the world helps to establish the global imaginary as integral to conceptions of world order and essential to cooperation on major global challenges.

There can be no definitive description of the role of peacekeeping in the global imaginary. As explained in the introduction to this thesis, this is an interpretative endeavor, so its results are indeterminate.[618] The effort to elaborate on it is further complicated by the fact that there has been little research into the way peacekeeping missions are perceived,[619] and little written about their impact on our conceptions of the world. Still, theory can help organize what might otherwise appear disparate events, thereby shedding light on the meanings we have attached to peacekeeping. There is also an abundance of critical literature on the topic, and much that can be said about the expectations with which we burden peacekeepers. The successes and perceived failures of peacekeeping clearly play some part in shaping our visions of the world, and if this chapter will not be able to determine its precise role, it can nevertheless outline many of peacekeeping's likely impacts on the global imaginary.

[618] Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Culture, Third Edition, pgs. 3-31.* Basic Books. 2017.
[619] Pouligny, Beatrice. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People.* C. Hurst and Co. 2006.

The Origins and Evolution of Peacekeeping

Some version of peacekeeping can probably be identified in most social groups, for most societies are at risk of being ruptured by violence, and keepers of the peace can help preserve unity in any social group. Everyday peacekeeping is present, among other places, in bouncers preventing barroom brawls, referees keeping hockey players from beating each other up, and police separating groups of rival protesters. It shows itself when parents pull bickering kids apart and people stand between their friends when they are about to come to blows. The variety of examples suggests that placing a human barrier between potentially violent rivals is far from unusual. And it reminds us that doing so is often a thankless and dangerous task. It suggests that the modern practice of peacekeeping probably has far deeper roots than we have been led to believe, because the functions it serves are likely more universal than most of us imagine. And these deeper roots of peacekeeping suggest that the international practice of peacekeeping may be more institutionalized than many of its advocates think. The need to prevent violence from breaking out among otherwise cooperative groups of people, and the possibility that it might be accomplished by placing nonviolent actors between them, is simply part of the ontological structure of human groups.

Keeping the peace in this more general sense long preceded placing international peacekeeping forces between rival militaries. The Roman Empire established the general principle that people should be governed by universal laws. Fernanda Pirie's epic history of law suggests that it was a common approach to law among a multitude of empires at the time,[620] and it set the empire up as a sort of peacekeeping force among the peoples it ruled. But empires have always risked rupture by outbreaks of violence among the peoples they governed, and the use of armed forces to prevent rival gangs and tribes from harming one another is a major function of policing the world over.[621] Thus, the idea of standing between two parties to a fight has deeper political roots than we are likely to imagine as well.

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[620] Pirie, Fernanda. *The Rule of Laws: A 4,000-Year Quest to Order the World.* Basic Books. 2021.

[621] Kleinfeld, Rachel. *A Savage Order: How the World's Deadliest Countries Can Forge a Path to Security.* Pantheon. 2018.

It is only the contemporary internationalized practice of peacekeeping that is novel, and even that has been around longer than most people probably think. The first instance of international military forces being used to prevent the outbreak of violence among local factions is typically cited as having occurred under the League of Nations. In fact, Bellamy and Williamson point to several uses of it after the end of the First World War on the borders of Germany.[622] Meanwhile, postwar peacekeeping carried out under the auspices of the UN distinguishes itself from previous forms of keeping the peace by the absence of a sovereign from which peacekeepers derive their authority and by the multitude of states involved in it. And it is hard to imagine that either the international system of states or the concern with keeping peace among them would have emerged without the idea that we are all bound together by the single planet on which we reside.

The first uses of international peacekeeping forces took place as global empires were beginning to be seen as illegitimate, and it was integral to the package of collective security arrangements at the heart of the League of Nations.[623] In this way, peacekeeping was part of a bundle of liberal international institutions,[624] which might be viewed as springing from a globalized liberal internationalist ideology. It was also part of a border function of the international system of states, which helped maintain the territorial integrity of states in a tightly bounded international system. Peacekeeping prevented outbreaks of violence when the use of imperial force ceased to be seen as legitimate. It sought to maintain cooperative relations between rivals and to maintain the boundaries of the international system of states. And while peacekeepers are more apt to police the boundaries of rival factions within states today, they continue to be deployed to border zones, as in the cases of Cyprus and the India-Pakistan border.

Peacekeeping missions were initiated by the UN on several occasions during the Cold War, but aside from its mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo, most were quite small relative to

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[622] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williamson, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition, pgs. 69-71.* Polity Press. 2010.
[623] Ikenberry, G. John. *A World Safe for Democracies: Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global Order.* Yale University Press. 2020.
[624] Paris, Roland. *Saving Liberal Peacebuilding.* Review of International Studies (2010), 36, 337–365.

what would come later.[625] It was only in the eighties, as the Cold War was coming to a close, that peacekeeping missions would increase in size and number. The closing of the Cold War would usher in a rash of missions as communist aligned governments and movements the world over suddenly became unviable. Peacekeeping missions would be initiated, among other places, in Rwanda and Burundi, Bosnia and Croatia, Namibia and Angola, Somalia and Timor Leste, Liberia and Sierra Leone, El Salvador and Guatemala. There were few unmitigated successes, but the rate of learning was rapid.[626]

Modern peacekeepers have typically derived their authority from the UN Security Council,[627] but they have increasingly done so through regional organizations like NATO and the African Union.[628] These are loosely arranged multinational organizations, which have seldom provided strong peacekeeping mandates. The weakness of the mandates stems from the need to satisfy all parties when there is often little uniting them except for shared circumstances. This has often led to a pattern of "organized hypocrisy" in the UN Security Council, wherein different divisions of the organization take on contradictory functions, in order to satisfy the needs of rival great powers, who each have their own competing agendas.[629] And it has meant that several missions were unable to keep the peace amid horrific outbreaks of violence, most notably in Rwanda, Bosnia, Somalia, and Angola. Unfortunately, it is just these missions that have tended to receive the most attention.[630] And the attention they have received, along with the horrors involved, may have done more to shape the global imaginary, through its traumatizing effect on observers, than

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[625] Jett, Dennis. *Why Peacekeeping Fails.* Middle East Policy. Spring 2019 Vol. XXVI, No. 1.
[626] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williams, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition, pgs. 53-87.* Polity Press. 2010; Fearon, James D. *Civil Wars and the Current International System.* Daedalus. Fall (2017) Vol. 146, No. 4, pp. 18-32; Paris, Roland. *Saving Liberal Peacebuilding.* Review of International Studies (2010), 36, 337–365.
[627] Williams, Paul D. *The Security Council's Peacekeeping Trilemma.* International Affairs 96: 2 479–499, 2020.
[628] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williams, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition, pgs. 266-288.* Polity Press. 2010.
[629] Lipson, Michael. *Peacekeeping: Organized Hypocrisy?* European Journal of International Relations. Vol. 13(1): 5-34, 2007.
[630] Paris, Roland. *Saving Liberal Peacebuilding.* Review of International Studies (2010), 36, 337–365.

all of the other peacekeeping missions combined. For when the general public thinks of peacekeeping, it is arguably its big failures that come to mind.

Peacekeeping missions tend to have the kind of staying power that conservatives often negatively associate with government programs, and they often continue long after regional experts would find a reason to talk about their existence.[631] The peacekeeping missions in the Golan Heights and Lebanon rarely if ever appear in general writings on the region, except when they are being bombed by Israel, for instance. This can partly be explained by the fact that most missions are actually smaller than the general public tends to imagine, and their activities are usually highly constrained. Hence, it is not hard to keep them going. Yet, the deeper explanation for their continuation lies in the persistence of conflict and the effort on the part of the international community to do what they can to keep them from escalating. This highlights both the effectiveness of peacekeeping and its failure to meet the expectations that have been placed upon it. And it is this perception of failure, which has become embedded in our notions of the way the world works, that has come to shape our ability to impact it.

Why Peacekeeping Works

The critical literature on peacekeeping tends to treat it as shambolic,[632] but according to what may be the most extensive study of it to date, peacekeeping missions achieve their goals 75 percent of the time.[633] The vast majority of missions are requested by the parties to a conflict,

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[631] Jett, Dennis. *Why Peacekeeping Fails.* Middle East Policy. Spring (2019) Vol. XXVI, No. 1.
[632] Autesserre, Severine. *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacekeeping.* Cambridge University Press. 2010; Chandler, David. *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017*. Palgrave Macmillan. 2017; Dallaire, Romeo. *Shake Hands With the Devil.* Da Capo Press. 2004; Pouligny, Beatrice. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People.* C. Hurst and Co. 2006; Sitkowski, Andrzej. *UN Peacekeeping: Myth and Reality.* Praeger Security International. 2006; Steidle, Brian and Steidle, Gretchen Wallace. *The Devil Came on Horseback: Bearing Witness to Genocide After Darfur.* Public Affairs. 2007.
[633] Fortna, Virginia Page. *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices After War.* Princeton University Press. 2008.

which seek to consolidate their gains and protect themselves from further violence.[634] These missions involve monitoring already established lines of peace. Peacekeepers prevent violence by placing themselves between warring parties, where they can provide a transparent source of information on troop movements. They also raise the stakes on those who would break the peace by bearing witness to their actions. Sometimes all peacekeepers are tasked with doing is collecting testimonies after the violence has occurred in a warzone, and this can be frustrating to peacekeepers and international observers alike.[635] Yet, this is often enough to carry out later prosecutions, whose future prospects can help keep warring parties in line. In this way, the presence of peacekeepers signals to warring parties that the whole world is watching, and that has often proven enough to stop would-be perpetrators of violence from escalating conflicts.[636]

Peacekeeping's extraordinary record of success was neatly summarized by Walter et al in 2021.[637] Increasing the number of UN peacekeepers in sub-Saharan Africa has been found to significantly reduce civilian deaths,[638] along with overall levels of violence.[639] Peacekeepers have been found to reduce deaths in the specific places where they are located,[640] and to prevent the geographic spread of violence.[641] Warring parties are more likely to sign peace agreements if they expect peacekeepers to monitor them,[642] and to stick to their agreements when they do. The

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[634] Ibid.

[635] Steidle, Brian and Wallace, Gretchen Steidle. *The Devil Came on Horseback: Bearing Witness to Genocide in Darfur.* Public Affairs. 2007.

[636] Bellamy, Alex J. *World Peace: And How We Can Achieve It.* Oxford University Press. 2019.

[637] Walter, Barbera F and Howard, Lisa Morje et al. *The Extraordinary Relationship Between Peacekeeping and Peace.* British Journal of Political Science. (2021) 51, 1705–1722.

[638] Hultman, Lisa and Kathman, Kathman, Jacob et al. *United Nations peacekeeping and civilian protection in civil war.* American Journal of Political Science. (2013) 57(4): 875–891.

[639] Hultman, Lisa and Kathman, Jacob et al. *Beyond keeping peace: United Nations effectiveness in the midst of fighting.* American Political Science Review. (2014) 108(4), 737–753.

[640] Reeder, Bryce W. and Hendricks, Michael et al. *All Peacekeeping is Local: Measuring Subnational Variation in Peacekeeping Effectiveness.* International Studies Quarterly. (2022) 66 sqac010.

[641] Beardsley K and Gleditsch KS. *Peacekeeping as conflict containment.* International Studies. (2015) Review 17, 67–89.

[642] Lundgren, Magnus. *Which type of international organizations can settle civil wars?* Review of International Organizations. (2016) 12(4), 613–641.

results are all the more extraordinary in light of the fact that peacekeepers tend to be deployed to the most dangerous frontlines of the most active conflicts..[643] And as we have seen, they are often under-provisioned and operating under contradictory mandates.[644]

Meanwhile, peacekeepers are sometimes used to enforce the peace with violence.[645] After peacekeepers failed in the nineties to prevent major crimes against humanity in places like Bosnia and Rwanda, critics from inside and outside the UN insisted they be granted greater power to enforce the peace with violence in the service of protecting civilians.[646] The danger was that doing so might require peacekeepers to choose sides, and this would make them a party to conflicts. But if peacekeepers were parties to the conflict, they would also become easy targets, which few states would want to send into harm's way—unless they became even more heavily armed, but this might lead them into quagmires. Thus, taking the reins off peacekeepers might simply result in fewer missions being undertaken. Meanwhile, participation in these ventures would leave peacekeepers subject to a whole new set of criticisms. In this way, the question of whether or not peacekeepers might use greater force to protect civilians highlighted the fact that peacekeepers would remain in a double bind whether or not their restraints were removed. Nevertheless, peacekeepers were granted greater powers to enforce the peace in places like the Congo.[647] The results were mixed, with peacekeepers protecting more civilians but also becoming targets who were ill provisioned and badly prepared for the fighting they encountered, which often arose from a dizzying array of local militias.[648]

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[643] Ruggeri A, Dorussen H and Gizelis T-I. *On the frontline every day? Subnational deployment of United Nations peacekeepers.* British Journal of Political Science. (2018) 48(4), 1005–1025.
[644] Williams, Paul D. *The Security Council's Peacekeeping Trilemma.* International Affairs. 96: 2 479–499, 2020.
[645] Boulden, Jane. *Peace Enforcement: The United Nations Experience in Congo, Somalia, and Bosnia.* Praeger. 2001.
[646] Annan, Kofi and Mousavizadeh, Nader. *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace.* Penguin Press. 2012; Brahimi, Lakdhar. *Report on the Panel of the United Nations Peace Operations.* The United Nations General Assembly Security Council. 2000.
[647] Autesserre, Severine. *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacekeeping.* Cambridge University Press. 2010.
[648] Ibid.

Peacekeepers also often take on policing functions in transitional administrations.[649] The presence of peacekeepers in a transitional period of statebuilding reminds local populations that there is an order to the social transformations they are experiencing, and that the international community remains committed to seeing them through it. They also help facilitate the distribution of aid to the most unstable places where violence might still break out, and this can prove critical to facilitating the kind of development needed to win support for transitional governments.[650] Meanwhile, there are often no neutral parties in the wake of a civil war, and it takes time to train police and integrate former militia members into police forces when they were just at war with one another.

Peacekeeping can be thought of as a border function of the international system of states. It takes place on the margins of order, where it is breaking down and being reconstituted. Peacekeepers are essential to building peace and order after civil wars, and these are essential to a stable conception of the global imaginary. For without peace and order, the world would appear a chaotic jumble of events, rendering world society fractured and inchoate. Yet, peacekeepers are also representatives of the world itself, who bear the insignia of the international system of states. In this way, they provide an opportunity for us to explore how the world itself is personified as an imaginary, and this makes peacekeeping an unusually fruitful conceptual field. It also makes it a lynchpin in our conceptions of the world.

[649] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williams, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition, pgs. 377-397.* Polity Press. 2010.
[650] Collier, Paul and Elliot, V.L. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Politics.* World Bank Publications. 2003.

Why Peacekeeping is Imagined to Fail

Peacekeeping missions have been criticized for a multitude of inadequacies. The criticisms are often constructively aimed at making peacekeeping more effective,[651] but they can also take aim at the method itself and the motives of those who advocate its use.[652] Many of its advocates have almost nothing good to say about it until the final pages of their books where they clarify that they actually support it.[653] Many rail about its failure—to be used more often.[654] In the process, they have contributed to bringing the practice of peacekeeping into disrepute,[655] and they have helped sully it in the global imaginary. Yet, the criticisms have also contributed to the development of peacekeeping methods. And while the general public appears to have settled upon notions of peacekeeping rooted in its missions from the nineties, our understanding of peacekeeping is bound up with a dialectic of the global imaginary that continues to evolve.

Supporters of peacekeeping missions have argued that they would be more effective if their mandates were clearer, their troop numbers were higher,[656] and their troops were better trained.[657] These are less criticisms of the practice than the failure to unleash its potentiality. But these criticisms are often mixed together with more pointed critiques. It has also been argued that

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[651] Autesserre, Severine. *The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World*. Oxford University Press. 2021; Lakdhar, Brahimi. *Report on the Panel of the United Nations Peace Operations*. The United Nations General Assembly Security Council. 2000; Thakur, Ramesh. *The United Nations, Peace and Security*. Cambridge University Press. 2006.

[652] Chandler, David. *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997– 2017*. Palgrave Macmillan. 2017.

[653] Autesserre, Severine. *The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World.* Oxford University Press. 2021.

[654] Sitkowski, Andrzej. *UN Peacekeeping: Myth and Reality.* Praeger University. 2006.

[655] Paris, Roland. *Saving Liberal Peacebuilding*. Review of International Studies (2010), 36, 337–365.

[656] Doyle, Michael W. and Sambanis, Nicholas. *Making War and Building Peace.* Princeton University Press. 2006.

[657] Dobbins, James and Jones, Seth G. et al. *The Beginner's Guide to Nation Building.* Rand Corporation. 2007.

peacekeepers need to do more to prevent atrocities,[658] to connect with local populations,[659] to make women feel safe,[660] and to stop their own abuses of power.[661] These criticisms have come primarily from academics supportive of the institution, but they have also come from the highest echelons of the UN.[662] Critics have argued that peacekeepers need to be attentive to the social acts that establish peace[663] and to the social spaces in which peace might manifest.[664] They have also been pressed to build on the peace that is formed through local associations[665] and to do more to prevent the spread of more personalized local conflicts,[666] which tend to degenerate into wider conflicts that result in broken truces.[667]

Most of the criticisms could be redressed through a more supportive UN Security Council. If it were more supportive of peacekeeping missions, it would increase their troop numbers, the strength of their mandates, the level of their training, and their freedom to prevent atrocities. This support would make it easier for troops to connect with local populations, who would be more likely to see them as effective protectors with a stronger presence on the ground. A more

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[658] Sitkowski, Adrzej. *UN Peacekeeping: Myth and Reality.* Praeger University. 2006.
[659] Autesserre, Severine. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention.* Cambridge University Press. 2014.
[660] Pouligny, Beatrice. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People.* Charles Hurst and Co. 2006.
[661] Moon, Ban Ki. *Resolved: Uniting Nations in a Divided World.* Columbia University Press. 2021.
[662] Lakdhar, Brahimi. *Report on the Panel of the United Nations Peace Operations.* The United Nations General Assembly Security Council. 2000; Moon, Ban Ki. *Resolved: Uniting Nations in a Divided World.* Columbia University Press. 2021; Thakur, Ramesh. *The United Nations, Peace and Security.* Cambridge University Press. 2006.
[663] Mac Ginty, Roger. *Everyday Peace: How So-called Ordinary People Can Disrupt Violent Conflict.* Oxford University Press. 2021.
[664] Kappler, Stefanie and Björkdahl, Annika. *Peacebuilding and Spatial Transformation: Peace, Space and Place.* Routledge. 2017.
[665] Richmond, Oliver P. *Peace Formation and Political Order in Conflict Affected Societies.* Oxford University Press. 2016.
[666] Autesserre, Severine. *The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World.* Oxford University Press. 2021.
[667] Autesserre, Severine. *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacekeeping.* Cambridge University Press. 2010.

supportive UN Security Council might also take measures to protect peacekeepers when they are being systematically targeted by the parties to a conflict, as in the case of Israel killing peacekeepers in Lebanon. Meanwhile, better funding would make it easier to draw troops from more professional armies, with better reputations to keep up, which might maintain greater discipline, with better oversight from superiors, and less likelihood of being attacked by the parties to a conflict—to say nothing of building up a professional peacekeeping officer corps. And perhaps if they were provided these resources, peacekeepers would indeed be seen as heroic agents of the peace while the international system of states would be seen as a beacon of order and stability.

Saying the Security Council needs to do more to support peacekeeping and making it happen are not the same thing. The crimes against humanity perpetrated by Russia in Syria[668] and Ukraine,[669] the cultural genocide of Uyghurs being carried out by China,[670] and the genocide being committed by Israel in Gaza, remind us that the real problem with peacekeeping is getting its missions approved and funded. The practice of peacekeeping ultimately arises out of a fragmented system of global power relations,[671] and this highlights a common perception of brokenness in the global imaginary. It is perceived to be broken because the world cannot function as a single unit, but it cannot function as a single unit because its centers of power are fragmented, and in many cases parties to the crimes against humanity that need to be stopped. And this is saliently illustrated by the dysfunctional constraints that are commonly placed upon

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[668] Amnesty International. *Nowhere is Safe for Us: Unlawful Attacks and Mass Displacement in North-West Syria.* 2020; Human Rights Watch. *Targeting Life in Idlib: Syrian and Russian Strikes on Civilian Infrastructure.* 2020.

[669] New Lines Institute and Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights. *The Independent Legal Analysis of the Russian Federation's Breaches of the Genocide Convention in Ukraine and the Duty to Prevent.* 2022.

[670] Human Rights Watch. *Crimes Against Humanity in Xinjiang: Mass Detetnion, Torture, Cultural Persecution of Uyghurs, Other Turkic Muslims.* 2021; United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. *OHCHR Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China.* 2022.

[671] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* Columbia University Press. 1977.

peacekeepers.[672]

Some of the criticisms of peacekeeping are the result of the institution's steep learning curve. Peacekeeping may be an established global institution, with deep roots in the ontological structure of human society, but the vast majority of its missions have taken place in the last few decades, and the lack of a standing peacekeeping force and officer corps has meant that each new crop of peacekeepers must relearn the lessons of the past. This has been partially mitigated by the creation of the UN Department of Peace Operations, which was founded in 1992. Yet, only so much can be conveyed to officers in the field and their troops from bureaucrats working thousands of miles away. Peacekeeping is the product of an emerging discipline of peacebuilding, which is vigorously critiquing its own methods and assumptions.[673] Yet, even as we learn more about what works, it must be applied to ever changing methods of warfare, human rights norms, international institutions, and international orders.

Even if peacekeeping missions were to receive adequate funding and support, they would likely remain poorly understood. The idea that armed troops placed between the parties to a conflict might reduce the level of violence is generally counterintuitive. A conventional understanding of warfare would suggest that placing more troops on the battlefield is likely to lead to either more violence or greater domination, after all. That's just the way ordinary people tend to think warfare works. Similarly, the idea that these same troops might stand by while atrocities take place, or not take sides against the attackers when crimes against humanity are being carried out, can offend our moral sensibilities. It is offensive to both the local victims of violence[674] and global observers, who are often traumatized by their observation of crimes against humanity

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[672] Lipson, Michael. *Peacekeeping: Organized Hypocrisy?* European Journal of International Relations. Vol. 13(1): 5-34, 2007.

[673] Goertze, Catherine. *The Distinction of Peace: A Social Analysis of Peacebuilding.* University of Michigan Press. 2017.

[674] Autesserre, Severine. *The Crisis of Peacekeeping: Why the UN Can't End Wars.* Foreign Affairs. January-February (2019) Vol. 98 no.1; Pouligny, Beatrice. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People.* Charles Hurst and Co. 2006.

from afar.[675] And it can appear absurd to distant onlookers who expect peacekeepers to bring the security they associate with world society.

Peacekeepers can often seem to be imbued with blue halos—until their missions are looked at more closely. That is, they are cast into the role of saviors, representing a universal conception of benevolent humanity. But since peacekeepers are typically drawn from standing armies, and their missions are overseen by great powers, which may have no interest in protecting civilians, they rarely live up to the image. And since few people are aware of peacekeeping's record of success, and the successes get so little attention, while the failures are cause for guilt and reflection, disillusionment with peacekeeping has become a commonplace. While we may not be able to assert definitively the effect of this disillusionment on the global imaginary, it is unlikely to make it more compelling. And the disillusionment has likely repelled many who previously took solace in the prospect of global collective action.

Peacekeeping has also been criticized as a neocolonial institution, which neoliberal western powers use to maintain control in fragile states. The idea here seems to be that western capitalist states coerce other nations into accepting peacekeeping missions that help open weak states up to their markets and geopolitical influence. In this way, neoliberal western powers are said to use peacekeeping, along with global institutions like statebuilding and development aid, to extend their hegemony and widen their markets. There is certainly a case to be made that America's interest in Bosnia and Kosovo stemmed at least in part from a desire to integrate the last remaining communist state in Europe into neoliberal markets,[676] and the later capitalistic development of Kosovo might seem to bear this out. However, far from being exploited, Bosnia saw little foreign capital investment at all once the fighting ceased in the nineties. And there are

[675] Dallaire, Romeo. *Shake Hands With the Devil.* Da Capo Press. 2004; Horesh, Theo. *The Holocausts We All Deny: The Crisis Before the Fascist Inferno.* Cosmopolis Press. 2022; Rose, Jacqueline. *The Last Resistance.* Verso. 2007; Steidle, Brian and Steidle, Gretchen Wallace. *The Devil Came on Horseback: Bearing Witness to Genocide After Darfur.* Public Affairs. 2007
[676] Chomsky, Noam. *The New Military Humanism.* Pluto Press. 1999.

virtually no smoking guns pointing to such intentions motivating any major peacekeeping missions, except perhaps the early mission to the Congo in 1961.[677]

But America has routinely exploited the failed states in which it intervened, most notably Chile and Iraq, to spread its corporate brands in what activist Naomi Klein dubbed "disaster capitalism."[678] And while the internal discussions of the Obama administration suggest that the intervention in Libya was genuinely humanitarian,[679] it just happened to take out another major critic of Israel, and there was little concern with humanitarianism when it came to nation building in the wake of the intervention. This suggests there may be a systemic dynamic at work that leads otherwise noble interventions in the affairs of foreign states to be hijacked by more nefarious interests. Hence, there is good reason to question whether a similar dynamic may be at work in peacekeeping missions, as in the debate around disarming Hezbollah and maintaining the multi-decadal peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon. And even though the evidence appears lacking, it has nevertheless played a part in sullying peacekeeping in the global imaginary. In this way, responses to peacekeeping may involve lingering resentments over previous colonial regimes.

However, the vast majority of missions have actually been implemented at the behest of warring parties,[680] and they have been approved by the UN Security Council, whose decisions must win the support of rival powers like America and Russia. Most missions actually find less support in the Security Council than they do in the General Assembly, which is made up of a larger number of low and middle-income states. It is not the neoliberal United States and United Kingdom that were pressing to protect food aid entering into Gaza, after all. Meanwhile, the Secretaries General overseeing the missions typically come from non-western states, as have most recent

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[677] Ngonzala-Ntalaja, Georges. *The Congo From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History, pgs. 94-121*. Zed Books. 2002.
[678] Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism.* Penguin Books. 2008.
[679] Obama, Barack. *The Promised Land.* Penguin Books. 2024; Power, Samantha. *The Education of an Idealist, pgs. 297-312.* William Collins. 2021; Rhodes, Ben. *The World As It Is: Inside the Obama White House.* Vintage. 2019.
[680] Fortna, Virginia Page. *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices After War.* Princeton University Press. 2008.

peacekeepers. And an ever increasing number of missions have been initiated by the African Union.[681] Finally, the missions seldom occur in the kinds of resource rich places or former colonies that major states might want to control or access as trading partners, and there is little evidence they have used the missions to make such inroads.[682]

Hence, for the criticism to hold any meaning, it would have to be pushed back to another level of abstraction, in which it is not the states themselves that are colonial. Rather, something pertaining to the system in which they are operating would need to be replicating neocolonialism in the way a mode of production shapes social and economic relations. In that case, overcoming neocolonialism would mean bringing about a deeper shift in the international order, which might require a new set of international institutions. The last chapter provides a similar reconstruction of the international order, but it does so without negating the value of liberal international institutions like peacekeeping and statebuilding.

A more convincing criticism is that peacekeeping can appear a milquetoast response to horrific violence, which really requires the kind of justice the world's most powerful states refuse to provide. In this sense, peacekeeping might be helpful, but it is seldom enough.[683] And this can lead its missions to look like failures, even when they are successes. Meanwhile, the experience of failure can be deflating, because it reminds us of all the things global collective action has failed to accomplish. And while a narrow cost benefit analysis may favor peacekeeping in this or that situation, the demoralizing effects of its inadequacies and its failure to provide justice, may negatively impact support for other important global initiatives. In this way, the failure to bring a more satisfying sense of success to peacekeeping missions might prevent other important global actions from ever getting off the ground.

Of course, none of this can be stated definitively, but it can be interpreted logically. If people

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[681] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williams, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition, pgs. 301-321.* Polity Press. 2010.

[682] Howard, Lisa Morje. *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars.* Cambridge University Press. 2007.

[683] Brown, Garrett W. and Bohm, Alexandra. *Introducing Jus Ante Bellum as a Cosmopolitan Approach to Humanitarian Intervention.* European Journal of International Relations. (2016) 22(4): 725–748.

expect peacekeepers to prevent atrocities, and they only minimize them, peacekeepers will fail to meet their expectations. And if the inability to meet expectations is commonly equated with failure, then peacekeeping missions will be seen as failures. Meanwhile, if peacekeeping missions are viewed as projects of the international community, then the international community will be seen to have failed. But since the consequences of failure in peacekeeping often result in mass atrocities, the international community will be seen as having failed to prevent mass atrocities. And since people often fixate on mass atrocities generations into the future, the international community will come to be tarred with the mass atrocities it fails to prevent. In this way, we can begin to develop a picture of how peacekeeping helps to construct the global imaginary in such a way as to fuel the retreat from globalism.

It is not a definitive picture, for there are other dimensions of it that might be seized upon. For instance, we might examine the implications of the fact that peacekeeping deployments are astonishingly cosmopolitan, both in the composition of their troops and the aims of their missions. The world community pulls them together in order to protect the most vulnerable peoples in the world; hence, the idea of peacekeeping is also tied to our highest ideals. And the perception that peacekeeping missions are commonly failures is tied to the idea that cosmopolitanism doesn't work—hence the retreat from globalism.

Again, we might have examined the failures of peacekeeping through the lens of imperialism, emphasizing the way the great powers deliberately seek to undermine peacekeeping missions by minimizing their funding, constricting their missions, and in many cases preventing them from ever getting off the ground in the first place. In this way, the case study might have emphasized the way failures in peacekeeping signal a world under the rule of great powers, which deliberately aim to undermine global collective action in the interest of humanity along with the very idea of a world of which all of humanity is members. But this alternative framework also affirms many of the findings of the thesis, like the idea that perceived failures in global institutions commonly result in dissatisfactions with the global imaginary, thereby inspiring the retreat from globalism.

Few critics argue that peacekeeping should be abandoned altogether. Yet, there are few

unambiguous supporters of it outside the UN. Hence, it often appears that peacekeeping is under fire from all quarters. The UN continues to spend around $6 billion on roughly 80,000 peacekeepers each year, down from a high of 100,000. And regional organizations like the African Union and NATO have initiated a number of new peacekeeping missions in recent years.[684] But no new major UN missions have been initiated since 2014, when it could be argued the international order began to deteriorate in perceptible ways, following Russia's land grab in the Crimea and subsequent outbreaks of crimes against humanity in the Central African Republic, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Gaza, Yemen, and Burma.[685]

These challenges are significant to our conception of the global imaginary, because they can make peacekeeping appear nonsensical to the general public. Peacekeeping can appear a fumbling attempt to bring peace to the margins of the world, but its centrality to the work of the UN can make the international community itself appear marginal and incapable of shouldering significant responsibilities. It can also make the experience of globalism feel unsettling and precarious. In short, the perceived failures of peacekeeping to meet the expectations placed upon it can make the world itself appear a failure. But it is important to remember that for all its visibility, peacekeeping is actually subordinate to other important global institutions.

Peacekeeping is rooted in the global imaginary through its critical role in peacemaking and the essential role of peacemaking in preserving world order. Meanwhile, peacekeeping is rooted in the role of peacekeepers as representatives of international society and its system of states. In this regard, peacekeepers can be seen as emissaries of the global imaginary tasked with policing the borders of the international state system and preventing the spread of violent chaos. So, the role they play is vital if subordinate to a wider process of making peace, which is logically subordinate to the task of maintaining global order. Yet, peacekeepers are typically underfunded, undertrained, disempowered, and lacking in authority.

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[684] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williams, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition, pgs. 301-321.* Polity Press. 2010.

[685] Horesh, Theo. *The Holocausts We All Deny: The Crisis Before the Fascist Inferno, Revised edition, pgs. 1-9.* Cosmopolis Press. 2022.

Peacekeeping in the Global Imaginary

Peacekeeping plays an essential role in a constellation of peacemaking institutions, and there is no other practice that might replace it. Prolonged conflict tends to foster failed states, refugee crises, crimes against humanity, regional economic decline, and the spread of violence to neighboring states.[686] And since responsible leaders want to avoid these hazards, and there is stature in brokering peace deals, world leaders will probably continue making peace in conflict zones. Peacekeeping is perpetuated by its record of success and the international habit of resorting to it. And the passage of time is likely to deepen the reliance on peacekeepers. It is for these reasons that peacekeeping is being treated as an institutionalized practice for the purposes of this thesis, which will likely continue to find a role in the amalgam of institutions grounding the global imaginary.

The resilience of peacekeeping as an institutionalized practice is largely the result of its adoption by regional organizations like the African and European Unions, which use it to prevent the spread of regional wars.[687] But it is also the result of a more nuanced understanding of its applications. Peacekeeping's promoters have learned a lot about how to make it work better. They have learned over the course of missions and from reflecting on what worked between them.[688] As more organizations utilize peacekeepers in a wider range of circumstances, the opportunities for discovering more successful peacekeeping methods might be expected to increase. However, the initiation of new peacekeeping missions has receded substantially since the last major one was started in the Central African Republic in 2014. This raises the question of whether the practice of peacekeeping will continue its pattern of growth, followed by a temporary recession, which began after the First World War.

The institution of peacekeeping is strengthened by its essential role in a package of peacemaking

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[686] Collier, Paul and Elliot, V.L. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policies.* World Bank Publications. 2003.
[687] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williams, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition, pgs. 301-321.* Polity Press. 2010.
[688] Howard, Lisa Morje. *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars.* Cambridge University Press. 2007.

institutions.[689] Peacekeepers are used to secure brokered peace deals in places like the Congo, Bosnia, and Croatia, for undisciplined soldiers on the ground can often unravel the agreements of leaders. They are used to police transitional periods of statebuilding, as in the case of Timor Leste, for unrest is common where the state has collapsed, and states recovering from civil wars rarely have functioning police forces.[690] They are also often required to protect aid workers, for without the economic and educational opportunities brought about by development aid, fighting is often resumed. In this way, peacekeeping is part of an interlocking set of interdependent, global peacemaking institutions and practices.

If the institution of peacekeeping were abandoned, other peacemaking institutions would likely fail as well. The efforts of diplomats to end conflicts might be sabotaged by extremists on the ground, who reignite conflicts if they don't get what they want. And development projects that might help bring the jobs and security needed to wean young men off of violence, while increasing trust in the international community, would fail due to a lack of safety preventing aid workers from operating in the region. Hence, if some other institution were to take its place, it would need to take on many of the functions of peacekeeping, and thus it would likely evolve into a modified form of it. In this way, peacekeeping is likely to maintain some role in the global imaginary, as a means of facilitating global cooperation and maintaining planetary co-existence, whether or not we are able to envision its precise contours.

Peacekeeping is part of an interlocking system of global institutions and practices that ground our conceptions of the global order. Some of these institutions and practices are arranged hierarchically. For instance, peacekeeping tends to take place within the wider institution of peacemaking, broadly conceived as pertaining to the efforts of diplomats to forge truces among warring parties, and peacemaking tends to take place within the wider institution of diplomacy; meanwhile, diplomacy tends to take place within international society, and international society

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[689] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williams, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition.* Polity Press. 2010; Goertze, Catherine. *The Distinction of Peace: A Social Analysis of Peacebuilding.* University of Michigan Press. 2017.

[690] Bellamy, Alex J. and Williams, Paul D. *Understanding Peacekeeping, Second Edition, pgs. 255-279.* Polity Press. 2010; Dobbins, James. *The Beginner's Guide to Nationbuilding.* Rand Corporation. 2007.

is situated within the international system of states.[691] In this way, peacekeeping is a subordinate component in a larger architecture of global institutions and practices, and the system itself reinforces the commitment to it, which highlights the institutionalized nature of the practice. Yet, the interlocking system of global institutions and practices is also weblike.

Peacekeeping missions tend to take place within statebuilding missions, but statebuilding missions often arise out of peacekeeping missions. And it is sometimes difficult to tell whether development aid is being provided in order to bring peace or peace is being provided in order to encourage development.[692] Meanwhile, statebuilding is subordinate to the system of states, which it prepares fragile states to enter, but it is also integral to the system of states, each of which has been constructed in accord with the needs of the system.[693] In this way, the interlocking system of institutions can look a lot like stacked logs in the game Jenga: you might be able to get away with pulling several out of it, but remove too many of these vital institutions and the whole edifice collapses.

Hence, peacekeeping helps keep the peace between warring parties and in the international system of states, and this makes it integral to the way we imagine the world to hang together. Institutions may be thoroughly distinct from social imaginaries, but they lend them shape by focusing our minds on the kind of commonly shared practices emphasized by Charles Taylor in his salient depiction of the modern social imaginary.[694] Perhaps this is why so many of the critics of peacekeeping can't live with it and can't live without it. While just about everyone seems to think it could be done a whole lot better, hardly anyone can imagine doing away with it, because it is an essential component in the world we have come to imagine. But perhaps this also explains why it can be so easily disparaged without its critics feeling compelled to offer an alternative. In maintaining the state system by policing its margins, peacekeeping can appear the ultimate enforcer of an international order that, like every order, is bound to be met with criticism—and this is key to the role it plays in the global imaginary.

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[691] Wight, Martin. *Systems of States.* Leicester University Press. 1977.
[692] Collier, Paul. *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places, Reprint Edition.* Harper Perennial. 2010.
[693] Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics.* Cambridge University Press. 1999.
[694] Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries.* Duke University Press. 2003.

Peacekeeping is successful at least partly because peacekeepers represent the world to warring parties. By making their presence felt as agents of the international system of states, they demonstrate that any crimes that are committed will be reported to the world's most powerful states. Hence, they command some level of respect with little use of force while interrupting emergent patterns of violence.[695] That doesn't mean that they strike fear into the hearts of militants, nor that they command enough respect to prevent some of the worst outbreaks of violence, as in Srebrenica and Rwanda. But the fact that peacekeepers can intrusively document war crimes without routinely getting slaughtered suggests they possess a sort of diplomatic immunity and authority as the agents of the international community and its great powers.

Meanwhile, the fact that peacekeepers are tasked with keeping nations from tearing one another apart suggests that we imagine them to play some role in helping to bind them together. It also suggests that peace is important enough to invest significant resources in preserving, and that it makes the world a better place, not just for the direct victims of violence, but also the citizens of great powers, who approve the missions, along with the states that fund them, and those that provide their troops. Peacekeepers are a reminder that peace matters to the global imaginary, for it is essential to our co-existence. In this way, peacekeepers are agents of peace, who come from afar, in the name of humanity, to reestablish order, and put an end to violence. The image can make the international community look like a beacon of peace, which comes to the assistance of troubled nations in their moment of greatest need. Yet, the image is hard to square with a more common view of geopolitical rivalry as a Hobbesian arena of all against all.

War makes it harder to imagine an integrated world, because violence tends to grab our attention, and it colors the world with a sense of discord. It reminds us of all the ways that people are unable to cooperate, and of the need for nations to be on guard against one another. The decreasing rate of war between states since the Second World War,[696] coupled with the greater

[695] Fortna, Virginia Page. *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices After Civil War.* Princeton University Press. 2008.
[696] Pinker, Steven. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined.* Viking. 2011.

cooperation between states, which many analysts have observed in this period,[697] suggests that global cooperation is stronger when violence is less frequent. States tend to spend more on defense in ages marked by heavy fighting, and nations tend to become more insular when the threat of violence increases. Meanwhile, violence is commonly associated with discord and rarely cooperation, because people who are killing one another are not typically seen to be getting along.

In this way, the very idea of violence changes our perception of the world, decreasing our sense of security and trust, while increasing our anxiety in relation to other peoples. The violence between warring parties in small and marginal states may at first glance seem to have little to do with this process of great powers building up armies and closing down borders. Yet, we need only consider that the two-decade long War on Terror, which began with an attack on America's World Trade Towers, was carried out by a small terrorist group located in a distant broken state, to be reminded of how quickly distances can be spanned in a globalized world, and how rapidly disorder can spread. Peacekeepers sustain the global imaginary by containing just these sorts of ruptures in the actual world, by providing an illusion of order that they might never actually establish.

Peacekeepers act as the eyes of the world in some of its worst episodes of violence, and they act as agents of the world in the very places where it is being torn asunder. The idea that they act as the eyes of the world suggests that they are keeping watch for it, where no one else can or will go. It also suggests that they are monitoring dangers to the world in order to protect it from the spread of violence. But more intangibly, identifying peacekeepers as the eyes of the world reminds us of their role in bearing witness to its worst acts of collective violence. As we have seen, the very presence of peacekeepers in the field can decrease violence, but even when they fail to decrease it, their presence forces the rest of us to look, if only at how they have failed, and in the worst cases simply to remember so that we might never forget, as we have so often been taught to do with the Holocaust.

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[697] Ikenberry, G. John. *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crisis of Liberal Order.* Yale University Press. 2020.

Peacekeepers sustain the idea of a community of nations in some of the most fractured parts of the world. In fact, the presence of the international community might be felt most strongly precisely in those places that are most broken, if only because they are the most likely to be met with its agents, in the form of peacekeepers, statebuilders, and humanitarians.[698] Yet, representing the world to the traumatized populations of war torn states is a fraught endeavor. Peacekeepers are arguably the most visible agents of the international system in these conflict zones, if only because it is their job to make their presence known.[699] But what that means to the local populations they are sworn to protect might not be all that clear. Beatrice Pouligny's research suggests that the intentions of peacekeepers are seldom explained to the populations they are there to protect,[700] and caution is a natural response to men with guns, and all the more so for traumatized people.[701] So, peacekeepers are often first received with a measure of guardedness. Meanwhile, safety protocols intended to protect peacekeepers, and behavioral strictures intended to protect local populations from their potential abuses, minimize contact with local populations.[702] And this can lead to misunderstandings about what they seek to accomplish and their license to prevent mass atrocities.[703]

Local residents are undoubtedly aware that a powerful international organization representing the community of nations has sent men with guns into their villages. The UN generally maintains a strong presence in most of the places where peacekeepers are sent, after all. And the fact they have been sent by the international community implies that the authority of peacekeepers is in some way greater than that of other men with guns. They are the agents of powerful countries,

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[698] Higate, Paul and Henry, Marsha. *Insecure Spaces: Peacekeeping, Power and Performance in Haiti, Kosovo, and Liberia.* Zed Books. 2013.
[699] Fortna, Virginia Page. *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices After Civil War.* Princeton University Press. 2008.
[700] Pouligny, Beatrice. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People.* Charles Hurst and Co. 2006.
[701] Higate, Paul and Henry, Marsha. *Insecure Spaces: Peacekeeping, Power, and Performance in Haiti, Kosovo, and Liberia.* Zed Books. 2013.
[702] Autesserre, Severine. *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacekeeping.* Cambridge University Press. 2010.
[703] Pouligny, Beatrice. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People.* Charles Hurst and Co. 2006.

like the United States and Russia, acting in concert, after all. But the very passivity of peacekeepers in the face of violence can make them appear feckless, as exhibited by countless critiques of their activities.[704] And the inherent weaknesses of the UN as a body hamstrung by great geopolitical rivals, and the constraints placed on peacekeepers as its agents, can make them the easiest group of men with guns on the ground to dominate.

In this way, peacekeepers represent the world as a community lacking in strength and authority to both the local populations they are tasked with protecting and the international observers tracking their missions from outside conflict zones. The sense of confusion and fecklessness attributed to peacekeeping can color the global imaginary with a sense of unviability, suggesting that little can be accomplished because there is no accountability. But it also represents a concrete embodiment of the global imaginary that might also be looked at from the most elevated vantages, thereby harkening back to the tensions that are such an inherent part of the global imaginary.

The role of peacekeepers in the global imaginary cannot be fully comprehended without some recognition of their embodiment of the world spirit. Hegel saw the geist, which can be roughly translated as Spirit, as embodying the consciousness of the world through great men, like Caesar or Napoleon.[705] These great men transformed history by harnessing the spirit of the world to their advantage, and in so doing they spurred the development of the world spirit. In this way, the spirit of the world acted on the world through these men, while the consciousness of the men through which it acted embodied the spirit of the world. Hence, if peacekeepers were embodying the world spirit, they would be transforming history in the name of the world, and they would be

[704] Autesserre, Severine. *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacekeeping.* Cambridge University Press. 2010; Chandler, David. *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2017; Dallaire, Romeo. *Shake Hands With the Devil.* Da Capo Press. 2004; Pouligny, Beatrice. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People.* C. Hurst and Co. 2006; Sitkowski, Andrzej. *UN Peacekeeping: Myth and Reality.* Praeger Security International. 2006; Steidle, Brian and Steidle, Gretchen Wallace. *The Devil Came on Horseback: Bearing Witness to Genocide* After Darfur.Public Affairs. 2007.

[705] Hegel, Georges Wilhelm and Hartman, Robert trans. *Reason in History, pgs. 1-11.* Macmillan/Library of Liberal Arts. 1977.

spurring the development of human consciousness.

Of course, nobody expects peacekeepers to do much more than keep renewed episodes of violence from breaking out in conflict zones these days. Still, the notion of peacekeepers as agents of the world as such highlights their roles as both agents of the international system of states and witnesses to some of the worst crimes against humanity in the world today. As discussed previously, the UN might be said to act as a representative body of humanity. In this way, peacekeepers could be said to have been tasked by humanity with bearing witness to some of its darkest moments of collective violence, thereby rendering them the metaphorical eyes of the world. And they have often been commanded to stand idly by, doing nothing as humanity descends into barbarism, thereby burdening them with responsibility for our own passivity in the face of humanity's greatest failings.

Since few people know what is happening in the conflict zones to which peacekeepers have been sent, and since denial in the face of crimes against humanity is common,[706] the purpose of peacekeeping missions is often poorly understood. Bearing witness to crimes against humanity can be traumatizing, even for those who are watching from a safe distance. The crimes are often so unthinkable that we lack the frameworks needed to put them in context. They are often so vivid that they stick with us for years, even when just described in writing. In this way, to the extent that peacekeepers are the eyes of the world amid its worst episodes of violence, they represent the trauma of the world, especially amid its worst lapses in places like Bosnia and Rwanda. And while analyzing the dynamics of that trauma falls outside the scope of this thesis, an outline of its dimensions can highlight the way our perceptions of peacekeeping pervert our conception of the world.

We could never climb into the collective mind of the whole world as was discussed in the introductory and first chapters, and we lack the surveys to ascertain what the whole of the world is thinking in fine detail. Thus, we can only interpret the nature of the global imaginary, and we can only depict it in glimpses, as we have repeatedly seen in the preceding chapters. So, the

[706] Horesh, Theo. *The Holocausts We All Deny: The Crisis Before the Fascist Inferno, Revised Edition.* Cosmopolis Press. 2022.

precise role of peacekeeping in the global imaginary can only be speculated upon. And assigning it a place in the global imaginary is an exercise in what might be termed *global social theory*, which by the nature of the world must remain abstract, and all the more so given its size and complexity. Yet, peacekeeping is a global institution and one of the primary practices of the international community, and it plays a critical part in our conceptualization of peace in the global imaginary.

Peacekeeping illustrates many of the tensions we have already encountered throughout this thesis. As we have seen, peacekeepers are typically thrown into marginal territories, where there is no clear center of power, which few people understand, where levels of trauma are high, and affected populations are too small to invest much energy in understanding. Many of these places like the Central African Republic and Somalia lack clear centers of power, which is precisely why peacekeepers were called for in the first place. Many like Lebanon and Bosnia have unusual governance structures, tied to keeping the peace, which take time to understand. Many like Timor Leste and Namibia have such small populations that nearby nations are not even likely to know much about them. In fact, except for the Congo and Sudan, the vast majority of states that have hosted peacekeeping missions have either small populations or territories. And almost every single one of them is too lacking in both economic and geopolitical heft to play the kind of role in the international system of states that is likely to lead people to invest significant time and energy in understanding.

Meanwhile, the intentions of peacekeepers tend to be misunderstood by local populations and international observers alike. And they are all the more confusing because of the counterintuitive role of peacekeepers. Placing lightly armed soldiers in between rival armies in order to keep them from fighting can simply appear absurd, according to the conventional norms of many, if not most, societies, after all. Hence, the actual results of peacekeeping can make the global imaginary appear confusing, disordered, fissiparous, and purposeless—even when the importance of the institution is recognized, along with the success of its stated missions.

Meanwhile, the tension between its necessary functions and the inability to carry them out can sharpen the appearance of dysfunctionality in the global imaginary. Peacekeeping is pregnant

with unmet promise, and its frustrated ideals can lead people to retreat from globalism. It highlights the fragmentation of international authority, the failures of international justice, the impotence of international law, and the potential evils to which humanity might at any time resort—even when peacekeeping works. But it is also a performative embodiment of the will of the international order of states, which strengthens our consciousness of its unity, and reminds us of what might be possible with just a little more international cooperation and resources.

Peacekeeping heightens the tensions involved in the unmet promises of the global imaginary, because it can often appear the most noble manifestation of the international order, while at one and the same time representing its greatest failures. In this way, peacekeeping illustrates the dialectical ebb and flow of the global imaginary, which is perpetually being created and destroyed, propped up and torn down. Peacekeeping also focuses our minds on some of the world's greatest sources of collective trauma. And since few people want to look for long at the genocide and crimes against humanity that peacekeepers are tasked with preventing, peacekeeping often becomes associated with them by default. Thus, instead of promising integration and interconnection, the global imaginary comes to be seen as foreshadowing breakdown—and it is much the same with statebuilding, to which we will turn in the next chapter.

Chapter V: Statebuilding

Statebuilding can be broadly defined as the process of constructing the governing institutions of states. Sometimes these institutions evolve over hundreds, if not thousands, of years;[707] sometimes they must be constructed quickly following decolonization or the break-up of larger states. And sometimes they must be reconstructed with the help of outsiders following state collapse and civil war. It is this last case with which the literature on statebuilding has mostly developed and with which this chapter will be primarily concerned. Yet, a grasp of how the governing institutions of more stable states have evolved, and how new states have come into being, can better inform our understanding of why successful statebuilding, following state collapse and civil war, has proved so elusive, and why it is so important to the formation of the global imaginary.

Collapsed states are not just a problem for their citizens. They create a multitude of dangerous spillover effects for neighboring states and the world. These range, among other things, from civil war to pandemic disease, economic collapse to political extremism. The international community has come to view statebuilding in fragile states as a necessary means of preventing the spread of these disorders. Yet, statebuilding is difficult, and its record of failure has suggested to some well-informed observers that it is an almost impossible task.[708] The challenge involves importing effective institutions to populations that may be culturally unprepared for their adoption. The new institutions may not be taken up due to a lack of education and experience

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[707] Fukuyama, Francis. *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2012.

[708] Chandler, David. *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2017; Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019.

with bureaucratic efficiency.[709] They may not be taken up due to the opposition of elites, who use the state as a means of personal enrichment.[710] But perhaps the best explanation may attribute the failures to a mistrust of powerful states and their global institutional proxies.[711]

The end result of over three decades of statebuilding missions in dozens of countries has been mixed, with most missions producing liberal institutions, along with compromises with local elites.[712] Though measurement of its success is confounded by the presence of peacekeeping and humanitarian aid, which make it difficult to distinguish the exact cause of the increased stability, statebuilding has probably been able to prevent a relapse into violence in a strong majority of cases. Statebuilders have also often managed to spur some measure of economic growth, as in the case of Afghanistan, which saw dramatic low quality growth under the economic stewardship of Ashraf Ghani in the mid-2000s.[713] But only a handful of stable democracies have been created, most notably Namibia and Timor Leste, and most of the states that have received such missions remain mired in corruption and inefficiency.

The failure of statebuilding to produce more visible successes has left it subject to immense criticism.[714] Yet, this chapter seeks to explain the more general criticism of the international

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[709] Fukuyama, Francis. *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century.* Profile Books. 2004.

[710] Barnett, Michael and Fang, Songying et al. *Compromised Peacebuilding.* International Studies Quarterly. (2014) 58, 608–620; Krasner, Stephen D. *How to Make Love to a Despot: An Alternative Foreign Policy for the Twenty-First Century.* Liveright. 2020; Radin, Andrew. *Institution Building in Weak States: The Primacy of Local Politics.* Georgetown University Press. 2020.

[711] Pouligny, Beatrice. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People.* C. Hurst and Co. 2005.

[712] Barnett, Michael and Fang, Songying et al. *Compromised Peacebuilding.* International Studies Quarterly. (2014) 58, 608–620.

[713] Ghani, Ashraf. *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World.* Oxford University Press. 2009.

[714] Autesserre, Severine. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention.* Cambridge University Press. 2014; Chandler, David. *Bosnia: Faking Democracy After Dayton.* Pluto Press. 1999; Chandler, David. *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2017; Krasner, Stephen D. *Shared Sovereignty: New*

community, which has resulted from the partial successes and ultimate failures of statebuilding. In short, it seeks to explain how multiple failed statebuilding missions contributed to an image of the international system of states that is strikingly similar to that of a failed state. In identifying itself with the states it sought to reconstruct, this chapter will seek to demonstrate that the international system of states became associated with their failures. And this in turn contributed to a wider sense of dysfunctionality in the global imaginary. In other words, the chapter aims to better understand how seemingly noble efforts to re-establish order on the margins of the international system of states contributed to such a profound sense of global disorder and how this has undermined more solidaristic notions of the global imaginary.

Statebuilding can help us to better understand the global imaginary because it is one of the major activities of the international community. It is also one of the more sophisticated means by which it intervenes in the affairs of states, as we will see later in the chapter. By engaging in the practice of statebuilding, the international community establishes its proficiency by demonstrating its ability to manage institutions. It also constitutes itself through the performative practice of statebuilding, and it embodies its own principles through its repeated practice. In this way, it is reminiscent of Taylor's modern social imaginary, which emerges out of a multitude of practices associated with modernity,[715] only in this case the practices are global. And it is for these reasons, among others, that it has been chosen as a case study.

But whereas peacekeepers tend to be more visible, statebuilding takes place behind the scenes. So, its impact on the global imaginary is less direct. And it is a bureaucratic practice that forecloses the possibility of the kind of Habermasian dialogue, which might establish the normative foundations of law and morality. Statebuilding may aim to build democratic states, but

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Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States. International Security. Fall (2004) Volume 29, Number 2 pp. 85-120; Lake, David A. *The Statebuilder's Dilemma: The Limits of Foreign Intervention.* Cornell University Press. 2016; Paris, Roland. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict.* Cambridge University Press. 2004; Snyder, Jack. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*. W.W. Norton and Company. 2000; Woodward, Susan. *The Ideology of Failed States: Why Intervention Fails.* Cambridge University Press. 2017.

[715] Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries.* Duke University Press. 2003.

it does so by undermining the civil society that is the bedrock of democratic cultures. And while it is an international institution, statebuilding missions tend to be led by western democracies like the United States, which uses statebuilding to establish closer relations with governments that are dependent on it. Thus, frustrations with statebuilding, and those that are projected back onto the global imaginary as a result of its failures, may have less to do with the international community and more to do with the major powers controlling it.

Meanwhile, a substantial portion of those frustrations are tied to a string of paradoxes that leave statebuilding missions forever falling short of their unmet promise—much as we saw with peacekeeping. In this way, statebuilding is at one and the same time too much and too little. It is too much in that it makes the international community the agent of dramatic social changes that it could never begin to inspire. And it is too little in that the transformations it could never begin to inspire are necessary for the kind of revolutions implied in the development of democratic states. In this way, it is too revolutionary and not nearly revolutionary enough; too idealistic and void of the idealism it requires to succeed. If it is not altogether clear what this means at this stage, it should be abundantly clear by the end of this chapter.

The Origins and Evolution of Statebuilding

Contemporary statebuilding is part of a wider package of peacebuilding practices that came to prominence in the early nineties, after the close of the Cold War.[716] When the Cold War ended, Soviet arms and aid dried up, leading ruling elites in Soviet-allied states to seek new means of maintaining power.[717] Meanwhile, communist parties unaffiliated with the Soviet Union suffered a collapse in support. This opened up a multitude of power vacuums in states across the world,[718]

[716] Goetze, Catherine. *The Distinction of Peace: A Social Analysis of Peacebuilding.* University of Michigan Press. 2017.
[717] Bates, Robert H. *When Things Fell Apart, Reprint edition, pgs. 97-127.* Cambridge University Press. 2015.
[718] Fearon, James D. *Civil War and the Current International System.* Daedalus. Fall (2017) Vol. 146, No. 4 pp. 18-32.

and the ensuing power struggles led some states like Rwanda and Yugoslavia to be torn apart by civil wars. It also opened up new opportunities for resolving long standing conflicts in states like Angola, Namibia, Cambodia, El Salvador and Guatemala.

Meanwhile, as shifting geopolitical fortunes brought with them new struggles for power in already weak former colonial states, the international community came to see itself as tasked with holding them together.[719] The sense of responsibility it exhibited heralded a new international order characterized by greater global cooperation, but it also signaled an increasing concern with the breakdown of order on its margins. Suddenly, the international community found itself embroiled in resolving the civil wars that resulted from the changing world order, and it responded with a mixture of tried and true peacebuilding practices and experiments in statebuilding.

States had been created by the international community at least since Greece was carved out of the Ottoman Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century.[720] However, these were ad hoc affairs, which seldom involved more than a few states actively participating in the statebuilding process. What changed in the nineties, in a process mirroring and typically accompanying that of peacekeeping, was that vast international bureaucracies like the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with dozens if not hundreds of member states, began to take on statebuilding missions. These associations involved so many states that oversight came to be seen more as the provenance of international society than any particular group of states.[721] And the involvement of the international community required that the processes of statebuilding be regularized and in many ways institutionalized.

International society came to see itself as tasked with shoring up the internal governance of the international system's weakest and most broken members. The alarm was first sounded around

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[719] Cavalcante, Fernando. *Peacebuilding in the United Nations: Coming Into Life.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2019.
[720] Mazower, Mark. *The Greek Revolution: 1821 and the Making of Modern Europe.* Penguin Press. 2021.
[721] Hale, Thomas and Held, David. *Gridlock: Why Global Cooperation is Failing.* Polity Press. 2013.

the breakdown of order in Somalia, where the state had completely collapsed. But the same concerns were soon being applied to a growing list of states experiencing a range of different challenges.[722] The interventions represented a dramatic shift in the global imaginary. Suddenly, the system of states was not just demarcating borders and laying out the conditions for membership in it. Now, it was actively building its component parts, thereby saddling its reputation with their fate. And the fate of these crumbling entities would in most cases not look good to the citizens of more stable and functional states, if only because they were starting from so little. In the end, this chapter will seek to demonstrate that the world itself would come to be imagined as looking more like the broken states the international community sought to shore up.

There were several structural reasons that contributed to the breakdown of former colonial states.

Many of the states with larger territories, like the Democratic Republic of Congo[723] and the Central African Republic,[724] lacked the resources needed to project power into the hinterlands of the vast territories they were tasked with governing, thereby presenting challenges to maintaining a monopoly on the use of force.[725] Many ethnically and religiously exclusive governments like Sudan left regional and ethnic rivals marginalized, thereby leading them to take up arms in revolt.[726] The breakdown of central states also resulted from a failure to develop economically.[727]

A number of former colonial states failed to bring about the economic development needed for

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[722] Call, Charles T. *The Fallacy of the "Failed State."* Third World Quarterly. (2008) Vol. 29, No. 8 pp 1491–1507; Woodward, Susan L. *The Ideology of Failed States: Why Intervention Fails.* Cambridge University Press. 2017.
[723] Trefon, Theodore. *Congo Masquerade: The Political Culture of Aid Inefficiency and Reform Failure.* Zed Books. 2011.
[724] Lombard, Louisa. *State of Rebellion: Violence and Intervention in the Central African Republic.* Zed Books 2016.
[725] Herbst, Jeffrey. *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control, Second edition.* Princeton University Press. 2014.
[726] Collier, Paul. *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places, pgs. 15-103.* Harper Perennial. 2010.
[727]Bates, Robert H. *When Things Fell Apart, Reprint edition, pgs. 97-128.* Cambridge University Press. 2015.

them to maintain legitimacy, and many were hit especially hard by a drop in commodity prices in the early seventies. Demographic youth bulges, coupled with a lack of jobs, led young people to take up arms in support of the highest bidders in several more states.[728] An explosive combination of severe poverty, coupled with opportunities to exploit rich mineral wealth, in states with weak central governments, led warlords in places like Sierra Leone[729] to build private militias in a bid to capture resources.[730] And chronic disease resulting from subtropical climates and a lack of access to markets hindered development and with it the ability of states to govern effectively.[731]

Since civil wars have a tendency to spread across borders, and civil wars were spreading at an alarming rate, the task of shoring up fragile states was seen as all the more urgent. Yet, statebuilding only gradually came to be viewed as an essential solution after multiple efforts at peacekeeping and international conflict resolution failed.[732] The idea that broken states might be reconstructed in order to prevent relapses into violence would have probably seemed strange to past generations. Over the course of recorded history, the world had witnessed countless imperial land grabs and an endless stream of empires whose possessions were governed by local elites. It had also seen dozens of states created in the wake of collapsing empires, like those of the French, British, Spanish, Russian, Ottoman, Portuguese, Japanese, and Austro-Hungarians in the twentieth century. But the statebuilding that took off in the nineties was distinctive, and it was arguably premised on shakier foundations.

The question of what makes a state a failure depends upon how the state is defined.[733] It also

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[728] Ibid.

[729] Campbell, Greg. *Blood Diamonds: Tracing the Path of the World's Most Deadly Stones.* Basic Books. 2004.

[730] Collier, Paul. *The Plundered Planet: Why We Must—And How We Can—Manage Nature for Global Prosperity.* Oxford University Press. 2011.

[731] Sachs, Jeffrey. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time, pgs. 5-25 and 51-73.* Penguin Books. 2006.

[732] Boutros Boutros-Gali. *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping.* Cambridge University Press. 2009.

[733] Woodward, Susan L. *The Ideology of Failed States: Why Intervention Fails.* Cambridge University Press. 2017.

depends upon the competences that states are expected to exhibit. In many ways, it is the administratively efficient and stable state that is the historical anomaly.[734] While commentary on state failure tends to depend upon the Fragile States Index, numerous indices have been created to measure the failure of states to live up to international expectations, and the criteria they have used have often been contradictory.[735] The index's most fragile states include authoritarian ones like North Korea, others that have collapsed like Somalia, and those at war like Ukraine.[736] Given the license that identifying a state as failed provides to countries seeking to remake them in their own images, previous insiders to statebuilding missions have questioned the ideological purposes to which the process of identifying failed states have been put. [737] What most of the critics appear to be overlooking is how living on an increasingly globalized planet leads to increasing expectations about the proficiency of states in previously overlooked parts of the world. In short, statebuilding might be seen as necessary because the spillover effects of state collapse have been intensified by increasing levels of global interconnection.

The dozens of statebuilding missions that took place after the Cold War made it possible to compare and contrast them, and to isolate what worked and what didn't.[738] And this led in turn to an evolutionary process of learning,[739] which spurred the creation of multiple organizations dedicated to statebuilding.[740] It also generated a statebuilding industry composed of professional bureaucrats who worked in a range of states, and these contributed to a growing international

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[734] Saeed, Raza. *The Ubiquity of State Fragility: Fault Lines in the Categorization of Conceptualization of Failed and Fragile States.* Social & Legal Studies. (2020) Vol. 29(6) 767–789.

[735] Woodward, Susan L. *The Ideology of Failed States: Why Intervention Fails, pgs. 11-51.* Cambridge University Press. 2017.

[736] Call, Charles T. *The Fallacy of the "Failed State."* Third World Quarterly. (2008) Vol. 29, No. 8 pp 1491–1507.

[737] Woodward, Susan L. *The Ideology of Failed States: Why Intervention Fails, pgs. 126-164.* Cambridge University Press. 2017.

[738] Dobbins, James and Jones, Seth G. *The UN's Role in Nation Building: From the Congo to Iraq.* RAND Corporation. 2005; Paris, Roland. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict.* Cambridge University Press. 2004.

[739] Howard, Lisa Morje. *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars.* Cambridge University Press. 2007.

[740] Cavalcante, Fernando. *Peacebuilding in the United Nations: Coming Into Life.* Palgrave Macmillan 2019.

society. The statebuilders were also part of a wider humanitarian aid industry, which generated its own norms and subculture as part of a growing world society.[741]

The subculture that developed was international in composition, but it was more than the sum of its cultural parts, and it was more than an occupational group. Rather, it came to consist of its own rituals and practices and ways of coping.[742] It often transformed local economies and altered the visual landscapes of the places where it set up camp.[743] And it tended to constitute a significant imposition on host populations,[744] which looked skeptically upon the motives of its representatives.[745] In this way, statebuilding missions, which were largely inspired by the emergence of a new global imaginary, contributed to its development by generating a new international subculture.[746] But it also provided the international community multiple stages upon which it might display its capacities, and as we will see this had the effect of making it appear both more capable and more of a failure than it actually was in reality.

Statebuilding has gone through several phases since the early nineties.[747] The first stage emphasized peacekeeping and conflict resolution with only a marginal role for statebuilding. When peacekeeping missions failed to realize their expected results, peacebuilders turned to statebuilding to help stabilize states recovering from civil wars. The late nineties saw a shift to

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[741] Autesserre, Severine. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention.* Cambridge University Press. 2014.
[742] Ibid.
[743] Smirl, Lisa. *Spaces of Aid: How Cars, Compounds, and Hotels Shape Humanitarianism.* Zed Books. 2005.
[744] Higate, Paul. *Insecure Spaces: Peacekeeping, Power, and Performance in Haiti, Kosovo, and Liberia.* Zed Books. 2009.
[745] Pouligny, Beatrice. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People.* C. Hurst and Co. 2005.
[746] Autesserre, Severine. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention*. Cambridge University Press. 2014.
[747] Chandler, David. *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2017.

democratization[748] and an emphasis on more investment.[749] When better funded missions foundered, statebuilders turned to supporting local ownership of statebuilding.[750] Sometimes this meant the grassroots empowerment of local participants,[751] sometimes the integration of warlords and tribes into the governance process, as the Bush administration tried in Afghanistan,[752] and more lately to compromises with local elites.[753]

When local ownership failed to produce the expected results, many turned to limiting the aims of statebuilders. Andrew Radin observed that statebuilding projects that did not encounter resistance among local elites tended to succeed, while those that did tended to fail. Thus, he counseled only taking on projects that were unlikely to encounter elite resistance.[754] Stephen Krasner recommended limiting the aims of statebuilders to "good enough governance" that dispensed with the idea of democratization in favor of the rule of law and improved services.[755] Overlooking the pressing circumstances that led the international community to take up statebuilding in the first place, and anchoring his views around the unusual cases of Iraq and Afghanistan, John Mearsheimer treated the whole endeavor as a delusional attempt to impose liberalism on the world's most marginal states.[756]

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[748] Paris, Roland. *Saving Liberal Peacebuilding.* Review of International Studies (2010), 36, 337–365.
[749] Dobbins, James and Jones, Seth G. *The UN's Role in Nation Building: From the Congo to Iraq.* RAND Corporation. 2005.
[750] Autesserre, Severine. *The Frontlines of Peace: An Insider's Guide to Changing the World.* Oxford University Press. 2021.
[751] United Nations Development Program. *Securing the Local Peace.* United Nations. 2012.
[752] Mukhopadhyay, Dipali. *Warlords, Strongman Governors, and the State in Afghanistan.* Cambridge University Press. 2016.
[753] Barnett, Michael and Fang, Songying et al. *Compromised Peacebuilding.* International Studies Quarterly (2014) 58, 608–620.
[754] Radin, Andrew. *Institution Building in Weak States: The Primacy of Local Politics.* Georgetown University Press. 2020.
[755] Krasner, Stephen D. *How to Make Love to a Despot: An Alternative Foreign Policy for the Twenty-First Century.* Liveright. 2020.
[756] Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019.

The problem was that while cases of statebuilding in places like Iraq and Afghanistan might be written off as the imperial efforts of a single major state to project power abroad, this more ideological process of trying to make the world in the image of western democracies could be witnessed even in relatively selfless statebuilding missions in places like Bosnia. That might not have negated the interest the international community had in authorizing these missions, but it complicated support for them and led to considerable skepticism over their intentions. It also highlighted the way in which statebuilding was tied to an ideologically liberal project that could quickly find itself at odds with a more cosmopolitan global order. Statebuilding missions were not always about statebuilding, and that highlighted the fact that the "global" institutions we are examining were often the playthings of global hegemons.

Following several partial successes, along with a number of relapses into violence, statebuilding increasingly came to be viewed as chimerical, a mythologized fantasy of institutional transferal that was doomed to failure.[757] While state builders could point with some justification to the failure of the international community to invest the resources needed to make their missions a success,[758] even the most well funded missions like those in Bosnia and Afghanistan produced only mixed results.[759] Meanwhile, few heard about the most successful endeavors in places like Namibia and East Timor, which produced full democracies, for once these states stabilized, they were no longer newsworthy.

In this way, statebuilding came to be associated with failure in the global imaginary, and it came to tinge it with a sense of fissiparous instability. Statebuilding's difficulties suggested that one more global institution was simply dysfunctional, but it also brought clear images of ruin to the global imaginary. People who could not possibly follow what was happening in places like El Salvador and Guatemala had a vague sense the international community was involved in them, and they knew all too well that their names were associated with catastrophes, which would often

[757] Chandler, David. *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1997-2017.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2017.
[758] Doyle, Michael W. and Sambanis, Nicholas. *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations.* Princeton University Press. 2011.
[759] Chandler, David. *Bosnia: Faking Democracy After Dayton.* Pluto Press. 1999; Rubin, Barnett R. *Afghanistan: What Everyone Needs to Know.* Oxford University Press. 2020.

plague them long after the international community had left. In this way, the global imaginary came to be seen in the same light as the failing states that the international community sought to prop up, as if it was the international system of states that had actually destroyed its most vulnerable members. For once the international community took responsibility for holding the broken states together, it made itself responsible for all that went wrong in them. Meanwhile, the failed states to which it brought significant, though insufficient, improvements began to be used as an excuse for more general international inaction, and with it a turn to nationalism.[760]

Global institutions both arise out of and foster the growth of the global imaginary. Thus, it is quite possible that the perception of failure stemmed from a more general retreat from globalism that had already been set in motion prior to the advent of the international community's interest in statebuilding. The heyday of globalization in the nineties was often characterized as an era marked by rising ethnonationalism, after all. And statebuilding missions commonly failed due to a lack of resources whose flow was stymied precisely due to skepticism around big global projects.[761] Hence, the same paradox that we have encountered throughout this thesis, in which the embrace of globalism comes coupled with a retreat from it, may simply be an enduring feature of the global imaginary, much as Isaiah Berlin saw romanticism as an enduring feature of modernity.[762]

What's puzzling is the lofty expectations that would lead to such dashed hopes.

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[760] Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019.
[761] Dobbins, James and Jones, Seth G. et al. *The Beginner's Guide to Nation Building.* Rand Corporation. 2007.
[762] Berlin, Isaiah. *The Roots of Romanticism.* Princeton University Press. 1999.

Why Statebuilding Works

Contemporary statebuilding typically involves importing the institutions of developed democracies into weak or broken states.[763] And it involves filling government agencies with advisors, who help train local staff in efficient administration.[764] The advisors aim to improve institutional capacity and efficiency, and they often seek to root out nepotism, corruption, and neopatrimonialism, a system in which power is used to bestow favors in exchange for support.[765] In some cases, like those of East Timor and Kosovo, this can mean practically administering the state. Yet, it usually involves helping build a modern professionalized military, training police and judges, finance ministers and government agency heads, in the best institutional practices of developed democracies.[766]

The process of exporting western political institutions, whether by settlers or colonial administrators, dates back to the Roman Empire. It therefore predates the advent of modern democracy by a couple of thousand years.[767] Statebuilding was also an enduring feature of western colonialism, whose rule through tribal leaders likely plays some part in state failure today.[768] So, while statebuilding has come to be associated with democratization, it is far more integral to the development of states more generally. Political institutions have been undergoing a global process of development over several thousand years, which has weeded out some of the

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[763] Fukuyama, Francis. *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century.* Profile Books. 2004.
[764] Chandler, David. *Bosnia: Faking Democracy After Dayton.* Pluto Press. 1999; Dobbins, James and Jones, Seth G. *The Beginner's Guide to Nation Building, pgs. 135-160.* RAND Corporation. 2007.
[765] Radin, Andrew. *Institution Building in Weak States: The Primacy of Local Politics.* Georgetown University Press. 2020.
[766] Dobbins, James and Jones, Seth G. *The Beginner's Guide to Nation Building.* RAND Corporation. 2007.
[767] Badie, Bertrand. *The Imported State: The Westernization of the Political Order, pgs. 1-4.* Stanford University Press. 2000.
[768] Mambdani, Mahmood. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism.* Princeton University Press. 1996.

most ineffective institutions.[769] Meanwhile, the best ideas of humanity have tended to be diffused across cultures.[770]

The idea that institutions cannot be transplanted overlooks the fact that institutions have always been transplanted. The only question lies in the conditions that are necessary for them to be successfully taken up. Transplanted institutions are more likely to stick when they do not encounter elite resistance, and elites are often responsive to popular pressure. So, for new institutions to be taken up, they need to either tiptoe around elite interests, or they need to enjoy enough popular support for their acceptance to be in the interests of elites.[771] Yet, institutions as we have seen don't simply arise from following the rules and procedures of a sort of nation builder's manual, though these exist and appear quite useful.[772] Rather, they consist of a complex amalgam of rules and norms,[773] ideas and habits.[774] They also need to be perceived as valuable to the people participating in them.[775] In this way, adopting new political institutions is far more challenging than a narrow emphasis on creating the right laws and training the right administrators might suggest—and it may be best measured in generations.[776]

National political institutions as we have seen are shaped by the international system of states.[777] The current international order requires states to fulfill several criteria in order to attain

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[769] Fukuyama, Francis. *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2012.
[770] Wright, Robert. *Non-Zero: The Logic of Human Destiny.* Pantheon. 1999.
[771] Radin, Andrew. *Institution Building in Weak States: The Primacy of Local Politics.* Georgetown University Press. 2020.
[772] Fukuyama, Francis. *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century.* Profile Books. 2004.
[773] North, Douglass C. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance, pgs. 3-10.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.
[774] Scott, Richard W. *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities,* Fourth edition. Sage Publications. 2013.
[775] Huntington, Samuel P. *Political Order in Changing Societies, pgs. 25-37.* Yale University Press. 1968.
[776] Acemoglu, Daren and Robinson, James A. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty.* Currency. 2012.
[777] Wight, Martin. *Systems of States.* Leicester University Press. 1977.

recognition, including but not limited to maintaining clearly demarcated borders, governed by a single entity, with a recognizable head of state, overseeing a distinct citizen body.[778] It also pressures states to maintain baseline normative standards of human rights and the rule of law.[779] States as we have seen are always shaped by the international systems of which they are a part,[780] and each system of states encourages the adoption of its own unique set of political institutions.[781] Thus, the external shaping of states precedes statebuilding missions, and it is integral to the international system of states, which is only equipped to deal with particular forms of political institutions. In this way, statebuilding is best seen as a more intensive instantiation of the more general process wherein the international system of states shapes the institutions of its members.

The global spread of political institutions and the tendency of the international system to shape states suggest that transplanting political institutions has been quite common throughout history. The almost uniform adoption by every state in the world of parliaments and heads of states, central banks and defense ministers, treasuries and citizenship, also suggests that successful political institutions are commonly transferred from one culture to another. Meanwhile, reconstructing collapsed states has become essential to the stability of the international system and to preventing the global spread of a wide array of social harms. We will explore the challenges that make successful statebuilding difficult to achieve over the course of the next two subsections. Yet, the challenges do not change the fact that statebuilding is both necessary and possible.

Statebuilding is essential to peacebuilding because unstable states are prone to civil war, and

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[778] Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics, pgs. 193-245.* Cambridge University Press. 1999.
[779] Smit, Christian-Reus. *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations.* Princeton University Press. 2009.
[780] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* Red Globe Press. 1977.
[781] Watson, Adam. *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis, Second edition.* Routledge. 2009.

states that have just experienced a civil war are prone to relapsing back into it.[782] They risk slipping back into civil war because militias are often still not entirely demobilized. Meanwhile, fresh traumas decrease social trust, thereby hindering a return to normal. And fresh resentments can often spark renewed fighting. Thus, by building stronger and more effective states, peacebuilders can prevent further outbreaks of violence by facilitating a faster return to normal. They can also strengthen the rule of law, thereby increasing the price that might be paid for a return to fighting. Effective states also tend to produce more economic development, and prosperous states are less likely to collapse into civil war.[783] So, building stronger and more effective states helps prevent outbreaks of violence by returning to normal, establishing the rule of law, and increasing economic development.

Neighboring states have an interest in reconstructing collapsed states because the effects of civil war and state collapse tend to spill across borders. Fighting is likely to spread across borders because ethnic militias tend to recruit troops from ethnic kin in foreign states.[784] They also seek refuge outside of state borders where they cannot be reached by government troops. When the fighting crosses borders, food shortages often do as well, for the fighting can disrupt harvests and food distribution networks. Refugees are also likely to cross borders, for it is safer in neighboring states.[785] This can disrupt labor markets, and it can strain social structures, which often triggers a backlash against immigrants, and a retreat into nationalism. The economic troubles of collapsed states tend to impact the economies of neighboring states, which often share infrastructure and trade as well. Hence, to the extent that states can be reconstructed, neighboring states will tend to benefit from it.

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[782] Collier, Paul and Hoeffle, Anker et al. *Post-Conflict Risks.* Center for the Study of African Economies, Department of Economics, University of Oxford. 2006; Walter, Barbara. *Does Conflict Beget Conflict? Explaining Recurring Civil War.* Journal of Peace Research. (2004) Vol.41, No.3, pp.371–88.

[783] Collier, Paul. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It.* Oxford University Press. 2007.

[784] Bates, Robert H. *When Things Fell Apart.* Cambridge University Press. 2008.

[785] Betts, Alexander and Collier, Paul. *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World.* Oxford University Press. 2017.

Distant states also have an interest in statebuilding because collapsed states tend to produce a multitude of dangerous global spillover effects. Farmers desperate to earn a living amid disrupted markets and missed harvests often turn to growing high value drugs, and militias seeking to finance their fighting often turn to the drug trade, even when they are initially opposed to it, as happened with the Taliban in Afghanistan.[786] They also often turn to piracy and ransoming hostages, as happened in Somalia,[787] and kidnapping women and girls for the sex trade, as Isis did in Iraq and Nigeria.[788] Their criminality is facilitated by the disappearance of the rule of law, and it is encouraged by their need for weapons.[789] Thus, civilians with no relationship to the militias often opportunistically turn to these dangerous trades as well. In this way, collapsed states tend to become lawless zones where global challenges proliferate.

Meanwhile, as healthcare systems collapse, and desperate populations take up dangerous practices tied to their survival, pandemic diseases can break out.[790] Pandemics break out among populations whose immunity has been weakened by malnutrition, and they fester in cities lacking adequate water treatment and sewage facilities. They can also spread slowly in populations lacking access to basic healthcare. This can make collapsed states breeding grounds for global pandemics like HIV and Ebola,[791] which rage uncontrolled due to a lack of resources and expertise. Hence, it is quite possible that state failure will be the primary factor in the emergence of a major pandemic disease like Covid-19, which disrupts the international economy and kills tens of millions of people at some point in the future.

As social systems fragment, desperate youths often turn to extremism, which promises order and a sense of meaning. This can make collapsed states a breeding ground for dangerous extremist

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[786] Rashid, Ahmed. *Taliban: Power of Militant Islam in Afghanistan and Beyond, pgs. 117-127.* Yale University Press. 2022.
[787] Bahadur, Jay. *The Pirates of Somalia: Inside Their Hidden World.* Harper Collins. 2011.
[788] Bean, Dr. Amy L. *The Last Yezidi Genocide.* Adinolfi Books. 2019.
[789] Collier, Paul. *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places.* Harper Perennial. 2006.
[790] Farmer, Paul. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor.* University of California Press. 2003.
[791] Farmer, Paul. *Fevers, Feuds, and Diamonds: Ebola and the Ravages of History.* Picador Press. 2021.

movements, whose terrorism can disrupt the international order. For instance, Al Qaeda contributed to a two decade long global crisis, which led the world's most powerful state into at least two dangerous and costly wars. And Isis built a multinational army, which destabilized several states and helped normalize crimes against humanity, thereby contributing to a more brutal and frightful global imaginary.[792] The problem was not simply that they made the world more dangerous. Rather, they contributed to an image of danger in the world out of all proportion with the actual dangers, thereby making the world itself appear a far more dangerous place.

In summary, statebuilding promises to prevent a multitude of evils, but it also promises to bring a sense of order to the global imaginary. The evils impact the citizens of collapsed states, but they also spread to neighboring states, and many come to plague the world, sometimes quite literally. Insofar as they contribute to the conception of a more dangerous world, the evils generated by failed states can lead to a retreat from globalism wherein people come to see it as an unviable option. Thus, there is a direct link between state failure, frustration with the global imaginary, and the breakdown of global collective action.

In this way, the residents of broken states can benefit from statebuilding, but so can those of neighboring and distant states, along with the members of world society. Statebuilding can also help stabilize the international system of states by bringing order to each of its members. And in so doing, it can contribute to a greater sense of order in the global imaginary. The next two subsections will explore the challenges involved in importing political institutions. Yet, even marginal improvements in the provision of services and the basic rule of law can make sizable impacts on human well-being.[793] Unfortunately, statebuilding presents a palaver of challenges that are difficult to maneuver and often impossible to fully overcome.

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[792] Horesh, Theo. *The Holocausts We All Deny: The Crisis Before the Fascist Inferno, Revised edition, pgs. 1-9.* Cosmopolis Press. 2022.

[793] Krasner, Stephen D. *How to Make Love to a Despot: An Alternative Foreign Policy for the Twenty-First Century.* Liveright. 2020.

Why Statebuilding is Imagined to Fail

State builders are plagued by a multitude of paradoxes and double binds.

If they are to gain international support, the institutions they create need to be seen as legitimate, and for that to occur they need to be democratic. Few states would want to selflessly contribute to building an autocracy, because they would become associated with the human rights abuses that are typically carried out as autocrats consolidate their rule. And the democracies that tend to contribute the most to statebuilding missions are even less likely to want to support an autocrat, because they are unlikely to make good allies. Meanwhile, statebuilding missions require buy-in from local populations if they are to be seen as legitimate,[794] and that is unlikely to happen if statebuilders are supporting an autocrat. There are just too many opportunities to buy off autocrats, in order to exert control over their governments, for the beneficiaries of statebuilding missions to feel comfortable with them receiving foreign support. Yet, young democracies can be highly unstable and prone to war,[795] and the primary task of state builders is that of stabilizing states.[796] Hence, statebuilders are challenged with the paradox of crafting stable democratic institutions whose very nature risks political destabilization.[797]

Democratization is generally popular among statebuilders because stable democracies rarely go

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[794] United Nations Development Program. *Securing the Social Peace.* United Nations. 2012; Zartman, Jonathan. *Negotiation, Exclusion, and Durable Peace: Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Tajikistan.* International Negotiation. (2008) 13, 55–72.

[795] Snyder, Jack. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2000.

[796] Barnett, Michael and Fang, Songying et al. *Compromised Peacebuilding.* International Studies Quarterly (2014) 58, 608–620; Fukuyama, Francis. *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century.* Profile Books. 2004; Krasner, Stephen D. *How to Make Love to a Despot: An Alternative Foreign Policy for the Twenty-First Century*. Liveright. 2020; Radin, Andrew. *Institution Building in Weak States: The Primacy of Local Politics.* Georgetown University Press. 2020.

[797] Paris, Roland. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict.* Cambridge University Press. 2004; Snyder, Jack. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2000.

to war together.[798] They also tend to be cooperative members of international institutions.[799] And bringing freedom and voice to people can be inspiring, because it can dramatically enhance their most basic human capabilities and freedoms.[800] Some studies also suggest that democracy is associated with higher rates of economic growth in states that are not heavily reliant on oil.[801] Unfortunately, stable democracies tend to emerge over the course of generations, as states integrate long standing inclusive social institutions, and some states continually slip back into more authoritarian forms of government.[802] If statebuilders are to win the support of former warring parties, they need to create inclusive states.[803] Yet, former warring parties are often loath to work together. So, they commonly subvert the efforts of statebuilders in a bid to capture power.[804] Electoral competition often turns violent as a result. Thus, the effort to shift battlefield competition to ballot boxes can backfire when political parties turn to bullets instead.[805]

Statebuilding missions undertaken by singular powers like the United States are confronted by a

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[798] Doyle, Michael W. *Liberal Peace: Essays, pgs. 13-61.* Routledge. 2011; Russett, Bruce K. *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World.* Princeton University Press. 1993

[799] Ikenberry, John G. *A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crisis of Global Order.* Yale University Press. 2020.

[800] Nussbaum, Martha C. *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach.* Harvard University Press. 2013; Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom.* Anchor. 2000.

[801] Collier, Paul. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It, pgs. 53-63.* Oxford University Press. 2008; Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Penguin Press. 2006.

[802] Acemoglu, Daren and Robinson, James A. *The Narrow Corridor: How Nations Struggle for Liberty.* Penguin Books. 2020.

[803] Barnett, Michael. *Building a Republican Peace: Stabilizing States After War.* International Security. Spring (2006) Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 87-112.

[804] Barnett, Michael and Fang, Songying et al. *Compromised Peacebuilding.* International Studies Quarterly (2014) 58, 608–620; Collier, Paul. *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places.* Harper Perennial. 2006; Jarstad, Anna K and Sisk, Timothy D eds. *From War to Democracy: The Dilemmas of Peacebuilding.* Cambridge University Press. 2008.

[805] Snyder, Jack. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2000.

further dilemma observed by David Lake.[806] They want to create democracies, but doing so risks bringing to power leaders who may be hostile to their interests. Meanwhile, they often lie to themselves about the liberal intentions of what are clearly autocrats. Hence, the United States has a long history of installing illiberal leaders that it markets as liberal. Holding elections early on also risks bringing leaders to power who might try to force the statebuilders to leave before their work is complete.[807] Thus, whenever a single power, or a small group of powers with common interests, undertakes a statebuilding mission, there is a risk they will undermine the development of democratic institutions in order to protect their own interests. Yet, a comparable dilemma is inherent to the process of democratization itself and presents further troubles for statebuilders.

Statebuilders may wish to establish democratic states, but taking it upon themselves to establish the constitutional conventions that will bring them into being is not democratic. Rather, it is a paternalistic act of conservatorship. Even a founding act initiated by a local actor is undemocratic, because it involves an unrepresentative individual or group initiating a new state—or else the process of initiating the state, or the process that leads to the process, etc. In this way, the quest for a democratic founding act sets us on an infinite regress that always ends with an undemocratic decision to set the process in motion.[808] A recognition of this fact may let statebuilders off the hook for not always acting democratically, but it also places them in a visibly paternalistic position. Unlike the founding fathers of nations, whose descendants offset their paternalism by highlighting their best features,[809] statebuilders enjoy no such favorable veiling. Far from it, they must often overcome substantial mistrust and ressentiment tied to the powers they wield.

Democratic transitions are not always successful. They are typically beset by social turmoil.

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[806] Lake, David A. *Statebuilder's Dilemma: On the Limits of Foreign Intervention.* Cornell University Press. 2016.
[807] Paris, Roland. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict.* Cambridge University Press. 2004.
[808] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques and Cole, G.D.H trans. *The Social Contract, pgs. 40-43.* BN Publishing. 2007.
[809] Wingo, Ajume H. *Veil Politics in Liberal Democratic States.* Cambridge University Press. 2003.

Even when they succeed without a glitch, the constitutions that are adopted in the early stages of a state have profound ramifications for future generations. And those who initiate them typically play a major role in the shape they take. So, even when statebuilders are initiating democratic transitions, the arbitrary power exercised by these founders can be significant. Meanwhile, since societies that have not developed democratic institutions are often more receptive to authoritarian parties, a good constitution is rarely enough to assure lasting democratic institutions. Rather, statebuilders must intervene repeatedly to cultivate democratic leaders and parties who will help stabilize their states' fledgling institutions. Establishing government bureaus also requires countless normative decisions, which ultimately fall in the laps of international statebuilders.[810] Hence, statebuilders must often use undemocratic means to establish democratic states, and they must do so repeatedly, thereby exposing themselves to charges of hypocrisy, and worse neocolonialism.[811]

Statebuilders are confronted by a further paradox in establishing the organs of state. If they are to build effective states, they need to create rational bureaucracies.[812] Yet, rational bureaucracies are the byproduct of a modernization process that can take generations to complete.[813] It requires educated populations that are accustomed to acting according to rational plans, and it requires subordinating charismatic leaders to the rule of law.[814] Meanwhile, the process of statebuilding can take several years if it is to be effective.[815] Yet, restive populations are seldom willing to wait that long. Hence, local populations often turn against their benefactors, seeing in them a new set

[810] Chandler, David. *Bosnia: Faking Democracy After Dayton.* Pluto Press. 1999.
[811] Chandler, David. *Empire in Denial: The Politics of Statebuilding.* Pluto Press. 2006.
[812] Fukuyama, Francis. *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century.* Profile Books. 2004; Fukuyama, Francis. *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy*. Profile Books. 2015.
[813] Weber, Max and Tribe, Keith. *Economy and Society: A New Translation, pgs. 338-448.* Harvard University Press. 2019.
[814] Ibid. *, pgs. 338-448*
[815] Paris, Roland. *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict.* Cambridge University Press. 2004.

of colonial masters,[816] which is often an accurate characterization, while in other cases one can only guess at their actual motives. In any case, it is the undemocratic means by which they establish democratic institutions that local populations find most frustrating.

Similarly, if they are to build effective institutions, the institutions typically need to be imported from the outside.[817] Yet, institutions are always normative and cultural, so reconstructing states can require undoing thousands of years of deeply ingrained norms and cultural habits.[818] Thus, it is often only the legal shell of institutions that can be transplanted in the short term, and this means that the institutions statebuilders construct are all too often poorly understood and lacking in legitimacy. They are also easy for elites to manipulate.[819] Yet, the failure of statebuilders to import the best institutional practices at their disposal would be negligent, and it would likely provoke a backlash and charges of corruption. This places statebuilders in an inescapable double bind, which is bound to bring about both local and global frustrations.

The process of transforming the state is also revolutionary, as are the social and economic changes accompanying it. That is because the state is like a master switch which can be used to alter virtually every social and economic institution operative within the bounds of its authority. Statebuilders can dramatically alter the shape of the family and markets and tribal authority, for instance. They can transform the nature of gender roles through regulating domestic abuse and liberalizing divorce. And, through the educational systems they construct, they can transform the very way in which people think and speak and conceive of their identities. Yet, statebuilders are typically bureaucrats, who see themselves as implementing the best institutional practices of the

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[816] Autesserre, Severine. *The Crisis of Peacekeeping: Why the UN Can't End Wars.* Foreign Affairs. January-February (2019) Vol. 98 no.1; Pouligny, Beatrice. *Peace Operations Seen from Below: UN Missions and Local People*. Charles Hurst and Co. 2006.

[817] Fukuyama, Francis. *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century.* Profile Books. 2004.

[818] Acemoglu, Daren and Robinson, James A. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty.* Profile Books. 2013.

[819] Barnett, Michael and Fang, Songying et al. *Compromised Peacebuilding.* International Studies Quarterly (2014) 58, 608–620.

international community.[820] They are not political philosophers, and they seldom have much contact with actual revolutionaries.

In this way, statebuilders take on tasks for which they are ill suited and unleash forces they are unlikely to comprehend. Statebuilders are ultimately the agents of international organizations seeking to maintain the morally minimalist standards of human rights and the rule of law, who just happen to be the revolutionary founders of foreign states. This can make their behavior suspicious in the eyes of their local beneficiaries, who tend to be accustomed to rapacious political elites using the state as a means of personal enrichment and foreign states exploiting their populations and resources. It is also easy for statebuilders to deny the revolutionary nature of their roles, acting like mere technocrats as they turn societies upside down.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for statebuilders lies in the fact that they are intervening in the affairs of peoples in the midst of major historical crises, which involve transformations in their core national identities. In examining seven states that have passed through such crises, Jared Diamond demonstrates that they are able to overcome them by facing the reality of their situations, honestly appraising their prospects, formulating a realistic plan to overcome their challenges, and using the unique strengths of their cultures to their advantage.[821] This is how a people like the Finns was able to preserve their democratic institutions while remaining a Soviet satellite.[822] And it is how the Germans reconstructed their national identity following the rise of Nazism and the consequent Allied bombings that leveled most of their major cities.[823]

Yet, even the most radically transformational advocates of statebuilding are not suggesting that statebuilders could spur anything like this kind of national self-reflection. Transforming societies is simply not a part of their job descriptions. Still, Diamond's studies suggest it is precisely what is most needed for their work to succeed. Is it possible that statebuilders are nevertheless the

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[820] Dobbins, James and Jones, Seth G. *The Beginner's Guide to Nation Building.* RAND Corporation. 2007; *Fukuyama, Francis. State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century.* Profile Books. 2004.
[821] Diamond, Jared. *Upheaval: How Nations Cope Crisis and Change.* Bloomberg 2020.
[822] Ibid. pgs. 57-100.
[823] Ibid. pgs. 214-245.

unwitting agents of history? Perhaps they embody a transformational world spirit that would spur development through their deeper contact with less developed societies, as we contemplated peacekeepers doing in the last chapter? Maybe the development they are seeking involves placing these states in a sort of "golden straightjacket," a set of institutions that will inevitably lead to their development, as Thomas Friedman famously recommended?[824]

It might be possible but it is hard to imagine how we would ever know for sure. And there are arguably no examples of statebuilding having had this kind of impact, outside of Japan and Germany following the Second World War,[825] and these were unusual cases insofar as they already possessed substantially developed bureaucracies.[826] Even America's Reconstruction of the Deep South, when it sought to transform its social and political institutions after the Civil War, is generally recognized to have failed.[827]

Perhaps the brief era of statebuilding witnessed over the course of the last few decades was just too short a period to carry out the kind of longitudinal studies that would demonstrate its effectiveness, and the impact of statebuilding will come to be seen by future generations as having been far more effective than we believe today. Daren Acemoglu and James Robinson demonstrate that nations which have experienced even a little democracy in previous historical periods are more likely to become stable democracies today, after all.[828] Yet, even if this turned out to be the case, it would still fail to explain the unmet promise of statebuilding in the present.

The problem with statebuilding is that, while it might bring about profound changes over the

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[824] Friedman, Thomas. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization, pgs. 101-112.* Macmillan USA. 2012.
[825] Dower, John W. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Aftermath of World War II.* Penguin 2000; Jahner, Harold and Whiteside, Shaun trans. *Aftermath: Life in the Fallout of the Third Reich.* WH Allen. 2022.
[826] Fukuyama, Francis. *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century, pgs. 82-91.* Cornell University Press. 2004.
[827] Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877. Updated Edition.* Harper Perennial Modern Classics. 2014.
[828] Acemoglu, Daren and Robinson, James A. *The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty.* Penguin Press. 2019.

course of generations, it is being implemented in order to stabilize societies in the present. Hence, its many paradoxes and challenges have tended to leave people frustrated with its end results, and this is likely to leave them frustrated with the global community from which their mandates arise. If statebuilding missions are to be effective, they must be well funded and staffed; and to be well funded and staffed, they need to make big promises. But statebuilding missions tend to be hamstrung by an array of inescapable conditions, exhaustively outlined in this subsection. So, they tend to be viewed as failures, even when they help bring an end to violence, along with greater economic growth and some measure of democratic accountability that they intended to produce.

Statebuilding missions are commonly seen as failures by their local beneficiaries, but also by observers from across the world, and perhaps most poignantly by many of their biggest supporters in think tanks and academia. Thus, while statebuilding may help sustain a sense of order in the world by bringing better governance to the most disordered regions of it, it also brings a sense of disorder to the global community by shackling it to the fates of the most disorderly states. Yet, statebuilding has become a core component of the current international order, because it has become an integral component in sustaining the current system of states.

Statebuilding in the Global Imaginary

Statebuilding enters the global imaginary as the promise of a stabilizing institution aimed at helping restore order to the world's most broken places. It is conceived as a bureaucratic set of practices aimed at saving states, and in this way enters our conception of the world as a subordinate component of the international system of states. In short, we imagine statebuilding to be reconstructing governing institutions that broke down in this order. There may never have been a functioning state in the places where statebuilders have been sent, and the conditions necessary for the emergence of a functioning state might not be present. Yet, the language of statebuilding is replete with references to restoration, and it is laden with references to bringing stability and order.

The problem lies in the fact that the order that statebuilding purports to be restoring is internal to the states that it is reconstructing. And as we saw in the first chapter on social imaginaries, the order that exists in any given society is the result of a dialogical process in which the experiences of individuals are communicated to one another and come into sync.[829] This can be as subtle as adjusting a conversation to the body language of its participants,[830] and as grandiose as forging a democratic nation, replete with its rich array of social norms and legal principles, out of a centuries long process of communicative reason.[831] Institutions like money and banks and corporations come to feel like natural features of the social landscape not simply as a consequence of the rules governing their use. Rather, they are stabilized through a process that makes doing without them unthinkable.[832] And it is hard to imagine how international statebuilders might unleash a process of transformation resulting in such assumed institutions.

Statebuilding has become essential to preventing a multitude of spillover effects from state collapse.[833] It is a necessary component in quelling violence and reestablishing order after civil wars, as we have seen throughout this chapter; and it is key to preventing sex trafficking and the drug trade, along with terrorism and pandemic disease. Statebuilding prevents the spread of violence and economic decline across state borders, and it can be critical to stopping the collapse of whole regions. It has also become an integral solution to a multitude of global challenges, which makes it an essential institution to the current world order. In fact, if each of these challenges were to grow even just a little worse without it, statebuilding might be said to be essential to preserving the global order.

Its impact need not be that great for it to be seen as a necessary global institution, which plays a critical role in sustaining the global imaginary. In the same way that peacekeeping was seen to be

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[829] Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality.* Anchor Books. 1966.
[830] Blumer, Herbert. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method.* University of California Press. 1986.
[831] Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms.* Polity Press. 1996.
[832] Searle, John. *The Construction of Social Reality.* Penguin. 1996.
[833] Collier, Paul. *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places.* Harper Collins. 2009.

a critical institution in the establishment of world peace, statebuilding appears to be an essential institution to the establishment of world order. It is essential because without it the endemic challenges of collapsed states would spread beyond their borders, and it can be thought of as an institution because it is such an entrenched response to breakdown, replete with a panoply of its own subordinate practices. It has been taken up by multiple global organizations, including arguably the world's most powerful state, following its own wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. And it has become a key component in how we imagine order to be restored where it has broken down in the world.

It is hard to imagine the world without statebuilding, because statebuilding is imagined to bring order to the world—and it is hard to conceive of the world without order. The world is just too big a place to conceptualize without some kind of organizing principle. So, we tend to tidy it up in our imaginations by attributing order to it where it does not exist. Countless philosophers and psychologists have pointed out how we do this in our day to day lives, but the challenge of comprehending vast and complex systems is always greater.[834] And the world itself is astonishingly difficult to wrap our minds around it, because the number of variables in it mind boggling.[835] What is remarkable about statebuilding is how the task of bringing order to troubled states concretizes this more psychological task of bringing order to our conceptions of a fragmented world.

Throughout this thesis we have seen how the state system is essential to the order we imagine to constitute the world. The system of states brings shape to each of the states within it by recognizing their borders and currencies, state institutions and leaders. It also brings order to states by incentivizing the adoption of what have come to be regarded as a set of well functioning institutions, like parliaments and presidencies, central banks and treasuries. The state system encourages the adoption of these institutions by not recognizing states that fail to take them up. It provides preferential loans and trade agreements to the states that adopt them, and it tends to shun those that don't even try to adapt their institutions to these recognizable models.

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[834] Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World.* University of Minnesota Press. 2013.

[835] Horesh, Theo. *Convergence: The Globalization of Mind.* Bauu Institute Press. 2014.

In this way, statebuilding can be looked at through the lens of a state system that seeks to bring order to the world by bringing its territorial components into conformity with its dominant model. It can be seen through the lens of a state system that uses its power to bring order to the places where it has broken down. And it can be considered from the vantage of a global imaginary that attempts to bring order to the world by bringing it into conformity with our conceptions of it. The only problem is that the paradoxes and challenges of statebuilding all too often bring about a greater sense of chaos—even when statebuilding is successful, according to its own mandates. In the next chapter, we will see how a similar process occurs with development aid, which tinges the global imaginary with the contradictions inherent to development and the unsustainability of its practices.

Chapter VI: Development Aid

Development aid might be defined as foreign assistance aimed at supporting social and economic development.

The aid may be provided by governments or nonprofits, and given to individuals, communities, or states. But its primary purpose is by definition purported to be economic development. In actuality, what is commonly referred to as development aid is often provided to appease domestic lobbies of states like Israel[836] and to hold leverage over states like Egypt.[837] It is used to win wars in places like Iraq and Afghanistan,[838] to support peacekeeping and statebuilding missions in places like Bosnia and Timor Leste,[839] and to alleviate the suffering brought about by environmental catastrophes in places like Haiti.[840] In theory, it is distinct from humanitarian aid in its aim of developing a country, but as we will see the two goals are often inseparable in practice. Development aid is used to win souls, signal virtues, right wrongs, empower women, protect children, maintain alliances, promote democracy, control states, and, let us not forget its almost blunted purpose of spurring social and economic development.

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[836] Mearsheimer, John J. and Walt, Stephen M. *The Israel Lobby: And U.S. Foreign Policy, pgs. 23-48.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2008; Pappe, Ilan. *Lobbying for Zionism on Both Sides of the Atlantic.* Oneworld Publications. 2024.

[837] Carter, Jimmy. *White House Diary, pgs. 216-245.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.

[838] Rubin, Barnett R. *Afghanistan: What Everyone Needs to Know, pgs. 185-203.* Oxford University Press. 2020.

[839] Collier, Paul. *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places.* Harper Perennial. 2010.

[840] Farmer, Paul. *Haiti After the Earthquake.* Public Affairs. 2012.

Broadly speaking, development aid can be viewed as one of the principal means by which people in rich countries engage with those in poor countries. In short, by aiding in their development, people in rich countries are able to connect with and influence people in poor countries. In this way, development aid binds together the peoples of the world in our imaginations through the act of giving. Yet, the vast panoply of motives inspiring its provision tends to burden it with multiple and often contradictory meanings. Divided over its purposes, our judgments about it tend to diverge. Development aid often disguises base motives, like the quest for geopolitical control, under the lofty rhetoric of aiding the poor. Hence, many look upon it as wholly benevolent while others find the very notion of it suspect on principle[841] Yet, even where the motives behind giving aid are unimpeachable, its record of success has often proved unsatisfactory,[842] and this has contributed to it occupying an ambiguous place in the global imaginary. We don't know how it fits in with our ideas of the world, because we are divided within ourselves about its true purposes and effectiveness.[843]

Development projects are notorious for a multitude of perceived social and economic failures, which we will explore later in this chapter. In short, these have included its tendency to be used for political purposes,[844] its use in keeping dictators in power,[845] its lack of democratic

[841] Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010; Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, revised edition, pgs. 203-282.* African Tree Press. 2014.
[842] Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Penguin Books. 2007; Kenny, Charles. *Getting Better: Why Global Development is Succeeding and How We Can Improve the World Even More.* Basic Books. 2012; Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.
[843] Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Thinking Big Fails the Poor.* Routledge. 2018.
[844] Darden, Jessica Trisko. *Aiding and Abetting: U.S. Foreign Assistance and State Violence.* Stanford University Press. 2019
[845] Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Penguin Books. 2007

accountability,[846] and the way vast amounts of it can pervert the development of economies.[847] Still, it has proven effective in vaccinating children[848] and combating infant mortality,[849] empowering women and increasing literacy.[850] Meanwhile, countless infrastructural development projects have been successful.[851] So, few of its critics, with some notable exceptions,[852] have supported eradicating it completely. Yet, it has had mixed results in spurring economic development.[853] And while it can be used to support democratization,[854] it has also often been used to keep dictators in power, like Zaire's notorious Mobutu Sese Seko.[855] All of this will be demonstrated to complicate our understanding of the role of development aid in the global imaginary.

Its multiplicity of aims, coupled with its systemic complexity, muddies our efforts to assess its

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[846] Easterly, William. *Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor.* Basic Book. 2013.
[847] Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.
[848] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The End of Poverty: The Economic Possibilities of Our Time.* Penguin Books. 2006.
[849] Farmer, Paul. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor.* University of California Press. 2004
[850] Kenny, Charles. *Getting Better: Why Global Development Is Succeeding—And How We Can Improve the World Even More.* Basic Books. 2012.
[851] Hirschman, Albert O. *Development Projects Observed.* Brookings Institution Press. 1967; Ramalingam, Ben. *Aid on the Edge of Chaos: Rethinking International Cooperation in a Complex World.* Oxford University Press. 2015; Sachs, Jeffrey. *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen In Our Lifetimes.* Penguin. 2005.
[852] Friedman, Milton. *Foreign Economic Aid: Means and Objectives.* The Yale Review. 47:4 501-516; Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.
[853] Collier, Paul. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing, and What Can Be Done About It.* Oxford University Press. 2008.
[854] Carothers, Thomas. *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve.* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 1999.
[855] Wrong, Michela. *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz: Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu's Congo.* Harper Perennial. 2002.

effectiveness.[856] Its stated purposes are further complicated by the array of groups engaged in it, including states and churches, international associations and nongovernmental organizations. The assessment of development aid's effectiveness is also complicated by the ambiguity surrounding the notion of development itself.[857] Development is variously associated with increasing levels of trade and government activity,[858] more integrated socio-economic complexity,[859] the flourishing of human capabilities,[860] and greater social freedom.[861] Yet, these achievements do not always coincide, and sometimes they are contradictory.[862] All good things do not always go together,[863] and development is not always good.[864] Even when it is effective, development aid can result in neocolonial type dependencies,[865] and this is often precisely its purpose. Meanwhile, in the real world, development may be most often associated with others becoming more like ourselves, whoever "we" may be and whatever the merits of our claims to superiority.

Development can be defined in strictly economic terms as expressive of a country's increasing quantity of trade and government activity. Yet, increasing trade is meaningless when the primary

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[856] Ramalingam, Ben. *Aid on the Edge of Chaos: Rethinking International Cooperation in a Complex World.* Oxford University Press. 2019.
[857] Pilling, David. *The Growth Delusion: Wealth, Poverty, and the Well Being of Nations.* Tim Duggan Books. 2019.
[858] Stiglitz, Joseph E. and Sen, Amartya. *Mismeasuring Our Lives: Why GDP Doesn't Add Up.* The New Press. 2010.
[859] Tainter, Joseph A. *The Collapse of Complex Societies.* Cambridge University Press. 1990; Wilber, Ken. *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution.* Shambhala Books. 1995.
[860] Nussbaum, Martha C. *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach.* Belknap Press. 2013.
[861] Ingelhart, Ronald. *Cultural Evolution: People's Motives Are Changing, and Reshaping the World.* Cambridge University Press. 2018; Sen, Amartya. *Development As Freedom.* Anchor. 2000.
[862] Pilling, David. *The Growth Delusion: Wealth, Poverty, and the Well-Being of Nations.* Crown. 2019.
[863] Berlin, Isaiah. *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History.* Weidenfeld and Nicholson. 1953.
[864] Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed.* Yale University Press. 2020.
[865] Escobar, Arturo. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton University Press. 1995.

product being traded is heroin, as in the case of Afghanistan shortly after the American invasion, for instance.[866] The best development projects aim to bring about increases in quality of life,[867] but economic development is often accompanied by wrenching inequality, social instability, urban poverty, deteriorating community bonds, and greater authoritarian control.[868] Meanwhile, economists remain largely divided over what actually spurs economic growth.[869] So, development aid is burdened with the challenge of bringing about economic development, when we are not even clear what causes it,[870] and of bringing about high quality development, when there is little discussion of what precisely that means.[871]

Economic development today can also undermine development in the future, for the resources it depends upon are finite.[872] So, as soon as we take a global view of development, we are confronted by the question of its sustainability. If we cannot replenish the stocks of resources required for development, then we are in effect stealing them from future generations.[873] We are also confronted by its negative environmental externalities, many of which like climate change and declining soil fertility can be expected to compromise future development, and quite possibly the future of human civilization.[874] So, even when aid is imagined to be an effective tool

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[866] Rubin, Barnett R. *Afghanistan: What Everyone Needs to Know, pgs. 204-228.* Oxford University Press. 2020.
[867] Schumacher, E.F. *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered.* Harper and Row. 1970.
[868] Pilling, David. *The Growth Delusion: Wealth, Poverty, and the Well Being of Nations.* Crown. 2019; Sen, Amartya. *Development As Freedom.* Anchor. 2000; Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2003.
[869] Lin, Justin Yifu. *The Quest for Prosperity: How Developing Economies Can Take Off.* Princeton University Press. 2012.
[870] Kenny, Charles. *Getting Better: Why Global Development Is Succeeding—And How We Can Improve the World Even More, pgs. 1-17.* Basic Books. 2012.
[871] Pilling, David. *The Growth Delusion: Wealth, Poverty, and the Well-Being of Nations.* Crown. 2019.
[872] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet.* Penguin Press. 2008.
[873] Broome, John. *Climate Matters: Ethics in a Warming World, pgs. 73-96.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2012.
[874] Stern, Nicholas. *The Global Deal: Climate Change and the Creation of a New Era of Progress and Prosperity.* Public Affairs. 2009.

for alleviating chronic hunger and global inequities, and spurring the social and economic development of states, it remains controversial in the global imaginary.

Economic development may hold the promise of fulfilling human wants and needs and fostering the innovations needed to feed 10 billion people on a crowded planet.[875] But we will see that it is questionable whether or not development aid will help to attain this ideal. Meanwhile, few people can envision what the ideal might look like in practice,[876] and this highlights the ambiguous and controversial role of economic development more generally in the global imaginary. This chapter will demonstrate, first, how the institution of development aid arose out of an image of the world that had come to include all of humanity, second, where development aid is effective and why we keep coming back for more, and, finally, how the contradictions and failures of development aid have evoked frustration over our current global imaginary. Ultimately, through analyzing the role of development aid in the global imaginary, this chapter will begin to grapple with how the inequities and unsustainability of economic practices today have stifled the emergence of a more compelling global imaginary.

The Origins of Development Aid

The origins of development aid are typically dated back to the Marshall Plan in 1948, when the U.S. provided $13.3 billion dollars in aid to the previously developed states of war-torn Europe that had been devastated by the Second World War.[877] But the project of developing undeveloped countries through aid had its origin in President Harry S. Truman's inaugural address of 1949. Legend has it that the speech lacked moving ideas, so his speechwriters searched for something big, and they found it in a few short lines about helping out less developed countries.[878] The idea

[875] Conway, Gordon. *One Billion Hungry: Can We Feed the World.* Comstock Publishing Associates. 2012.
[876] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The Age of Sustainable Development.* Columbia University Press. 2015.
[877] Judt, Tony. *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945, pgs. 27-39.* Vintage Books. 2010.
[878] Hickel, Jason. *The Divide: A Brief Guide to Inequality and Its Solutions, pgs. 1-4.* Windmill Books. 2018.

appears to have spoken to an emergent global imaginary, for it turned out to be wildly popular with the public, who had just weathered the genocidal racism of the Second World War. It also came to be an ideological pillar in the spread of liberalism and the fight against globalized communism.[879]

In this way, the era of development aid was born in the brief interregnum between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War, at the very moment when western empires were starting to collapse. It was a crucial moment in the development of the global imaginary, for the geopolitical struggles and collapse of empires, coupled with advances in telecommunications and transportation, were leading ordinary people to think more globally. The fact that the whole world would soon be bound together under the prospect of nuclear armageddon probably also helped to spur the cosmopolitan ethic needed to inspire the provision of aid. Whatever the reasons, it was a breakout moment in a long and largely forgotten history that would finally see aid institutionalized.

However, the development economist William Easterly reminds us that the idea of helping poor countries develop actually had its roots in nineteenth century colonialism.[880] King Leopold II of Belgium had used the idea of developing the Congo as a means of cloaking his genocide in the late nineteenth century.[881] And President Woodrow Wilson had promoted the very same idea after the First World War. America used development aid to bolster Chiang Kai-shek in China in the 1930s, in a misadventure that appeared straight out of the Cold War, with all the misappropriation of funds and failed plans that would later come to characterize the institution.[882] Highlighting the deep roots of its pathologies, Easterly titles his signature book *The White Man's*

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[879] Darden, Jessica Trisko. *Aiding and Abetting: U.S. Foreign Assistance and State Violence.* Stanford University Press. 2019.
[880] Easterly, William. *The Tyranny of Experts: Economist, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor, pgs. 81-104.* Basic Books. 2014.
[881] Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa.* Houghton Mifflin. 1998.
[882] Easterly, William. *The Tyranny of Experts: Economist, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor, pgs. 47-80.* Basic Books. 2014.

Burden, in reference to Rudyard Kipling's poem from 1899.[883] In so doing, he highlights how development aid has long been a paternalistic counterpart to imperialism.

The Bosnian Nobel laureate in literature, Ivo Andric, goes further in implying that development may be a perennial challenge of empire in his *Bosnian Chronicle* of 1945 in which a Napoleonic era Austrian diplomat struggles with bringing culture to the Balkans where he is stationed.[884] His frustrations with the isolated outpost make it easy to imagine imperial officials the world over struggling with the same challenge of spreading the benefits of development over the course of history. As we saw in the third chapter on global institutions, aid to the victims of famine was engaged in by Native Americans and early Muslims and Christians, while aid to the victims of earthquakes was provided by Ancient Greek city-states. And when the Chinese admiral Zheng traveled the Indian Ocean with a fleet of 317 massive ships in the fifteenth century CE, he bestowed gifts on the people he met as a way of cementing Chinese dominance.[885]

In this way, aid has long exhibited a tension between the more cosmopolitan ideals justifying it and the more nationalistic purposes to which it has been put. It has also struggled with the difficulty, confronted in the last chapter on statebuilding, of transplanting institutions to foreign soils. Institutions as we have seen are not simply brought to life by the application of the right rules and techniques. Rather, they require the right ideas and norms to be set in motion. Yet, Cold War era dams and irrigation projects[886] were more apt to suffer from a lack of spare parts and educated managers,[887] rendering them unusable and subject to abandonment. And this

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[883] Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Oxford University Press. 2007.
[884] Andric, Ivo and Hawkesworth, Celia trans. *Bosnian Chronicle.* Arcade Publishing. 1963.
[885] Levathes, Louise. *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Thrown, 1405-1433.* Oxford University Press. 1997.
[886] Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Little America: The War Within the War for Afghanistan.* Vintage. 2013.
[887] Easterly, William. *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics.* MIT Press. 2002; Hirschman, Albert O. *Development Projects Observed, pgs. 35-85.* Brookings Institution Press. 1967.

highlighted the dependence of institutions on techno-economic levels of development.[888] It was a stark reminder of the perennial challenge of helping others develop, which we will examine in greater depth over the course of this chapter.

Development thinking at the time tended to focus on Walt Rostow's "stages of growth" model. The model emphasized bringing underdeveloped countries to the point of "take off," where economic growth would become self-sustaining. And this could be accomplished through heavy capital investment,[889] preferably in fixed capital, according to Nobel laureate Robert Solow.[890] Hence, a major emphasis was placed on big infrastructure projects. They were also a necessity in the newly independent countries of Africa, whose railroads had typically been tied by colonial powers to the ports, with little linkage to the continent's interior. The geography of the continent, with its big interior deserts and rainforests,[891] along with its multitude of different climates, which must be crossed in traversing it from north to south,[892] also divided population centers from one another, thereby hampering trade between states, as Jeffrey Sachs would later emphasize.[893]

Governments could be forgiven for the failure of their projects, because thinking on development aid was just getting underway. Meanwhile, most of the big aid groups were just getting started, and their budgets were a fraction of those today.[894] The subculture of aid workers that tends to

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[888] Weber, Max and Tribe, Keith trans. *Economy and Society: A New Translation, Volume 3 pgs. 248-335.* Harvard University Press. 2019.
[889] Rostow, W.W. *The Stages of Economic Growth: a Non-Communist Manifesto, pgs. 17-35.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.
[890] Solow, Robert. *Growth Theory: An Exposition.* Oxford University Press. 1970.
[891] Reader, John. *Africa: A Biography of the Continent, pgs. 25-45.* Vintage Books. 1999.
[892] Diamond, Jared. Guns, Germs, and Steel: A Short History of the Last 13,0000 Years. Vintage Books. 1998.
[893] Sachs, Jeffrey. *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen in Our Lifetimes, pgs. 57-59.* Penguin. 2005.
[894] Barnett, Michael. *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism, pgs. 161-171.* Cornell University Press. 2013.

separate them from their beneficiaries was also in its infancy.[895] The world at the time was more rural and less populated, and populations were even sparser in the third world. Thus, aid beneficiaries were likely to be living in more traditional communities, and idealistic peace corps volunteers could expect a genuine confrontation with cultural differences. Before the advent of the "crisis caravan,"[896] leading aid workers to jump from one humanitarian crisis to the next, and the fortified compounds that have come to protect them from locals,[897] they could count on a safer and more spacious experience as well.[898]

All in all, development aid occupied a less controversial place in the global imaginary, and hopes for what it might accomplish ran high. Yet, the contradictions involved in aiding people in undeveloped countries were present from the start. Development aid was integral to an American foreign policy that commonly propped up brutal anti-communist dictators.[899] Thus, the high ideals of aid workers were maintained at the price of their political ignorance, and this no doubt contributed to the controversial place of development aid in the global imaginary. Meanwhile, the corruption of dictators tended to undermine efforts aimed at developing their countries.[900] So, development aid was always tinged with more cynical motives.[901] And it was always a close kin to colonialism, which also promoted the development of far flung places. In fact, the Kennedy administration's establishment of USAID, the largest aid group in the world, immediately followed American support for a coup in the Democratic Republic of Congo and attempted

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[895] Autesserre, Severine. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention.* Cambridge University Press. 2014.
[896] Polman, Linda. *The Crisis Caravan: What's Wrong With Humanitarian Aid.* Metropolitan Books. 2010.
[897] Smirl, Lisa. *Spaces of Aid: How Cars, Compounds, and Hotels Shape Humanitarianism.* Zed Books. 2015.
[898] Higate, Paul. *Insecure Spaces: Peacekeeping, Power, and Performance in Haiti, Kosovo, and Liberia*. Zed Books. 2009.
[899] Darden, Jessica Trisko. *Aiding and Abetting: U.S. Foreign Assistance and State Violence.* Stanford University Press. 2019.
[900] Easterly, William. *The Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor.* Basic Books. 2014.
[901] Hickel, Jason. *The Divide: Global Inequality from Conquest to Free Markets.* W.W. Norton. 2018.

coups in Cuba. And it was followed by the overthrow of regimes in the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Vietnam, and Indonesia, where the CIA provided kill lists in a genocide that would claim half a million to a million lives.[902]

Meanwhile, the ideal of economic development tended to be more associated with large top down projects, which damaged environments and disrupted cultures. Hence, it militated against the agency of aid beneficiaries, the affirmation of their cultures, and a respect for their environments.[903] It drew from an unsustainable model of development that would soon come in for heavy criticism,[904] but the contradictions were peculiarly salient when it came to development aid, because aid work attracted idealists, who were particularly sensitive to its unsustainability.

The nature of development aid changed with the passing of the Cold War. Nongovernmental aid groups had been growing in size and strength since the seventies,[905] and the lines between development and humanitarian aid were being blurred by health and education projects promising to relieve more immediate suffering and spur development.[906] There was also a shift away from aiding dictators, though it was seldom as successful as its advocates would have liked.[907] Aid came to be coupled with peacebuilding and statebuilding, thereby blurring the distinction between humanitarian and development aid. Aid groups also adopted more expansive notions of development in accord with a critique of the concept of gross domestic product.

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[902] Robinson, Geoffrey B. *The Killing Season:A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965-66.* Princeton University Press. 2019.
[903] Schumacher, E.F. *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered.* Harper and Row. 1973.
[904] Meadows, Donella H. and Meadows, Dennis L. et al. *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind.* Universe Books. 1974.
[905] Barnett, Michael. *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism.* Cornell University Press. 2013, pgs. 161-171; Moyn, Samuel. *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History.* Belknap Press. 2012.
[906] Sachs, Jeffrey. *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen In Our Lifetimes.* Penguin. 2005; Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom.* Anchor. 2000.
[907] Collier, Paul. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It, pg. 87.* Oxford University Press. 2008.

Why Development Aid Works

Even the strongest critics of development aid like William Easterly tend to agree that it has been effective in diminishing the spread of diseases like smallpox and trypanosomiasis. So, making the case that its benefits are not worth the expense would at the very least need to demonstrate that protecting people from these diseases has come at too high a cost. Yet, it is a hard case to make without devaluing the lives of aid beneficiaries, as noted by William MacAskill, founder of the effective giving movement. MacAskill makes the audacious claim that if all aid had accomplished during this period was to eradicate smallpox, it would have been money well spent.[908]

There are several ways to parse the data. According to economist Damibisa Moyo, roughly a trillion dollars was spent on aid in sub-Saharan Africa in the 60 years prior to 2009, when she published her critique of the industry, *Dead Aid*.[909] Yet, MacAskill notes that spread out over 60 years, a trillion dollars amounts to just $17 billion a year. And divided by 412 million people, the average population of sub-Saharan Africa over this time period, it amounts to a mere $40 per recipient per year.[910] Of course, sub-Saharan Africa was not the only place receiving aid over this period. William Easterly places the total figure for aid disbursed to the third world "from the Marshall Plan to the present day" at $2.3 trillion.[911] But India, Latin America, and the Middle East contained several times the inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa through most of this period. Thus, the average aid recipient probably received less than $20 a year over this time period.

To call such spending lavish is to devalue the lives of the poor by suggesting that they are not worthy of receiving even such a pittance. But would it have been worth spending all of that

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[908] MacAskill, William. *Doing Good Better: Effective Altruism and a Radical New Way to Make a Difference, pg. 25.* Guardian Faber Publishing. 2016.
[909] Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa, pg. xviii.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.
[910] MacAskill, William. *Doing Good Better: Effective Altruism and a Radical New Way to Make a Difference, pgs. 23-24.* Guardian Faber Publishing. 2016.
[911] Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good, pg. 6.* Oxford University Press. 2007.

money if the only thing it managed to accomplish was the eradication of smallpox? Prior to its eradication in 1973, smallpox killed 1.5 to 3 million people a year. Hence, its eradication has saved between 60 and 120 million lives. Using a low estimate of 60 million lives saved, MacAskill argues that if all that foreign aid had accomplished was to eliminate smallpox, it would have done so at a cost of $40,000 for each life saved. Perhaps that seems like a lot, but he notes that government departments in the United States will pay roughly $7 million for infrastructure improvements if they can save just a single life. So, if all that aid ever did was eradicate smallpox, he points out that it would have done so at 1/150th the cost of what the US is willing to spend to save a life in its own country.[912]

But, of course, as mentioned previously, even Easterly believes that aid has accomplished more than just the eradication of smallpox. Life has improved dramatically in many of the countries that have seen the highest disbursements of aid. For instance, MacAskill notes that life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa has risen from 36.7 years in 1950 to 56 years today, more than a 50 percent increase,[913] and depending upon how the calculations are run, that might be said to amount to hundreds of millions of lives saved. Literacy rates have increased, and infant mortality rates have decreased, at comparable rates,[914] thereby dramatically improving the quality of life as well. Of course, development aid has not brought about these changes on its own. And a few critics of aid like Dambisa Moto might assert that more good would have been accomplished without it. Yet, it would seem to deserve at least some of the credit. And the presence of aid groups arguably pressured African governments to be more responsive to their citizen's needs, if only through the example they set. Hence, we should be wary of the claim that aid is ineffective and that its distribution cannot be justified based on the results.

However, the debate still rages over whether aid is effective in helping whole economies

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[912] MacAskill. William. *Doing Good Better: Effective Altruism and a Radical New Way to Make a Difference, pgs. 107-108.* Guardian Faber Publishing. 2016.
[913] Ibid. pgs. 23-24.
[914] Kenny, Charles. *Getting Better: How Global Development is Succeeding—And How We Can Improve the World Even More, pgs. 2-3.* Basic Books. 2012.

develop. Several studies suggest it has had little effect on economic development,[915] but its impact has been difficult to assess. A significant portion of aid has been a mere stopgap measure aimed at keeping the poorest countries from sinking further in poverty. Meanwhile, the fact that aid often goes to the poorest states, whose prospects of development are weakest, suggests a selection bias in the data that stacks the cards against aid appearing more successful. If better off states, with greater prospects for development, had been the beneficiaries of aid, they would have come out looking more successful.[916] And as we have seen, development aid tends to be put toward an array of purposes, many of which have little to do with spurring development. So, including this money in our assessments makes genuine aid look less effective than it is in actuality.

Meanwhile, cognitive biases play an outsize role in case-by-case evaluations of development aid. Some of the biggest recipients like South Korea and Israel have done so well that hardly anyone associates them with aid anymore.[917] Yet, Israel continues to be the biggest recipient of aid. Others, like Iraq and Afghanistan, were also the victims of war and political instability, which is all we tend to associate them with after all those years of fighting. The case of Afghanistan highlights the way aid can succeed and still be counted a failure. Over the course of two decades, when the country became one of the world's largest recipients of aid, between the fall of the Taliban in 2001 and their return to power in 2021, the economy quadrupled in size, infant mortality rates were cut in half, literacy rates almost doubled, and life expectancy increased by ten years.[918] Yet, few commentaries on the country noted the improvements, and all too many seemed to agree that the intervention had not improved the lives of average Afghans.

Development aid can be used to create jobs that might lure young men away from militias, and it

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[915] Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Oxford University Press. 2007; Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.
[916] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen in Our Lifetimes.* Penguin Press. 2005.
[917] Ibid.
[918] Rubin, Barnett R. *Afghanistan: What Everyone Needs to Know, pg. 175-204.* Oxford University Press. 2020.

can win support for peacekeeping and statebuilding by helping jumpstart broken economies.[919] The economic impact of these projects can be especially hard to assess because if they fail, then another round of fighting is likely to ensue. But if they succeed, the impact of the aid might be just enough to maintain the status quo of social and economic stagnation, which is what most people are likely to see in comparative economic data. Meanwhile, as in the case of Afghanistan, the effects of the aid may go unseen, as insiders and outsiders alike fixate on the ongoing impacts of the war. Yet, it is just this type of aid, which was originally doled out through the Marshall Plan, that helped institutionalize the practice of development aid in the first place.

Development aid is generally recognized to be highly effective in improving health outcomes and educating children.[920] Yet, as Amartya Sen demonstrates, basic literacy and numeracy improve productivity across all sectors of the economy, even for illiterate farmers with a year or two of schooling.[921] And healthier populations are able to work harder, longer, more years, and more days each year, thereby bringing a substantial boost to national output.[922] So, while comparative evaluations of the effectiveness of development aid on economic growth may have yielded mixed results, it is hard to imagine how improving education and health outcomes would not have a positive effect on national economic development.

Development aid can help minimize suffering by diminishing the spread of disease, but it can also increase productivity by allowing people to work more hours. Diseases like malaria don't just take people out of the workforce, though. They also weaken their bodies, thereby diminishing their productivity. Meanwhile, someone has to care for diseased populations, and in poorer countries this usually falls on family members, who are themselves often taken out of the

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[919] Collier, Paul. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It.* Oxford University Press. 2008.
[920] Kenny, Charles. *Getting Better: How Global Development is Succeeding—And How We Can Improve the World Even More, pgs. 2-3.* Basic Books. 2012.
[921] Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom, pgs. 30-31.* Anchor. 2000.
[922] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen In Our Lifetimes, pgs. 87-88.* Penguin Press. 2005.

workforce as well. And many diseases make it harder to think clearly,[923] as does the fear and stress of caring for sick children and relatives.[924] Hence, in diminishing the spread of disease, development aid can make workers more mentally and physically productive while increasing the size of the workforce.[925] Whether this shows up in comparative studies of development aid on economic growth, it is again hard to imagine how it would not positively impact it.

Development aid can increase the productivity of workers at all levels of the economy through education, but its impact on literacy and numeracy can also open up new economic sectors. In this way, it can help set economies on a trajectory that leads to urbanization, industrialization, and the growth of services. It can also empower women, rendering them more productive members of society. It can increase their options in life, freeing them from the limitations associated with motherhood.[926] And this can bring down birth rates, thereby decreasing population growth and its concomitant strains on the natural environment. It also allows parents to invest more resources in the education of their children, which Oded Galor in his celebrated history of inequality, found to be the primary difference between states that develop and those that fail to.[927] Hence, development aid can set in motion a virtuous circle in which education leads to more education, and more education leads to social and economic development.

In this sense, proponents of the "big push" to develop had a point. It was not simply that development required substantial capital investments, as Robert Solow argued throughout the Cold War.[928] Nor is it simply a matter of the poorest countries being caught in a "poverty trap," which forces them to overcome several problems at once in order to develop, as Jeffrey Sachs

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[923] Banerjee, Abhijit V. and Duflo, Esther. *Poor Economics: The Surprising Truth About Living on Less Than $1 a Day, pgs. 67-68.* Penguin Press. 2012.
[924] Mullainathan, Sendil and Shafir, Eldar. *Scarcity: The New Science of Having Less and How It Defines Our Lives, pgs. 48-49.* Picador. 2014.
[925] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen In Our Lifetimes.* Penguin Press. 2005.
[926] Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom, pgs. 189-203.* Anchor. 2000.
[927] Galor, Oded. *The Journey of Humanity: The Origins of Wealth and Inequality.* Bodley Head. 2022.
[928] Solow, Robert. *Growth Theory: An Exposition.* Oxford University Press. 1970.

has more recently argued.[929] Rather, economic development is associated with a range of social and cultural transformations, which each impact the others in a series of virtuous circles, leading to ever more expansive freedoms, as Amartya Sen has demonstrated.[930] And many countries have appeared to enter a period of "takeoff" in which rapid development launched this modernization sequence, whose strong version Walt Rostow articulated at the beginning of the Cold War.[931]

The idea that development aid might be able to launch this sequence in some of the poorest states was always a quixotic ambition, rooted in an economistic conceit. It overlooked the role of the state in creating markets and spurring development.[932] It centered on a view of development that failed to consider the role of institutions and culture.[933] And it was dependent on a conception of institutions that downplayed their normative and cultural dimensions.[934] It also failed to recognize the way in which particular technologies are dependent on the wider technological systems in which they are embedded.[935] And it lacked the self-reflexivity necessary to gracefully help others help themselves.[936] Each of these deficits led development economists to take up the wrong projects, but most of the mistakes could be chalked up to growing pains, which are unlikely to be repeated.

William MacAskill has pressed the idea that we should not be assessing the potential of aid

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[929] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen in Our Lifetimes.* Penguin Press. 2005.
[930] Sen, Amartya. *Develop as Freedom.* Anchor. 2000.
[931] Rostow, W.W. *The Stages of Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto.* Cambridge University Press. 1960.
[932] Chang, Ha-Joon. *Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism.* Bloomsbury Publishing. 2009; Mazzucato, Mariana. *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths.* Penguin Press. 2013.
[933] Landes, David S. *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some Are So Poor.* W.W. Norton and Company. 1999.
[934] Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Big Thinking Fails the Poor.* Routledge. 2018.
[935] Arthur, Brian W. *The Nature of Technology: What It Is and How It Evolves.* Free Press. 2011.
[936] Meade, Eric. *Reframing Poverty: New Thinking and Feeling About Humanity's Greatest Challenge.* Canyon House Press. 2019.

based on what it got wrong in the past but rather what it might accomplish in the future.[937] And after several generations of systematically evaluating what kind of aid works best, it is hard to imagine that the aid community has not learned some valuable lessons about how to be more effective. Unfortunately, the record of aid's successes and failures, coupled with the way it has been abused for ulterior purposes, has culminated in a conception of development aid that is all too often associated with failure. Still, the aim of this chapter is not to assess development aid's potential but rather its impact on the global imaginary, and to understand that we need to look more closely at how exactly it has been perceived to fail.

Why Development Aid is Imagined to Fail

The effectiveness of development aid is difficult to measure, if only because the intentions behind it are seldom clear. Take for instance the aid provided to the Democratic Republic of Congo during what is often described as "Africa's World War" in the late nineties and early 2000s.[938] The war had drawn in nine neighboring countries. And it was in the process of generating millions of deaths. Hunger at the time was rife, with half of the residents of the capital Kinshasa in the west eating only a meal a day, and a quarter eating only one meal every two days.[939] Meanwhile, the eastern Congo where most of the fighting took place was anarchic, with nine countries engaged in fighting and innumerable local militias joining the fray.[940] And the country as a whole had become known as the "rape capital of the world."[941]

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[937] MacAskill, William. *Doing Good Better: Effective Altruism and a Radical New Way to Make a Difference.* Guardian Faber Publishing. 2018.
[938] Prunier, Gerard. *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Crisis.* Oxford University Press. 2011.
[939] Trefon, Theodore. *Reinventing Order in the Congo: How People Respond to State Failure in Kinshasa.* Zed Books. 2004.
[940] Autesserre, Severine. *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding.* Cambridge University Press. 2010.
[941] Mukwege, Dr. Denis. *The Power of Women: A Doctor's Journey of Hope and Healing.* Short Books. 2022.

But the world ignored the Congo, so when the aid finally started rolling in, its purpose was not clear. Was it about stopping war, ending rapes, feeding people, easing consciences, developing the country, protecting neighboring states, or taking control of its mineral wealth, as states like Rwanda and Uganda seemed bent on doing?[942] Everything was broken, and fixing any one thing typically meant fixing everything else.[943] Aid slated for elections also aimed to build state capacities; aid slated for the military also sought to stop the war. Peacekeepers weren't just sent to stop the fighting but to end the rapes. Medical aid was not just sent to stop the rapes but to prevent the kind of intergenerational traumas that might hamper future development. Aid was sent with the aim of developing the country when future development was almost impossible to imagine, and the state it sought to develop was generally viewed by locals with disdain.

The Congo had been through the same sort of crisis in the early sixties, and the purpose of the aid that time was even more ambiguous. Following the country's newly won independence in 1961, and the election of its first leader Patrice Lumumba, a civil war broke out that would quickly draw in the UN's largest peacekeeping mission to date. When the fighting ceased a few years later, America's handpicked leader would take power. Mobutu Sese Seko was the man everyone had been talking about to lead the country, but he would quickly turn out to be a disappointment—before going on to pilfer billions of dollars in aid.[944]

The Congo became a caricature of everything that was wrong with development aid. The aid helped keep Mobutu in power by providing a source of cash with which he might buy support. This stymied the development of the state by helping him establish tribal dependencies that he relied upon to hold power.[945] It insulated him from answering to the people, and it perverted the development of the country by allowing him to invest in pet projects, like building up his own

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[942] Prendergast, John and Bafilemba, Fidel. *Congo Stories: Battling Five Centuries of Exploitation and Greed.* Grand Central Publishing. 2018.
[943] Trefon, Theodore. *Congo Masquerade: The Political Culture of Aid Inefficiency and Reform Failure.* Zed Books. 2011.
[944] Nzongola-Ntalaja, Georges. *The Congo: From Leopold to Kabila, a People's History.* Zed Books. 2002.
[945] Wrong, Michela. *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz: Living on the Brink of Disaster in Mobutu's Congo.* Harper Perennial. 2002.

hometown. It also allowed him to expend exorbitant sums on palaces and parties. Mobutu was a Cold War ally of the West. Thus, the aid could be seen as creating a neocolonial dependency, but his regime's corruption undermined the liberalism the aid aimed to protect.

The aid provided to Mobutu came to be seen as money down the drain, but more recent aid tends to be viewed differently. Joseph Kabila, who led the Congo for 18 years starting in 2001, was seen as someone with whom the international community could work. The money provided to his regime focused on stabilizing the country by increasing police and military capacities.[946] Yet, a major portion of it was put toward elections, even as he consolidated power.[947] The war is generally seen to have ended in 2003, and the aid contributed to substantial increases in economic growth. Nevertheless, fighting still rages in the east, and after two decades of sustained international engagement, the Congo remains one of the least developed countries in the world.

Many of these problems show up in the vast and expansive critical literature on development aid, which is mostly aimed at improving its effectiveness. But the problems involved in development aid are deeper.[948]

Jeffrey Sachs has argued that development projects are often not scalable, because aid dollars are

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[946] Autesserre, Severine. *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding.* Cambridge University Press. 2011.

[947] Trefon, Theodore. *Congo Masquerade: The Political Culture of Aid Inefficiency and Reform Failure.* Zed Books. 2011.

[948] Deaton, Angus. *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality.* Princeton University Press. 2015; Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Oxford University Press. 2007; Escobar, Arturo. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton University Press. 2011; Ferguson, James. *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho.* University of Minnesota Press. 1994; Hickel, Jason. *The Divide: Global Inequality from Conquest to Free Markets.* W.W. Norton and Co. 2018; Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Thinking Big Fails the Poor.* Routledge. 2018; Moyo, *Dambisa. Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010; Ramalingam, Ben. *Aid on the Edge of Chaos: Rethinking International Cooperation in a Complex World.* Oxford University Press. 2015; Uvin, Peter. *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda.* Kumarian Press. 1999.

so limited.[949] But even where the funding is lavish, charity is a poor means of helping hundreds of millions of people, whose needs might be met more sustainably through markets and states.[950] Development projects are hard to sustain because donors can be fickle. Yet, even when donors are in it for the long haul, reliance on them prevents the kind of hands-on learning that results in greater efficiency,[951] and which might provide the basis of future economic growth.[952] William Easterly argues that donors don't know what works, because they are not in the field, where good ideas typically need to be tweaked if they are to work.[953] Meanwhile, William MacAskill argues that the most effective ideas often gain little traction, because they don't attract donors, while bad ideas all too often steal the show.[954] In this way, the culture of aid tends to be bureaucratic and inflexible, but it can also just be ineffective.

Development projects are often hampered by top down directives, leaving little room for innovation in the field. This makes it hard for them to adapt to unforeseen circumstances, and it stymies the ability of people on the ground to seize opportunities.[955] Development projects are commonly rendered unusable by applying uniform solutions to wildly diverse settings, which are often systemically complex and culturally enmeshed.[956] Hence, they are often abandoned after they are established,[957] but they also often persist long after they have failed. Meanwhile, those

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[949] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The End of Poverty: The Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. Penguin Press. 2005.
[950] Deaton, Angus. *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality, pgs. 267-324.* Princeton University Press. 2015.
[951] Hirschman, Albert O. *Development Projects Observed, pgs. 9-34.* Brookings Institution Press. 1967.
[952] Stiglitz, Joseph E and Greenwald, Bruce. *Creating a Learning Society: A New Approach to Growth, Development, and Social Progress.* Columbia University Press. 2013.
[953] Eastery, William. *The Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor.* Basic Books. 2014.
[954] MacAskill, William. *Doing Good Better: Effective Altruism and a Radical New Way to Make a Difference, pgs. 29-42.* Guardian Faber Publishing. 2016.
[955] Easterly, William. *The Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor.* Basic Books. 2014.
[956] Ramalingam, Ben. *Aid on the Edge of Chaos: Rethinking International Cooperation in a Complex World.* Oxford University Press. 2015.
[957] Munk, Nina. *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and the Quest to End Poverty.* Doubleday. 2013.

that last often poach scarce talent from local institutions.[958] Thus, when aid helps establish health and educational institutions, it often undermines the state.[959] Meanwhile, vast amounts of aid can pervert economic development by granting big roles to foreign actors who don't stick around.[960]

The fact that aid is imposed from the outside can also undermine democratic development. Aid dollars are largely fungible, so dictators can just add them to education and healthcare budgets, shifting money that might have been slated for those purposes to the military instead.[961] And states that provide aid know this, so aid that is slated for education and healthcare is often known to be freeing up more funds to be transferred to the military. Aid can also be stolen by government officials, like the Congo's Mobutu. And this provides an incentive for them to cleave to power.[962] Aid can undermine local cultures by disrupting their logics. People do what they do for a reason, after all, but few aid agencies take the time to find out why.[963] Finally, even when aid helps develop a country, it takes the process of development out of its beneficiaries' hands, and this implies a paternalism that ultimately undermines their agency.

The emphasis on aid can come at a high opportunity cost as well. The social entrepreneur Paul Polak illustrates how it can take the focus off of creating products and services that really require markets and governments to bring to scale.[964] Clayton Christenson points out how businesses often drive the development of infrastructure, as in the case of the Korean shipping industry.[965]

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[958] Collier, Paul. *Exodus: How Migration is Changing Our World, pgs. 195-216.* Oxford University Press. 2015.
[959] Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid:Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa, pgs 48-70 and 77-97.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.
[960] Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest and Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Oxford University Press. 2007.
[961] Darden, Jessica Trisko. *Aiding and Abetting: U.S. Foreign Assistance and State Violence, pgs. 21-32.* Stanford University Press. 2019.
[962] De Mesquita, Bruce Bueno. *The Dictator's Handbook: Why Bad Behavior is Always Good Politics, pgs. 190-225.* Public Affairs. 2022.
[963] Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Big Thinking Fails the Poor.* Routledge. 2018.
[964] Polak, Paul. *Out of Poverty: What Works When Traditional Approaches Fail.* Berrett-Koehler. 2008.
[965] Christensen, Clayton M. and Ojomo, Efosa. *The Prosperity Paradox: How Innovation Can Lift Nations Out of Poverty, pgs. 129-154.* Harper Business. 2019.

Meanwhile, Tarun Khanna notes that good products can build social trust,[966] as did Muhammad Yunus's microloans, the first of several products and services aimed at rebuilding the social fabric of his country of Bangladesh.[967] Establishing trust can be as simple as developing reliable health and safety standards, and it often takes businesses growing to scale for it to happen.

Business solutions like these are not incompatible with aid, but they highlight how an emphasis on aid might result in missed opportunities. For they take the focus off of what aid beneficiaries might do to help themselves. They take up limited mental and public space. And they stymie the development of national identities, which often arise out of the process of development. In a similar vein as we have seen, Hernando De Soto argues that people living in absolute poverty already have substantial capital, which would allow them to receive the loans they need to grow their businesses—if only it was entered into formal registries.[968] Meanwhile, Joseph Stiglitz argues that the protective agricultural policies of the US and the EU have shut poor African farmers out of the global economy.[969] And Jagdish Bhagwati argues that what the poor really need is economic growth, which provides the resources governments need to create the national programs that might take them out of poverty.[970]

If emphasizing aid leads to path dependencies that make these ideas difficult to adopt, or it absolves people in the rich world of adopting more just immigration and trade policies, which hamper development in poorer countries, then the opportunity cost of aid may turn out to be higher than most people think. It is much the same with the mental resources it takes up. If the best minds are occupied with what to do about aid, thinking on homegrown development may

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[966] Khanna, Tarun. *Trust: Creating the Foundation for Entrepreneurship in Developing Countries.* Berrett-Koehler Publishers. 2018.
[967] Yunus, Muhammad. *Building Social Business: The New Kind of Capitalism That Serves Humanity's Most Pressing Needs.* Public Affairs. 2011.
[968] De Soto, Hernando. *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else.* Basic Books. 2000.
[969] Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Making Globalization Work, pgs. 61-102.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2006.
[970] Bhagwati, Jagdish and Panagariya, Arvind. *Why Growth Matters: How Economic Growth in India Helped Reduce Poverty and the Lessons for Other Developing Countries.* Public Affairs. 2014.

lag. The debate over development aid, which was launched between Jeffrey Sachs and William Easterly in the mid-2000s, certainly appears to have crowded out the debate over globalization. The aid debate has been largely technical, but the globalization debate tended to focus on questions of justice.

Some of the strongest criticisms of development aid have focused on its relationship to the structural adjustment programs undertaken by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund beginning in the eighties.[971] The former colonies of the developing world grew at a steady clip in the late fifties and sixties, but their growth declined dramatically, following the collapse in commodity prices as we have seen, which occurred in the early seventies.[972] Since most undeveloped economies were heavily dependent on commodities, they tended to shrink in size, along with government revenues. The end result was a decline in government capacities, which would later culminate in an ever increasing number of failed states.

Poor countries could not afford to repay their debts, and many had good reason not to. For they had all too often been accumulated under dictators, who pilfered the money that was loaned to their countries, as we saw in the case of Mobutu. Hence, international lenders agreed to restructure many of the debts. Yet, they would only agree to do so if the countries in question shrank their government sectors. And that often meant privatizing government businesses that were a primary source of employment, and reducing government payrolls that served as a sort of social safety net. In this way, structural adjustment programs allowed poor states experiencing crushing debt to remain solvent, but they also set the stage for their prolonged economic stagnation and often collapse.

It was all part of a wider shift in thinking concerning the role of government in markets, which

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[971] Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Oxford University Press. 2007; Escobar, Arturo. *Encountering Development. The Making and Unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton University Press. 2011; Hickel, Jason. *The Divide: Global Inequality from Conquest to Free Markets.* W.W. Norton. 2018; Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents.* W.W. Norton. 2002.
[972] Bates, Robert H. *When Things Fell Apart: State Failure in Late Century Africa.* Cambridge University Press. 2015.

culminated in the elections of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan.[973] The world was turning to what would come to be called a neoliberal model of economic development, and the use of development aid as a carrot in establishing the model would sully its reputation to this day.

Development Aid in the Global Imaginary

The idea of aiding in development as we have seen has been coterminous with the emergence of the global imaginary over the longue durée of modernity.[974] The institutionalization of humanitarian aid can be traced back to early modern religious missions, and something like today's development aid can be found in the waning days of European colonialism.[975] The idea of lending systematic aid to less developed peoples is expressive of a cosmopolitan ethic that extends the sphere of moral concern to all of humanity.[976] The failure to live up to the lofty ideals inherent to this ethic helped spawn a vast literature that is critical of aid,[977] and while the

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[973] Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* Oxford University Press. 2007.
[974] Barnett, Michael. *The Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism.* Cornell University Press. 2013.
[975] Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good, pgs. 237-272.* Oxford University Press. 2007.
[976] Singer, Peter. *Famine, Affluence, and Morality.* Philosophy and Public Affairs. (Spring 1972) Vol. 1, No. 3, pp 229-243.
[977] Deaton, Angus. *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality.* Princeton University Press. 2015; Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Oxford University Press. 2007; Escobar, Arturo. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton University Press. 2011; Ferguson, James. *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho.* University of Minnesota Press. 1994; Hickel, Jason. *The Divide: Global Inequality from Conquest to Free Markets.* W.W. Norton and Co. 2018; Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Thinking Big Fails the Poor.* Routledge. 2018; Moyo, Dambisa. Dead Aid: *Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010; Ramalingam, Ben. *Aid on the Edge of Chaos: Rethinking International Cooperation in a Complex World.* Oxford University Press. 2015; Uvin, Peter. *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda.* Kumarian Press. 1999.

literature itself has probably resulted in some degree of disillusionment with the global imaginary, it has also arguably enriched the debate around it.

Critics of aid seldom if ever note the extent to which the very idea of aid has been dependent on the cosmopolitanism that inspires and justifies it.[978] Without the pervasiveness of that ethic, Truman's idea of aid would not have been so popular, and King Leopold would not have been able to cloak his genocide. Nor would people have been very concerned once they found out about it, for without the cosmopolitan ethic, and the sense of empathy accompanying it, the very idea of aid would have made little sense.[979] So, whatever might be said of the effectiveness of development aid, and the ulterior motives it serves, the very idea of it would have been difficult to sustain without a strong global imaginary, leading people to see themselves as bound together with, and possessed of duties toward, people on the other side of the planet. And in institutionalizing these impulses, development aid helped strengthen them by bringing them into the real world.

Yet, the very idea of development aid raises questions about where humanity has come from, and if it will be able to sustain itself when it gets where it is going. The questions arise because development aid seeks to extend dubious ideas of social and economic development to the whole of the world, where they seldom take root and all too often fail. But development aid also seeks to actualize the most noble ambition of once and for all eradicating poverty,[980] and this forces us to consider what humanity might achieve for itself on a finite planet with limited resources. In so doing, it forces us to make sense of development, come to terms with the legacy of colonialism, and conceive of how we might live on one integrated planet. In this way, development aid probably plays a far more central role in the global imaginary than peacekeeping and statebuilding, and as we will see in the next chapter, it takes us closer to a more complete

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[978] MacAskill, William. *Doing Good Better: How Effective Altruism Can Help You Help Others, Do Work That Matters, and Make Smart Choices About Giving Back*. Penguin Publications. 2016; Pogge, Thomas. *World Poverty and Human Rights.* Polity Press. 2007; Singer, Peter. *One World: The Ethics of Globalization.* Yale University Press. 2014.

[979] Hunt, Lynn. *Inventing Human Rights: A History.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2008.

[980] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen in Our Lifetimes.* Penguins Press. 2005.

understanding of the global imaginary.

Economists have struggled with the question of what drives development for centuries now. Many theories of economic growth recognize stages that must be passed through on the path to development, from agriculture to industry to services and beyond.[981] Yet, identifying the stages of economic growth doesn't necessarily provide an answer as to how development might be stimulated, and answers to the question just tend to push the inquiry a step back. If we assert that it is good institutions that spur development as do James Robinson and Daren Acemoglu,[982] we are left to figure out what generates good institutions. If we assert that it is culture that generates good institutions as does David Landes,[983] we are left to explain what generates the right culture. The same thing might be said for technology, democracy, infrastructure, and capital investment.[984] Whatever answer we might arrive at as to what drives development will only beg the question of how that might be achieved, in a seemingly infinite regression. Meanwhile, the inability to generate a replicable model of stimulating growth undermines the idea of inevitable human progress. We can take a more holistic view of development by asserting that it is generated by a complex of conditions grouped under the notion of modernization.[985] But it is not as if it is any easier to stimulate the modernization process than economic growth.

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[981] Bell, Daniel. *The Coming of Postindustrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*. Basic Books. 1976; Gershenkron, Alexander. *Economic backwardness in historical perspective, a book of essays*. Belknap Press. 1962; Marx, Karl. *The Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy.* Penguin Classics. 1993; Mill, John Stuart. *Principles of Political Economy.* Oxford World Classics. 2008; Rostow, W.W. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto, second edition.* Cambridge University Press. 1971; Smith, Adam. *The Wealth of Nations.* Bantam Classics. 2003.

[982] Acemoglu, Daren and Robinson, James A. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty.* Currency. 2013.

[983] Landes, David S. *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some Are So Poor.* W.W. Norton and Company. 1999.

[984] Solow, Robert M. *Growth Theory: An Exposition.* Oxford University Press. 1970.

[985] Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Stanford University Press. 1991; Ingelhart, Ronald and Welzel, Christian. *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence.* Cambridge University Press. 2005; Marx, Karl. *The Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy.* Penguin Classics. 1993; Weber, Max and Tribe, Keith. *Economy and Society: A New Translation.* Harvard University Press. 2019.

The failure of development aid to more reliably spur growth highlights the fact that economists cannot agree on a replicable model of economic development, let alone how to enact it through aid projects. But if economists can't tell us how to generate development, the social and economic achievements of the most advanced economies should be downgraded to some measure of luck. In this way, the failure to end poverty highlights the contingency of our own privileges, and this forces us to confront their relative evanescence.[986] It also forces us to come to terms with the inevitability of suffering in the world, for it highlights the intractability of poverty.[987] Hence, development aid can tinge the global imaginary with both a sense of hope and hopelessness, and this in turn can color it with a sense of failure. It also raises questions about what precisely constitutes development.

The very idea of development has been under siege since at least the time of Rousseau in the mid-eighteenth century.[988] It is alleged to be a value laden and racist concept, which has been used to justify many of the worst abuses of western colonialism. And it has been pilloried from both the left and the right as a soulless assault on the things we hold most dear,[989] which dissolves all social bonds.[990] Meanwhile, anthropologist James Scott has demonstrated how agricultural peoples often revert to hunter gatherer lifestyles out of choice.[991] And functioning states commonly collapse, as national identities fragment into their component parts, as Joseph Tainter has illustrated.[992] So, we should not assume that development moves in a particular

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[986] Meade, Eric. *Reframing Poverty: New Thinking and Feeling About Humanity's Greatest Challenge.* Canyon House Press. 2019.
[987] Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Thinking Big Fails the Poor.* Routledge. 2018.
[988] Rousseau, Jean-Jacques and Cranston Maurice trans. *A Discourse on Inequality.* Penguin Classics. 1985.
[989] Berman, Morris. *The Reenchantment of the World.* Cornell University Press. 1981; Deneen, Patrick J. *Why Liberalism Failed, reprint edition.* Yale University Press. 2019; McCarraher, Eugene. *The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity.* Belknap Press. 2022.
[990] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity.* Polity Press. 2000.
[991] Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia.* Yale University Press. 2010.
[992] Tainter, Joseph A. *The Collapse of Complex Societies.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.

direction, which unfolds over time, as in the case of early childhood development. Nor, as Alexander Gershenkron pointed out in the middle of the twentieth century, should we assume that the stages of development look the same for the first societies passing through them as the last.[993]

Part of the problem with the idea of development is that it is commonly associated with improvements in conditions. Thus, we tend to assume that a society that is more economically developed is also better off. But while much of what we deem to be good is commonly associated with development, as in the case of increasing choices and capacities,[994] it doesn't mean development is always good. Nor does it mean that more developed cultures are somehow morally superior to those that are less developed. Far from it, the abusiveness of individuals and states is often rooted in their perceived sense of developmental superiority. Meanwhile, in order to cope with their challenges, highly developed systems often engage in conscious regression, reversion, retrenchment, and consolidation. They also often simply collapse.[995] This challenges both the idea that development progresses in stages and that it is always good. And it raises questions about where humanity is going, and whether where it is going is good, adding further confusion to the global imaginary.

In an ambitious project aimed at charting development across all dimensions of the human experience, Ken Wilber has argued from outside of academia that development is best conceived as advances in the integration of complexity.[996] Building on the work of Arthur Lovejoy, he sees development as being advanced by parts making up greater wholes, which themselves become the parts of ever greater wholes, in ever more complex wholes, with each advance in complexity

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[993] Gershenkron, Alexander. *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective, a Book of Essays*. Belknap Press. 1962.
[994] Beck, Don. *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership, and Change.* Blackwell Publishing. 1996; Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom.* Oxford University Press. 2001; Wilber, Ken. *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution, revised edition.* Shambhala. 2001.
[995] Tainter, Joseph A. *The Collapse of Complex Societies.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.
[996] Wilber, Ken. *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution, revised edition.* Shambhala. 2001.

representing a higher stage of development.[997] Brian Arthur has shown how technologies tend to develop in this way, with the inventions of one generation being subsumed into the components of the next generation's innovations.[998] And this ontological structure is readily observable in human anatomy, where many cells make up tissues, many tissues make up organ systems, and many organ systems make a body.[999] Learning also often proceeds in this manner, with the letters of the alphabet being constructed into words, words into sentences, and sentences into compositions.

Yet, it is not altogether clear whether it takes many families to make a tribe, many tribes to make an ethnic group, and many ethnic groups to make a nation. Rather, as we saw in the first chapter on social imaginaries, nations tend to be rooted in whatever principle might best bind together a group of people living in a given territory.[1000] They might use a shared language or religion to bind themselves together, but they might just as well be bound together from the top down by the state itself. Meanwhile, societies are often composed of a variety of smaller social units, ranging from occupational subcultures to ideological countercultures to municipalities. Hence, Tainter leaves open the question of whether development proceeds according to stages or in degrees.[1001] In this way, the development of societies might be measured by the linear progression in the organization of their states, but it might also be measured by the increase in their number of technologies, occupations, or government bureaus.[1002] Whatever the case, leaving open the question of whether development proceeds according to stages or in degrees further undermines the idea of a linear progression of human societies, and this also undermines our confidence in the future.

The question of what spurs economic development as we have just seen raises unanswerable

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[997] Lovejoy, Arthur O. *The Great Chain of Being.* Belknap Press. 1976.
[998] Arthur, Brian W. *The Nature of Technology: What It Is and How It Evolves.* Free Press. 2011.
[999] Wilber, Ken. *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution, revised edition.* Shambhala. 2001.
[1000] Hobsbawm, Eric J. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality, second edition.* Cambridge University Press. 2012.
[1001] Tainter, Joseph A. *The Collapse of Complex Societies.* Cambridge University Press. 1990.
[1002] Ibid.

questions about the nature of social and political development more generally, and this draws into question the ontological composition of human civilization and with it our ideas about the way the world works. Development is commonly conceived as a value laden concept that assumes increases in complexity are always good. Yet, anyone who has ever looked closely at urbanization and social displacement in developing countries has been forced to reckon with the counterarguments, which are all too often painfully glaring. In fact, the process of modernization, as it emerged in the nineteenth century, arose in conjunction with a romantic adversary, which criticized its every assertion, as Isaiah Berlin has demonstrated.[1003] In this way, development might always exist in tension with the urge to return to origins, the impulse to tear it all down, and the cautionary advice to proceed carefully. Whatever the case, its direction and worth can seldom be taken at face value, and this reminds us of the dialectic at the heart of the global imaginary.

Still, development can be defined so as to feature increasing levels of value that almost everyone would recognize as good. For instance, Amartya Sen conceives of development in terms of increasing degrees of personal, social, political, and economic freedom.[1004] Thus, more developed societies can be thought of as providing us with greater freedom while less developed societies tend to constrain our choices and venues of expression. In a similar vein, Martha Nussbaum conceives of development in terms of the fulfillment of human capabilities, with higher development signifying the greater ability to exercise our human capacities to work and think, feel and create.[1005] Aid organizations have increasingly integrated these concepts of development into their aims,[1006] but it is not what economists are measuring when they ask whether development aid has succeeded in spurring development.[1007] Rather, what they are

[1003] Berlin, Isaiah. *The Roots of Romanticism.* Princeton University Press. 1999.
[1004] Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom.* Anchor. 2000.
[1005] Nussbaum, Martha C. *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach.* Belknap Press. 2013.
[1006] Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Thinking Big Fails the Poor.* Routledge. 2018.
[1007] Collier, Paul. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It.* Oxford University Press. 2008; Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Oxford University Press. 2007; Moyo, Dambisa. Dead Aid: *Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010.

talking about is the amount of trade within a given territory as measured by gross domestic product. Yet, even here they come up short on answers.

Thus far, we have been exploring the challenge of bringing development to countries, but development aid seeks to bring it to the world, and this project is far more central to the global imaginary. It raises questions about the sustainability of advanced economies, which in turn leads us to question the prospects of human civilization. When we take into account ever increasing rates of groundwater depletion, declining soil fertility, diminishing fishery yields, and agricultural losses due to hotter temperatures, it is far from clear that the planet will be able to feed 10 billion people at today's levels of consumption.[1008] But it would be even harder to imagine if everyone on the planet were consuming and wasting as much food as, say, the average American.[1009] It is possible that increasing rates of technological development will bring about increasing rates of food production, but this has not been the case since the advent of the green revolution roughly half a century ago. Lester Brown has exhaustively demonstrated that most increases in food production since that time have come about through opening up new lands to production.[1010] Yet, most of what might be opened up to cultivation in the future consists of forests and wetlands, and opening these to production will only intensify climate change, and this will bring about its own concomitant decline in yields, along with a host of other problems. Therefore, developing the world's poorest countries could bring about massive food shortages in the future and thus their economic decline.

In this way, the very idea of spreading development brings up mixed feelings about its sustainability, which complicates its role in the global imaginary.

Helping others develop also tends to raise questions about power and dignity. This is just as true for a parent helping their own child as an aid worker from a more developed country helping

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[1008] Conway, Gordon. *One Billion Hungry: Can We Feed the World?* Comstock Publishing Associates. 2012.
[1009] Patel, Raj. *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System, expanded edition.* Melville House. 2012.
[1010] Brown, Lester R. *Full Planet, Empty Plates: The New Geopolitics of Food Scarcity.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2012.

poor villagers. Dependencies can arise even when great efforts are expended in preventing them, and patronizing attitudes can crop up even among the most idealistic givers. Even with the best good will, it can be demeaning to receive assistance. Yet, even when aid is delivered with a sense of social equality, it can undermine cultures by upending traditional institutions. This is often experienced as an assault on its beneficiaries' sense of dignity, but it can also be experienced as a deliberate attack on their cultures. Meanwhile, the paternalism of development aid reminds many people of colonialism, all the more so when it is given with the intention of buying leverage over their political institutions.[1011]

But even when development aid is successful and carried out with the best intentions, the inequities between giver and receiver can generate a sense of humiliation. And this tends to translate into further ambivalence about development aid in the global imaginary. It is often forgotten that, while aid is the work of saints, it is administered by real human beings. And it is hard work that can leave them burnt out. Aid workers can come to associate their service with the limitations of the real world, the failure of their dreams, and their own personal exhaustion, as an array of personal accounts testify.[1012] Academic economists studying it from afar often respond to its shortcomings in a similar manner.[1013]

Meanwhile, outsiders typically associate aid with the troubles it seeks to ameliorate, and much as in the case of peacekeeping and statebuilding, this can tinge the global imaginary with a sense of failure. The fact that the very idea of economic development is tied to a model of social and political organization that many find dubious further complicates the role of aid in the global

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[1011] Escobar, Arturo. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton University Press. 1995.

[1012] Katz, Jonathan M. *The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster.* St. Martin's Griffin. 2014; Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Thinking Big Fails the Poor.* Routledge. 2018; Orbinski, James. *An Imperfect Offering: Humanitarian Action for the Twenty-First Century.* Walker Books. 2009.

[1013] Ferguson, James. *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho.* University of Minnesota Press. 1994; Ramalingam, Ben. *Aid on the Edge of Chaos: Rethinking International Cooperation in a Complex World.* Oxford University Press. 2015; Uvin, Peter. *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda.* Kumarian Press. 1999.

imaginary.

Development aid is often provided at major moments of national upheaval, so it is commonly associated with social and political turbulence.[1014] And precisely because it is provided when things are at their worst, it tends to be associated with the most hard hit parts of the world in their greatest moments of crisis. Yet, even when it is provided to more stable states, they tend to be some of the poorest. So, much like peacekeeping and statebuilding, development aid tends to be associated with dysfunctionality and suffering. This same phenomenon has cropped up repeatedly over the course of the last three chapters, so it would be easy at this point to be inured to its salience. Yet, nothing could be more significant to the global imaginary than the fact that a major portion of the activity associated with it is doomed to failure.

Development aid presents us with a more perplexing problem pertaining to the composition of the global imaginary itself. Since development takes place over time, and it raises questions about the sustainability of the global economy, it draws into question who is included in the global imaginary. Is it every human being on the planet, or is it every human being who may come to be born on the planet in the future? Suddenly, the contours of the global imaginary start to appear less clear than those photos of the earth from space suggest. Peacekeeping and statebuilding could teach us a lot about a global imaginary that includes everyone who is alive today, but development seems most relevant to the members of future generations, who might benefit from the fruits of development.

The problem is that many of the bases upon which social imaginaries are premised are difficult to apply to future generations. Development transforms the mediums of communication that bind together social groups. It alters social practices, and transforms institutions. And while the normative foundations of international law and morality may develop over time, economic development tends to shatter and reformulate all values and institutions. It is a process Joseph Schumpeter dubbed "creative destruction," in referring to the emergence of new innovations and

[1014] Collier, Paul. *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places.* Harper Perennial. 2010.

industries.[1015] But it can also be applied to the transformation of social relations discussed by Marx.[1016] Just think of how the bases of social life were transformed over the last generation on social media and the ramifications that had for the reconfiguration of political power.

In this way, the consideration of development draws into question the nature of any social imaginary. But it is more salient to the global imaginary, because development is such an essential component of it. Yet, if development draws into question the shape of the global imaginary, then one of the central pillars of the global imaginary undermines the very idea of it. And that makes the questions raised by development even more decentering, while it recapitulates many of the problems of scale that are posed by an imaginary of this scope. The problem here is not simply that the global imaginary is too vast and complex to fathom. Rather, its very vastness and complexity sets us on an elusive quest for stable boundaries that development pushes ever further into the future.

Development aid has been integral to the emergence of a global economy. It has sought to fill the gaps in the techno-industrial system by globalizing its adoption. It has been a key institution of international society and the system of states. And for these reasons, among others, it has been chosen as one of our case studies. It also explains why it is a central pillar of the global imaginary, which challenges people in the developed world to think harder about their relationships to people in underdeveloped countries. But aid has also been a major source of discomfort with the global imaginary, because it highlights its inequities and displays its failures. Few of its critics argue for eliminating it altogether, but it has few defenders focusing on why it works and the need for more of it.[1017]

Just as we saw with peacekeeping, much of the literature on development aid excoriates it, only to come out in support of greater funding for it. While saying so is tangential to our primary

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[1015] Schumpeter, Joseph A. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy, third edition.* Harper Perennial Modern Classics. 2008.
[1016] Marx, Karl. *The Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy.* Penguin Classics. 1993.
[1017] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time.* Penguin Press. 2005; Singer, Peter. *One World: The Ethics of Globalization.* Yale University Press. 2004.

objective of examining its impact on the global imaginary, the same could be said of this case study. The literature reflects our discomfort with development aid, but it also perpetuates that discomfort by problematizing our best intentions. Criticisms of aid work certainly call to mind the old saying, “no good deed goes unpunished.” More importantly, they deepen discomfort with the global imaginary, thereby setting the stage for a retreat from globalism, which we turn to in full in the coming chapter.

Chapter VII: Strengthening the Global Imaginary

The Nature of the Retreat

The previous chapters demonstrated that while the global imaginary is strong it is also riddled with contradictions. The institutionalized practices through which it is manifested undermine it; the same forces that drive its development also spur a retreat from it. It is in this sense that the global imaginary might best be described as a dialectic that ebbs and flows as it develops.[1018] Yet, given the countless dimensions and manifold expressions of the global imaginary, it would be easy to lose sight of how it all hangs together: how multiple forces brought the global imaginary into being, how global institutions emerged out of the world we imagined, how the performance of those institutions shaped our images of the world, and how the retreat from globalism has been spurred by the failure of our institutions to live up to our global ideals. Hence, it is incumbent on us to pause and take stock of our preceding arguments.

We have now reached a point at which we can begin pulling together the threads of the past six chapters so as to better understand the retreat from globalism that has been present in recent years in every major region of the world. But before reviewing the argument that has been building up to this point, we would do well to look a little more closely at the retreat itself, for the case studies have helped to draw out many of the more elusive dimensions of the retreat. The retreat from globalism can be conceived as a rejection of social and political participation in the wider world. It is a retreat in the sense that globalization in all its forms has been increasing over

[1018] Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2009.

the past several generations,[1019] and now many people are deliberately trying to reverse the trend.[1020] Yet, it is also a retreat in the more salient and metaphorical sense of withdrawing from the field of battle, and this is a much more personal reaction.

The idea of participating in a wider global community has lost some of its allure, as it has come to appear less appealing.[1021] And as was outlined in the Introduction, this has led countless people in every major region of the world to abandon it in favor of something closer to home.[1022] The retreat from globalism is saliently exhibited in rising xenophobia and the rejection of refugees and immigrants.[1023] It shows up in proto-fascist movements whose ethnonationalism spurns outsiders.[1024] It is present in the rejection of liberalism and the embrace of a populist authoritarianism that seeks to place authority in the hands of a strongman.[1025] It appears in the

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[1019] Beck, Ulrich and Cronin, Ciara trans. *Cosmopolitan Vision.* Polity Press. 2006; Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture.* Routledge. 1994; Kirsch, Adam. *The Global Novel: Writing the 21st Century.* Columbia Global Reports. 2017; Meyer, John W and Drori, Gill S. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer.* Oxford University Press. 2009; Sachs, Jeffrey. *The Ages of Globalization: Geography, Technology, and Institutions.* Columbia University Press. 2020; Wright, Robert. *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny.* Vintage Books. 2001.

[1020] Deneen, Patrick J. *Regime Change: Toward a Post-Liberal Future.* Forum. 2023; Hazony, Yoram. *The Virtue of Nationalism.* Basic Books. 2020; Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019; Miller, David. *Citizenship and National Identity.* Polity Press. 2000; Scruton, Roger. *Where We Are: The State of Britain Now.* Bloomsbury Continuum. 2017; Tamir. Yael. *Why Nationalism.* Princeton University Press. 2019.

[1021] Eatwell, Roger and Goodwin, Matthew. *National Populism: The Revolt Against Liberal Democracy.* Penguin Random House. 2018; Krastev, Ivan. *After Europe.* University of Pennsylvania Press. 2017.

[1022] Scruton, Roger. *Where We Are: The State of Britain Now.* Bloomsbury Continuum. 2017.

[1023] Krastev, Ivan. *After Europe.* University of Pennsylvania Press. 2017; Polakow-Suransky, Sasha. *Go Back to Where You Came From: The Backlash Against Immigration and the Fate of Western Democracy.* Nation Books. 2017.

[1024] Horesh, Theo. *The Fascism This Time: And the Global Future of Democracy.* Cosmopolis Press. 2020; Stanley, Jason. *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them.* Random House. 2018.

[1025] Müller, Jan Werner. *What Is Populism?* Penguin Press. 2017.

turn against economic globalization and the development of national industries.[1026] It can be witnessed in the rejection of global cooperation and international agreements.[1027] And, as we have seen in the last three chapters, it appears in the criticism of international institutions, which is even prevalent in more cosmopolitan circles.[1028]

What all these forms of retreat share in common is a rejection of the wider world, with all of its associated chaos and confusion, and a retreat into what is imagined to be a more conventional existence. Peter Berger portrayed conventional reality as a field of objects that can be maneuvered in predictable patterns. Working at an office, where you wear the same clothes, carry out the same tasks, use the same skills, leave at the same time, negotiate the same traffic, and do the same thing the next day, rinsing and repeating in endless cycles, is part of a conventional reality, according to this view. The same could be said for mobilizing around the same election cycle, tracking the same debates, watching the same news, and voting in the same location, year after year in a seemingly endless cycle. These arrangements may be thrown into question by major upheavals in our lives, say, divorce or a coup. But they are generally predictable, and this lends to our lives a sense of constancy, which makes it easier to form a stable identity.[1029]

Yet, globalization is different in that it is by its very nature disruptive.[1030] It presents us with more

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[1026] Chang, Ha-Joon. *Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism.* Bloomsbury Publishing. 2009; Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the Global Economy.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2012.
[1027] Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities*. Yale University Press. 2019.
[1028] Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal.* Belknap Press. 2021; Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2008.
[1029] Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion, pgs. 3-28.* Anchor Books. 1990.
[1030]Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity.* Polity Press. 2000; Calhoun, Craig. *'Belonging' in the cosmopolitan imaginary.* (2003) Ethnicities 3(4). pp. 531-553; Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Polity Press. 1990; Greenwald, Bruce K. *Globalization: n. the irrational fear that someone in China will take your job.* Wiley. 2008; Mishra, Pankaj. *The Age of Anger: A History of the Present.* Penguin Press. 2018; Naim, Moises. *The End of Power: From*

information than we could begin to master.[1031] It presents us with more suffering than we could possibly fathom.[1032] It presents a vast and largely incomprehensible field of ever changing threats.[1033] And since there is so much going on with it, there are few regular patterns to our perception of it. So, our focus tends to drift when we turn to the wider world. Rising authoritarianism in Central Europe may seize our attention at some point only to fall so far off the radar that we don't even notice when it dissipates. We may agonize over the famine in Yemen for years only to forget about it altogether and miss when it ends. The institutions grounding our attention are too weak, the amount of information we need to master is too much, and the moral commitments with which we are confronted are too burdensome to keep up. Hence, there are few predictable habits associated with our global engagement, and we struggle to shape our lives and identities around it, because the world we imagine is an ever shifting target.

In this way, the retreat from globalism might be said to reject postmodernity, with its more fluid notions of race, gender, culture, identity, and sexuality. It might also be said to reject the complexity commonly associated with the information age, along with the kind of systemic thinking that is often required to grasp it. It might be said to reject these things because they are often imagined to have accompanied the rise of globalization. Yet, they are also related to it through their dissolution of conventional categories.[1034] In this sense, we have come to associate globalism with fluidity and complexity,[1035] and the kind of breaking of bounds commonly associated with radical movements and sophisticated elites. The global imaginary that results is less an ordered architecture of institutions and more an amalgam of ever changing forces. And as we have repeatedly seen throughout this thesis, this can be unsettling, and it can fuel the retreat from globalism and its institutions.

Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States, Why Being in Charge Isn't What It Used to Be. Basic Books. 2014.

[1031] Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World.* University of Minnesota Press. 2013.

[1032] Horesh, Theo. *Convergence: The Globalization of Mind.* Bauu Institute Press. 2014.

[1033] Brown, Lester R. Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization. W.W. Norton and Company. 2009; *Rees, Lord Martin. On the Future: Prospects for Humanity.* Princeton University Press. 2018.

[1034] Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity.* Polity Press. 2000.

[1035] Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Polity Press. 1990.

Whatever might be said of its exact nature, the retreat from globalism has been strengthened by a concomitant embrace of reified national identities. Reification as it is being used here is the process of transforming abstract ideas into concrete realities. National identities are constructed in the imagination and made real by belief,[1036] as the first chapter on social imaginaries demonstrated. The process is enacted through the recitation of emotional histories and moving displays of patriotism. And it is rooted in countless everyday reminders of our shared heritage and citizenship.[1037] But national identities have been dissolving in recent years due to a multitude of processes including, among other things, the globalization of trade, the disappearance of middle classes, the increase in multiculturalism, and the spread of the internet and social media. Hence, nationalists have had to more forcefully assert their identities in order to keep them from disappearing.[1038]

While the retreat from globalism commonly shows up in conscious political programs, what is being described here is a more personal reaction to these disruptive forces. It might appear in the form of an aversion to multiculturalism. It might take the form of hypernationalism, or else a rejection of emergent global institutions involved with humanitarianism and basic stability, as discussed in prior chapters.[1039] Yet, these are largely expressions of a sense of disillusionment with global action and a frustration with global elites.[1040] The impulse has been variously associated with rightwing populism[1041] and authoritarianism,[1042] while others like myself have

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[1036] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Verso. 1983; Hobsbawm, Eric and Ranger, Terrance eds. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge University Press. 1983.
[1037] Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism.* Sage Publications Ltd. 1995.
[1038] Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember.* Cambridge University Press. 1989.
[1039] Mearsheimer, John J. *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities.* Yale University Press. 2019.
[1040] Mishra, Pankaj. *The Age of Anger: A History of the Present, pgs, 321-346.* Penguin Press. 2018.
[1041] Muller, Jan Werner. *What Is Populism?* University of Pennsylvania. 2016.
[1042] Levitsky, Steven and Ziblatt, Daniel. *How Democracies Die.* Crown Publishing. 2019; Snyder, Timothy. *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century.* Crown Publishing. 2017.

associated it with a new form of fascism.[1043] These are now familiar analyses, but while the retreat from globalism inspires and overlaps with these trends, it needs to be understood as a distinct phenomenon, with its own set of repercussions.

In summary, the retreat from globalism as we saw in the Introduction involves a withdrawal from global connections and associations. It might be seen as a rejection or a repudiation of the processes of globalization, but it might just as well take the form of an appeal to or embrace of a more circumscribed field of experience. The retreat from globalism can assume a multitude of guises because it is first and foremost an orientation to the world, and it is an impulse to turn away from it. And since we can never take in the world at a glance, and it is far too big to know, the retreat from globalism is always a withdrawal from the world we have come to imagine. In short, the retreat from globalism is a rejection of the global imaginary, and understanding its meaning and implications will require a brief review of the foregoing chapters.

The Crisis in Its Totality

The first chapter as you may recall examined the nature of social imaginaries and why they are so critical to the formation of group identities. In short, social imaginaries consist of the ideas about what we share in common with the groups of which we are a part, and they are necessary if we are to bind vast numbers of people together in shared endeavors.[1044] These more inclusive social imaginaries have grown in importance as ever wider numbers of people have been brought together by advances in transportation and communication, which were first so critical to the

[1043] Albright, Madeleine. *Fascism: A Warning.* Harper Perennial. 2018; Horesh, Theo. *The Fascism This Time: And the Global Future of Democracy.* Cosmopolis Press. 2020; Stanley, Jason. *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them.* Random House. 2018.
[1044] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Verso. 1983.

formation of nations[1045] and now challenge us to cooperate more globally.[1046] But precisely because they exist in the imagination, and the world in which we live is constantly changing, social imaginaries are always porous, and they seldom approximate the real world of our relations.[1047] So, they require constant social fortification if they are to avoid dissolution,[1048] all the more so when they are being challenged by wider and more inclusive identities, like that of a cosmopolitanism tied to the global imaginary. This reaffirmation of social identities through rituals of remembrance and symbols of solidarity is nothing surprising, but it has become ever more pronounced as a stronger global imaginary has come to threaten more limited national identities.

In this way, the second chapter explored the way we are globally interconnected and how an emergent global imaginary has come to express an inchoate global identity that threatens more ethnic and national identities. As we have seen, humanity is more globally interlinked than even the most cosmopolitan thinkers tend to believe.[1049] We are bound together by our shared anatomy and physiology, the technologies that are most fundamental to human civilization,[1050] the global economy through which we work and trade,[1051] the occupational and recreational networks that are central to our everyday lives,[1052] and the international system of states which gives shape to our national identities.[1053] Most of what ties us together globally has been taken for granted,

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[1045] Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism.* Cornell University Press. 1983.
[1046] Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, pgs. 22-44.* Harper Perennial. 2015.
[1047] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity.* Liveright. 2018.
[1048] Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember.* Cambridge University Press. 1989.
[1049] Meyer, John W and Drori, Gill S. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[1050] Brown, Donald E. *Human Universals.* Temple University Press. 1991; Wright, Robert. *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny.* Vintage Books. 2001.
[1051] Friedman, Thomas. *The World is Flat: The Globalized World in the Twenty-First Century.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2005; Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Polity Press. 1990.
[1052] Slaughter, Anne Marie. *The Chessboard and the Web: Strategies of Connection in a Networked World.* Yale University Press. 2018.
[1053] Wendt, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics.* Cambridge University Press. 1999; Wight, Martin. *Systems of States.* Leicester University Press. 1977.

because it is such an integral part of our lives in just about every society on the planet.[1054] Yet, the global risks we share in common like climate change and food insecurity highlight the salience of our global integration.[1055]

Even as our most fundamental institutions and practices are globalized, our ideas about how we are tied together globally remain emergent and unformed, and this makes it difficult to inspire collaboration on the global challenges that are increasingly critical to the sustainability of human civilization. Hence, we turned in the third chapter to the global institutions that have already formed, examining how they have shaped our ideas of the world and the extent to which they might serve as the basis for shared global action. But far from detailing a set of institutions like humanitarianism, which might be pitted against more nationalist impulses, we found that it is the international system of states itself that has largely given shape to our national identities.[1056] This presented us with a paradox that is critical to understanding the global imaginary.

The very idea of most nations only appears within the context of a system of states that demarcates their territories, presses them to adopt western institutions,[1057] and sets the outer bounds of normatively acceptable state behavior.[1058] Change the international system of states into, say, a conglomeration of empires, and our national identities would come to be displaced by a new set of identity markers, perhaps dissolving into more ethnic or tribal ties, perhaps forming around wider religious identities.[1059] The same might be said of a shift to regional blocks or a bi-polar divide between democratic and authoritarian states. In this sense, nationalism is an outgrowth of the international system of states, and it is an integral expression of the global imaginary.

[1054] Waldron, Jeremy. *Cosmopolitan Norms.* In Benhabib, Seyla and Post, Robert eds. *Another Cosmopolitanism.* Oxford University Press. 2008.
[1055] Beck, Ulrich. *World Risk Society.* Polity Press. 1999.
[1056] Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics.* Waveland Press. 1979.
[1057] Badie, Bertrand. *The Imported State: The Westernization of Political Order.* Stanford University Press. 2000.
[1058] Reus-Smit, Christian. *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations.* Princeton University Press. 2009.
[1059] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity, pgs. 69-104.* Liveright. 2018.

Of course, many national identities, like that of the English, emerged out of longstanding cultures.[1060] But most didn't emerge from the ground up in this way,[1061] and even those that managed to build a state out of a nation took shape within the context of the international system of states. Thus, Englishness was subsumed into the Britishness associated with the more inclusive United Kingdom, and when it seemed that the United Kingdom would be subsumed into the European Union, a substantial portion of its population came to see themselves as more European than British. Thus, when the retreat from globalism centers around a return to nationalism, it is founded on a denial of the role of the international system of states in shaping national identities, which is so central to shaping the global imaginary.

In this way, it is my contention that we have been globalized for so long, and so many elements of our identities are rooted in global structures, that we can no longer see the global waters in which we are swimming. In the meantime, the great challenges of this century as we have seen in the case studies are mostly global, and thus we are bound together in vast pools of global risk.[1062] In the meantime, the absence of more global institutions, capable of bringing about more forceful collective action on global challenges, has come to threaten human civilization.[1063] And the nationalism into which people are retreating can neither conceptually nor institutionally grapple with these challenges. The paradox that has eluded almost everyone as we have seen is that the nationalism threatening human civilization is itself constructed out of the international system of states at the heart of the global imaginary.

Once that is understood, national identities must be taken as subordinate to this wider global system. Modern nations are quite literally a product of the global imaginary, which came into being only after we began to build an international system of states. But the trouble with the global imaginary cannot be settled with such a simple stroke of the pen, so to speak. The global

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[1060] Armstrong, John A. *Nations Before Nationalism.* University of North Carolina Press. 1982.
[1061] Hobsbawm , Eric. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780, Programme, Myth, Reality, Second edition.* Cambridge University press. 2012.
[1062] Beck, Ulrich. *Cosmopolitan Vision.* Polity Press. 2006.
[1063] Meyer, John W. and Krucken, Georg ed. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer.* Oxford University Press. 2010.

imaginary is plagued by its magnitude and complexity. It is simply too big to know,[1064] containing too many components,[1065] and it is too complex to grasp, with too much human diversity. This confounds the global imaginary with a set of challenges not faced by more parochial imaginaries. Meanwhile, the suffering with which we are confronted when we open our hearts to the whole of the world is too vast, and the moral commitments that arise in the face of this suffering tend to be too great, for most people to take on.[1066]

Thus, we struggle to maintain a vision of how we might engage with this wider world that does not leave us feeling hopelessly overwhelmed.[1067] The same goes for the international system of states, whose necessary tasks of peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid are all too often doomed to failure, because they simply demand more than the system can take on. In this way, the very projects the global community takes on to keep the world from falling apart lead to a global imaginary that appears hopelessly broken. Global institutions may be necessary in a globalized world, but the conditions in which they operate contribute to the retreat from globalism.

[1064] Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World.* University of Minnesota Press. 2013.

[1065] Weinberger, David. *Too Big to Know: Rethinking Knowledge Now That the Facts Aren't the Facts, Experts Are Everywhere, and the Smartest Person in the Room is the Room*. Basic Books. 2014.

[1066] Arneson, R. *Moral Limits on the Demands of Beneficence?* in D.K. Chatterjee ed. *The Ethics of Assistance.* Cambridge University Press. 2004; Horesh, Theo. *Convergence: The Globalization of Mind.* Bauu Institute. 2014; McKinnon, C. *Climate Change Justice: Getting motivated in the last chance saloon.* Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy. (2005) 14.2, 195-293; Risse, M. *'How Does the Global Order Harm the Poor?* (2005) Philosophy and Public Affairs, 33.4, 349-376.

[1067] Ibid.

The Trouble With Global Institutions

Each of the case studies brought to light their own unique challenges, so exploring the global imaginary through a wider range of institutions would have shone a light on more dimensions of it. Yet, there are only so many case studies an analysis like this might examine, and an increase in their number would have been paid for at the price of their depth. Still, the case studies converged around a common set of challenges. And we can see the same issues of scale and complexity cropping up in global challenges like climate change and genocide. So, it would be remiss not to provide at least a cursory glance at how the case studies are tied together and how the insights gleaned from them might be applied to other global challenges. Thus, we turn in this subsection to a synoptic overview of the case studies, which might shed a light on the deeper ontological structure of the global imaginary.

The international community has sought to maintain peace and order, while generating development, to prevent the maladies of the most troubled states from spreading. It has done this as we have seen because we live in a globalized world where the fate of all states and peoples are intimately bound together, so it is often necessary for states to act in concert to prevent problems in distant places from spreading to their own backyards. But the international system of states has also sought to ameliorate the troubles of the poorest and most broken nations because it has been pressed to act by an emergent global public sphere.[1068] In some cases, we even see state actors driving a humanitarian response, as if the representatives of international society have come to see themselves as speaking for the world. Whatever the motives, global action has been predicated on the notion that we all sink or swim together, and the sense that we are in it together has led us to see ourselves as related to people the world over.[1069]

Yet, humanity has struggled to build effective global institutions and failed to shape a compelling

[1068] Kaldor, Mary. *The Idea of Global Civil Society.* International Affairs. (2003) 79.3, pgs. 583-593; Keck, Margaret E. and Sikkink, Kathryn. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics.* Cornell University Press. 1998; Singer, Peter. *One World Now: The Ethics of Globalization, revised edition.* Yale University Press. 2016.
[1069] Beck, Ulrich and Cronin, Ciara trans. *Cosmopolitan Vision.* Polity Press. 2006; Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal.* Belknap Press. 2021.

global imaginary. Meanwhile, the actions of global institutions have led us to imagine a more broken world. And far from strengthening our sense of resilience in the face of global challenges, the types of challenges they have taken on have been more apt to leave us feeling helpless and overwhelmed. In this way, the retreat from globalism has been fueled among other things by the very type of collective actions this thesis seeks to foster, for they have led us to imagine a capricious and dangerous world over which we can exert little control. A brief review of the challenges shared by these institutions helps summarize the difficulties involved in shaping a stronger global imaginary.

The case studies demonstrated that the projects undertaken by these global institutions have typically been underfunded, and their mandates have usually been quite weak. There is seldom enough development aid to lift a nation out of poverty once and for all,[1070] and peacekeeping missions are seldom big enough to stop a major war.[1071] So, when their work is complete, we are left feeling incomplete, as we look upon the suffering that remains.[1072] This can be looked at in terms of the difficulty involved in bringing about collective action among multiple parties, when no single party bears the brunt of the problem.[1073] In this sense, there is always a danger that states will attempt to shirk their responsibilities, free riding off of others that do the hard work. It can also be viewed in terms of the geopolitical problem of building a system of states characterized by mutual cooperation.[1074] There have been many regional systems of states

[1070] Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities of Our Time.* Penguin Press. 2006.
[1071] Barnett, Michael and Fang, Songying et al. *Compromised Peacebuilding.* International Studies Quarterly. (2014) 58, 608–620; Sitkowski, Andrzej. *UN Peacekeeping: Myth and Reality.* Praeger Security International. 2006.
[1072] Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Thinking Big Fails the Poor.* Routledge. 2018; Meade, Eric. *Reframing Poverty: New Thinking and Feeling About Humanity's Greatest Challenge.* Canyon House Press. 2019.
[1073] Olsen, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups.* Harvard University Press. 1971.
[1074] Nye Jr., Joseph S. and Welch, David A. *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: An Introduction to Theory and History, tenth edition.* Pearson. 2016.

throughout history,[1075] but they are rarely as cooperative as many expect our current system of states to be— and there has never been a truly global system of states characterized by such cooperation.[1076]

However we choose to explain the milquetoast actions of the international system of states, the projects it has undertaken have tended to be left incomplete, and we have seldom had the satisfaction of seeing them put a final end to the troubles they have taken on. In the meantime, they have commonly been directed by distant bureaucrats, who lack a working knowledge of events on the ground.[1077] So, whether it is peacekeepers preventing two warring parties from fighting, or civil servants helping restore a previously functioning state, the projects undertaken by these institutions tend to be bound by rigid and inflexible rules of engagement. They tend to lack democratic accountability and fail to engage the participation of their beneficiaries.[1078] And while they are thoroughly political projects,[1079] whose implications are often quite revolutionary, the problems they take on tend to be treated as technical challenges.[1080]

Each of these institutions as we have seen has deep historical roots, but the distinct forms they have assumed are no more than a few generations old. The global imaginary to which they are

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[1075] Watson, Adam. *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis, second edition.* Routledge. 2009.
[1076] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* Columbia University Press. 1977.
[1077] Easterly, William. *The Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor.* Basic Books. 2012.
[1078] Barnett, Michael. *Building a Republican Peace: Stabilizing States After War.* International Security. Spring (2006) Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 87-112.
[1079] Barnett, Michael and Fang, Songying et al. *Compromised Peacebuilding.* International Studies Quarterly. (2014) 58, 608–620; Darden, Jessica Trisko. *Aiding and Abetting: U.S. Foreign Assistance and State Violence.* Stanford University Press. 2019; Lipson, Michael. *Peacekeeping: Organized Hypocrisy?* European Journal of International Relations. Vol. 13(1): 5-34, 2007.
[1080] Easterly, William. *The Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor.* Basic Books. 2012.

contributing is still emergent and unformed,[1081] and this too contributes to the sense that it lacks substance. Meanwhile, most of the projects they have taken on have taken place in the last few decades, so the institutions have been on an unusually steep learning curve.[1082] Given their youth, it should be no surprise that they have tended to get a lot of things wrong as they were learning. But the failures have left many outside observers frustrated by their efforts as well. The poor outcomes have resulted from taking on difficult projects, some portion of which were probably doomed to fail. Stopping a genocide is a lot to ask of lightly armed soldiers, assembled from a multitude of states, who lack specialized training, and permission to shoot, after all. And ending poverty with a budget of $40 per person per year, in a country plagued by a multitude of systemic challenges, can simply appear absurd.[1083]

The problems that are confronted by each of these institutions tend to result in tremendous suffering, which has spillover effects in neighboring countries and the wider world.[1084] So, their critics seldom suggest doing away with the practices altogether,[1085] and their criticisms have not appeared to have a major impact on project funding. In this sense, the institutions are like the only restaurant in town, which just happens to serve bad food. There is no staying home when it is a question of genocide or state collapse in an unstable part of the world, but there aren't many people jumping at taking on the job. And this sense of being reliant on bad institutions, coupled with their underfunding, can result in shoddy work and dissatisfaction all around, which also

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[1081] Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2009.

[1082] Cavalcante, Fernando. *Peacebuilding in the United Nations: Coming Into Life.* Palgrave Macmillan. 2019; Goertze, Catherine. *The Distinction of Peace: A Social Analysis of Peacebuilding.* University of Michigan Press. 2017; Howard, Lisa Morje. *UN Peacekeeping in Civil Wars.* Cambridge University Press. 2007.

[1083] MacAskill, William. *Doing Good Better: Effective Altruism and a Radical New Way to Make a Difference.* Guardian Faber Publishing. 2016.

[1084] Collier, Paul. *War, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places.* Harper Collins. 2009.

[1085] Collier, Paul. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It.* Oxford University Press. 2008; Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good.* Oxford University Press. 2007; Moyo, Dambisa. Dead Aid: *Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa.* Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. 2010; Sachs, Jeffrey D. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time.* Penguin Press. 2005.

shapes an unappealing global imaginary.

Each of these institutions tends to carry out its work in undeveloped countries, where the greatest struggles are largely unfamiliar to people from middle income and wealthy states. These countries are generally out of the way places, which only the experts tend to understand.[1086] They are also often small countries, like El Salvador and Bosnia, Namibia and Sierra Leone, which prohibits even the experts from understanding more than a few of them in depth. Meanwhile, there are few area experts focused on these issues, so engagement with the issues and cultures of the countries in which they work tends to be cursory.[1087] The result is that practitioners in the field don't tend to understand the deeper ramifications of their work.[1088] Nor are they able to fully communicate their missions to the general public, which also suffers from a lack of knowledge about the people and places affected by their missions. This can leave distant observers with frustrated expectations, contributing to a wider sense of frustration in the global imaginary, which becomes increasingly pervaded by dashed hopes and failed dreams.

The institutions seek to ameliorate traumatizing conditions, whether civil war, state collapse, or extreme poverty—and that's hard work that can leave people burnt out.[1089] Many come away traumatized, like the beneficiaries of their services, whose lives are torn apart by civil war, state collapse, chronic hunger, and early death. But many just come away emotionally exhausted as a result of all they have seen. In this sense, it is a lot like being on a battlefield, which is precisely where many of these people are placed—and that can make the work of these institutions psychologically wounding. It is wounding in the sense that the people exposed to it often fixate on the suffering they have witnessed and shape their worlds around it—as so many do with trauma. But it is also wounding in the sense that it confronts observers with suffering with which

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[1086] Autesserre, Severine. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention.* Cambridge University Press. 2014.
[1087] Lombard, Louisa. *State of Rebellion: Violence and Intervention in the Central African Republic.* Zed Books. 2016.
[1088] Autesserre, Severine. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention.* Cambridge University Press. 2014.
[1089] Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Thinking Big Fails the Poor, pgs. 118-134.* Routledge. 2018.

they lack the inner resources to grapple, and wounds like these can be crushing.[1090]

It is wounding to practitioners in the field, who lack the kind of mediating cultural institutions that might mitigate the most harmful effects of their anguish. But it is also wounding to outsiders looking in on their work, whether they be activists, academics, journalists, or informed citizens. A cycle in which high ideals are repeatedly being dashed to pieces has come to characterize this kind of work,[1091] calling to mind the cynic's saw, "if you aren't a socialist in your youth, you have no heart; if you aren't a conservative in old age, you have no brain." The high ideals drive people to dedicate their lives to helping others in need. Meanwhile, the difficulty of the work, coupled with its failure to make a more noticeable impact, and the lack of formal institutional support for it, leads to a sense of dejection, as if all was in vain. And this in turn shapes the way in which we conceive of the world, marking it as a place of vast suffering, which we lack the resources to ameliorate.

It is the stuff of a global imaginary that is bound to repel many while magnetizing few.

The case studies as we have seen are central to the work of some of the most important international organizations.[1092] But the work itself seldom makes the news, so even engaged citizens tend to misunderstand the nature of it. They don't tend to understand how the institutions of peacekeeping, statebuilding, and development aid work. Nor do they fully understand the challenges they confront, the difficulties they seek to overcome, or the places where they operate. How could they when there is so little information about them, so much background needed to understand what they do, so many tiny countries in which they operate, and such complexities involved in the organization of fragile states?[1093] In this way, support for and engagement with

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[1090] Meade, Eric. *Reframing Poverty: New Thinking and Feeling About Humanity's Greatest Challenge, pgs. 15-108.* Canyon House Press. 2019.
[1091] Kiš, Adam D. *The Development Trap: How Thinking Big Fails the Poor, pgs. 118-134.* Routledge. 2018.
[1092] Kennedy, Paul. *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations.* Penguin Press. 2007.
[1093] Lombard, Louisa. *State of Rebellion: Violence and Intervention in the Central African Republic.* Zed Books. 2016.

these institutions often reinforces a stereotype of naive idealism that pervades the global imaginary.[1094] It is hardly a recipe for building support for more global collective action.

The undemocratic nature of these institutions came up repeatedly in the case studies as well. Statebuilders set about building institutions that transform every dimension of life with little recognition of their revolutionary implications.[1095] Development projects dramatically alter the health and education systems of whole countries with little input from their beneficiaries,[1096] resulting in illegitimate institutions that don't last. But it is just as often misunderstood institutions that cannot be maintained.[1097] Statebuilders are typically technocrats seeking to implement a set of best practices who find themselves transforming whole ways of life. Meanwhile, as development practitioners and critics have argued for generations, aid projects are commonly dependent on donor funding, which makes feedback difficult, and with it vitally needed course corrections.[1098] The local beneficiaries of these institutions seldom have many opportunities for input,[1099] but neither do the citizens and representatives of donor states—and this too makes the work difficult to sustain, if only for lack of support.

The work itself is typically undertaken by a wide array of agencies and states, and this raises the question of how to get them all to cooperate on global challenges, when their interests diverge and the vast majority are focused on events closer to home.[1100] However important and necessary the work of these institutions may be, it is difficult not to come away with the impression that the international system of states is plagued by a lack of legitimacy and tremendous problems of

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[1094] Autesserre, Severine. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention.* Cambridge University Press. 2014.
[1095] Barnett, Michael. *Building a Republican Peace: Stabilizing States After War.* International Security. Spring (2006) Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 87-112.
[1096] Easterly, William. *The Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor.* Basic Books. 2012.
[1097] Trefon, Theodore. *Congo Masquerade: The Political Culture of Aid Inefficiency and Reform Failure.* Zed Books. 2011.
[1098] Hirschman, Albert O. *Development Projects Observed.* Brookings Institution Press. 1967.
[1099] United Nations Development Program. *Securing the Local Peace.* United Nations. 2012.
[1100] Hale, Thomas and Held, David et al. *Gridlock: Why Global Cooperation is Failing When We Need It Most.* Polity Press. 2013.

coordination.[1101] And world society with its countless cultures and nongovernmental associations does not come away looking much better.[1102] Meanwhile, the more they take on, the worse they tend to look. Yet, as we repeatedly found in the case studies, it is not as if the challenges of peace and order and development can simply be ignored. For violence tends to spill across borders, along with its attendant disorders, and its accompanying social and economic collapse.

Peacekeeping and statebuilding actualize the international system of state's respective aims of establishing peace and order, and development aid actualizes the global economic aim of development. Hence, the institutionalized practices of the case studies are closely related to more essential global institutions and therefore reveal in miniature some of the deeper problems with the international order itself. But the ontological structure of the case studies is also mirrored in global actions like the effort to stop genocide and climate change as well. The structure is the same because they take place in the same world, with the same power struggles, the same international system of states, and the same incomprehensibly vast scale, which renders it so impossible to fathom in its totality.

Take climate change, for instance. The number of activities contributing to climate change makes addressing it overwhelmingly complex.[1103] And it is hard to compel states to act on it, so what little action does occur is usually voluntarily adopted by nations.[1104] Even when it is successful, global climate action seldom gets the job done, as the task before it is overwhelming, and there is no permanent source of funding for it. Few people who support taking action on climate change are satisfied with the results. Hence, climate action tends to be associated with a sense of failure. And thinking about climate change also forces people to confront suffering they might not otherwise consider, so it can be traumatizing to follow efforts at generating action. Finally,

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[1101] Olsen, Mancur. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups.* Harvard University Press. 1974.
[1102] Burton, John W. *World Society.* Cambridge University Press. 1972.
[1103] Hulme, Mike. *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity.* Cambridge University Press. 2009.
[1104] Stern, Nicholas. *The Global Deal: Climate Change and the Creation of a New Era of Progress and Prosperity: Climate Change and the Creation of a New Era of Progress and Prosperity.* Public Affairs. 2009.

thinking about climate change forces us to consider moral arguments that are hard to confront, like our commitments to future generations and non-human life.[1105]

In this way, global collective action on climate change mirrors the ontological structure of our case studies. It is overwhelmingly complex, poorly funded, rarely enough to complete the job, tinged with a sense of failure, carried out through undeveloped institutions, involving exposure to mass suffering, and traumatizing to onlookers. Climate advocates who start out embracing the world also often end up frustrated by it. And it is similar with efforts to stop genocide, which all too often breaks out in obscure places, where experts and reporters are sparse, while most people are turning away in horror, and those who look tend to feel paralyzed in the face of insurmountable odds.[1106] The international community is notoriously bad at stopping genocide, because it is hard to get the great powers to come to agreement on taking action, often because they are divided about whether it is even a good thing to stop them, sometimes because they are essential to perpetrating the genocide in question. And even when they do, the resources needed to stop it are seldom forthcoming, because we struggle to wrap our minds around the process by which whole societies attack their most cherished norms and institutions.

If the reactions to the case studies were not mirrored in responses to challenges like climate change and genocide, they would not take us far in understanding the retreat from globalism. But people who try to stop genocides arguably come away with much the same disillusionment as those trying to stop climate change, rebuild states, lift people out of poverty, and prevent the recurrence of violence. And the same might be said of those trying to end the sex trade, save the rainforests, protect ocean fisheries, and relocate refugees. Each challenge is immense, complex, overwhelming, and traumatizing to confront. Work on each of them is insufficiently institutionalized. And they each challenge us to reconsider and often extend our moral commitments in burdensome and challenging new ways.[1107]

[1105] Gardiner, Stephen M. *The Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change.* Oxford University Press. 2013.
[1106] Horesh, Theo. *The Holocausts We All Deny: The Crisis Before the Fascist Inferno, Revised Edition.* Cosmopolis Press. 2022.
[1107] Singer, Peter. *Ethics in the Real World: 90 Essays on Things That Matter, Expanded Edition.* Princeton University Press. 2023.

The institutionalized practices of the case studies received special attention in this thesis because they play such a critical role in the work of the United Nations and therefore represent the world through their work. Being more contained, they are also easier to examine in depth. These sorts of practices also provide an opportunity to actively shape the global imaginary, and this will prove critical to how we might reconstruct a stronger and more resilient global imaginary. Further, they involve the cooperation of enough different kinds of actors that they can help us get a better grasp of what is involved in global collective action problems. In this way, they cover a tremendous amount of ground, and they supplement the more comprehensive material examined in the second chapter on the global imaginary and the third chapter on global institutions.

The examination of global practices in the case studies distinguishes this thesis from the work of Manfred Steger, who explores how the dialectic between rival ideologies, like globalization and anti-globalization, have come to shape the global imaginary.[1108] It distinguishes itself from more symbolic descriptions of the global imaginary by grounding what is described in institutions and practices.[1109] And it provides a link between the theory of political cosmopolitanism, which looks at why we need to develop stronger global political institutions,[1110] and the qualitative descriptions of cultural cosmopolitanism, which explore the development of globalized identities and affinities.[1111] In short, by examining the impact of institutionalized global practices on the global imaginary, the thesis helps us get a handle on how we might reform global institutions, while beginning to hint at a richer and more dynamic description of global citizenship.

Analyzing the global imaginary is like looking into a prism, where each angle reveals something different. The danger is that we will not look at it through enough different angles and therefore

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[1108] Steger, Manfred B. *The Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[1109] Bartleson, Jens. *Visions of World Community.* Cambridge University Press. 2009.
[1110] Held, David. *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities.* Polity Press. 2010.
[1111] Appiah, K. Anthony and Camp, Sokari Douglas. *The Need for Roots.* African Arts. (2004) Spring Vol. 37, No.1, 26-31; Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2007; Nussbaum, Martha C. *Toward a Globally Sensitive Patriotism.* Daedalus. (2008) Summer Vol. 137, No.3.

provide a partial description of it. The sheer abundance of phenomena shaping the global imaginary is extraordinary as we have seen. It consists of global institutions and practices, like those examined in the case studies. But it also consists of international law and globalized social practices, shared global risks and geopolitical events. And this is to say nothing of the international system of states and global economy. These are not just different types, but different categories of influence, and the sheer abundance of perspectives through which we might view the world helps account for the divergence in how it all fits together in our minds.

If the global imaginary lacks coherence, it is because we have failed to build a coherent world order.

Since we live in a globalized world, where everything is related to everything else, we might say that there is nothing in the world that does not contribute in some way to shaping the global imaginary. It is for this reason that the thesis has brushed through so many different types of influences on it. The second chapter examined some of the social dimensions of globalization, like everyday and banal cosmopolitanism, global networks, multiculturalism, and the material dimension of living on a single unified planet. Meanwhile, the third chapter sought to elaborate on a hefty list of global institutions, focusing attention on the international system of states, which plays such a strong role in shaping both the actual world and the world as we imagine it to be. In this way, the case studies supplemented a deeper theoretical argument about the ontological structure of the global imaginary, which is rooted in the challenges confronted by global institutions.

But the global imaginary that has been uncovered in the foregoing chapters is fragmentary, and its lack of coherence contributes to institutional malfunctions. Global institutions have helped to ground the global imaginary, but their failure to address the very challenges they have chosen to take on has colored it with a sense of failure. The development of global institutions may ultimately bring greater coherence to the global imaginary, but a multitude of overlapping global institutions could further fracture it as well. For the processes by which they are bound together are a mystery to most people, and if ordinary people continue to find access to them closed off, it may only get worse over time.

What is needed is a process of institutional development that engages people through a global public sphere.[1112] In so doing, the global imaginary would emerge in tandem with the institutions through which we might take on the great global challenges of this century.[1113] It is a process akin to that of states, which generated their own social imaginaries, which have proved so essential to binding peoples together to meet their collective challenges over the past two centuries. The task before us is much akin to that of constructing a national identity,[1114] only it is complicated by the scale and complexity of the world. Yet, it may prove possible through the construction of more participatory global institutions, and it is to this process of global institutional reform, and its prospect of building a more resilient global imaginary, that we now turn.

The Institutional Link to the Global Imaginary

We have examined how global institutions face challenges that might lead people to view them as illegitimate. Yet, little has been said about the role of legitimacy in international society and its effect on global institutions,[1115] and to understand that we need to return to the way social imaginaries emerge out of millions of people coming into sync with one another. We saw in the first chapter how social life is rooted in a dialectical process of individuals generating common understandings among themselves. The process can be as simple as adapting to the gestures of someone you are speaking to or making shifts in the pace and tone of communication in order to come into sync.[1116] The process of coming into sync is relational, and it commonly occurs

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[1112] Fraser, Nancy. *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World.* Theory, Culture, and Society. (2007) *Vol. 24(4): 7–30.*

[1113] Beck, Ulrich and Cronin, Ciara trans. *Cosmopolitan Vision.* Polity Press. 2006.

[1114] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism.* Allen Lane. 2019.

[1115] Clark, Ian. *Legitimacy in International Society.* Oxford University Press. 2005.

[1116] Blumer, Herbert. *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method.* University of California Press. 1986.

between individuals and in small groups. Yet, it can also involve millions of people developing common approaches to communication over generations, and it is out of this more extensive process that social imaginaries emerge.

What matters to legitimacy is how, out of a process of "communicative reason," groups of people generate new norms and legal principles that are accepted as legitimate. The notion of communicative reason is being used loosely here to denote the way whole societies debate social and political events; how through the process of debate they arrive at common understandings of the way the world works; how they generate meaning through asserting the things that matter most; how they develop norms through communicating the bounds of acceptable behavior; how moral principles emerge from the defense of political positions; and how those same normative principles are then translated into legal concepts.[1117]

Benedict Anderson emphasized the way social imaginaries rest on communities of millions, which come to share the same language, discuss the same literature, and debate the same political events, through commonly shared sources of news and literature, rooted in a shared geography.[1118] If the debates that ensue are coherent, they will tend to meet the conditions of communicative reason. But insofar as they reference the same history and political events, and make use of a common stock of narratives, they might generate the imagined communities with which their members identify regardless. For what they are ultimately generating is a shared lifeworld. In any case, what concerns us here is the legitimacy of the institutions generated out of these social imaginaries, for it is this sense of legitimacy that appears most lacking in the global institutions.

Political institutions can be said to be legitimate when their authority is perceived as right and acceptable. A strict utilitarian view might hold, in keeping with its principle of "the greatest happiness for the greatest number," that institutions are acceptable when they provide genuine

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[1117] Habermas, Jurgen. *Between Facts and Norms.* Polity Press. 1996.
[1118] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Verso. 1983.

public goods.[1119] Yet, a government that spent hundreds of billions of dollars enlisting the military in setting up cotton candy stands to make people happier would likely be seen as illegitimate. Thus, the political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset pointed out that legitimacy also involves "the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate and proper ones for the society."[1120] And for that to occur, there must be some process of arriving at what is most proper and appropriate.

Institutions can acquire their authority through the consent of the governed, in the classic formulation of John Locke.[1121] But they can also acquire it through being the type of institutions that might be chosen behind a "veil of ignorance" in which the people choosing the society into which they are to be born do not know what social position they might occupy, as delineated in John Rawls' *Theory of Justice*.[1122] This more contractarian view highlights the importance of the appropriateness of institutions, and their need to maximize the public good. But it also emphasizes how institutions are tasked with meeting the needs of all members of a society in a way they might willingly assent to. It is a tall order for the current crop of global institutions, which it is hard to imagine many people choosing from behind a veil of ignorance if they might occupy the bottom rung on the ladder of humanity.

If current global institutions are lacking in legitimacy, it is at least partly due to the fact that ordinary people have little say in what they do. Public participation could strengthen the coherence of the global imaginary by forcing institutions to address real human needs. For it tasks institutions with providing an account of their actions that the general public can accept. In this way, public participation subordinates institutions to the will of the people by forcing institutions to justify their own existence. And it translates the work of institutions into a language that might be better understood by ordinary people, who can then use that language to subject those same institutions to scrutiny.[1123] In this way, public participation in institutions

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[1119] Bentham, Jeremy. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation.* T. Payne and Sons. 1780.
[1120] Lipset, Seymour Martin. *Political Man: The Bases of Politics, pg. 64.* Heinemann. 1960.
[1121] Locke, John. *Two Treatises on Government.* Awnsham Churchill. 1690.
[1122] Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice.* Belknap Press. 1971.
[1123] Habermas, Jürgen. *Legitimation Crisis.* Beacon Press. 1975.

helps to build social imaginaries that are responsive to real human needs.

People tend to have little say in global institutions because they have no representation in major global organizations,[1124] and many of these organizations appear to cater to the interests of global elites who can access them more easily.[1125] Global elites have greater access because of their education and expertise, which makes it easier for them to get a hearing, as in the case of human rights and climate associations. But corporations have often lobbied successfully to enact their agendas at the World Trade Organization, and informal groupings like the annual meetings in Davos focus on bringing ultra-wealthy elites together with government officials.[1126] So, there are real problems of justice in the lack of access to global institutions,[1127] stemming from the unearned privileges and corruption of elites, which have fueled the retreat from globalism.

Ordinary people also have little say in the work of global institutions, because the global public sphere through which the actions of the organizations might be debated is weak.[1128] There are few forums through which issues of concern to the whole of humanity might be debated by people from across the world, for there is no global legislature, and there are few global media outlets. And while social media is largely globalized, citizens of autocratic states rarely have full access to their conversations, and most people on social media talk mostly with people from their own states.[1129] The lack of global forums through which they might express their views stymies

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[1124] Archibugi, Daniele. *The Global Commonwealth of Citizens.* Princeton University Press. 2008.

[1125] Rodrik, Dani. *The Globalization Paradox: Democracy and the Future of the Global Economy.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2012; Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2017.

[1126] Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Making Globalization Work.* W.W. Norton and Company. 2006.

[1127] Archibugi, Daniele. *The Global Commonwealth of Citizens.* Princeton University Press. 2008; Pogge, Thomas. *World Poverty and Human Rights.* Polity Press. 2002; Singer, Peter. *One World Now: The Ethics of Globalization, revised edition.* Yale University Press. 2016.

[1128] Fraser, Nancy. *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World.* Theory, Culture, and Society. (2007) *Vol. 24(4): 7–30.*

[1129] Ghemawat, Pankaj. *World 3.0: Global Prosperity and How to Achieve It, pgs. 13-39.* Harvard Business Review. 2011.

the development of a global public sphere. For debating ideas tends to refine them, and it challenges us to back them up with good arguments, which can further refine them. The end result is that humanitarian projects are mostly understood through their fundraising campaigns, and scientists and activists often carry out two largely divergent debates on issues like climate change. In this way, public discussions of global affairs tend to be ungrounded and often incoherent.

When global affairs are understood accurately, it is typically through the lenses of the national public spheres through which they have been debated. We see this with the climate crisis, when it is approached through national legislation, which takes center stage in the debate, in spite of its inability to make a sizable impact on what is ultimately a global challenge. National legislation on climate change may address the global nature of the threat, but it is forced to do so by pressing legislators over national commitments, conceptualized through national imaginaries. It might address the moral concern for future generations that interest groups press it to take on, but such concerns tend to be subordinated to the interests of citizens. In this way, even when states take on global issues, inspired by a cosmopolitan moral concern for a wider sphere of living beings, the debates they initiate tend to undermine more cosmopolitan commitments.

National public spheres are simply more developed than the global public sphere,[1130] so participating in them is imagined to be more useful. Yet, the process of addressing global challenges like climate change through national lenses fragments the global imaginary, and the fragmentation exacerbates what is already a divergent debate. Some climate advocates speak a language of science, others of energy policy, and still others of protecting species. Like many global challenges, climate change is highly complex, and it takes place across vast distances, so there are many dimensions to addressing it. The different languages speak to different moral conceptions of the good life and the nature of human civilization.[1131] And the diversity of perspectives tends to fracture the global imaginary, which is further fragmented by a multitude of national lenses through which the challenge of climate change must be addressed.

[1130] Habermas, Jurgen. *The Postnational Constellation.* Polity Press. 2015.
[1131] Hulme, Mike. *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity.* Cambridge University Press. 2009.

We have seen this challenge crop up repeatedly in the preceding chapters, where the sheer abundance of perspectives through which the global imaginary might be viewed has posed challenges to formulating a coherent conception of it. As we have repeatedly seen, the abundance of perspectives makes it difficult to settle upon global priorities and generate a common sense of purpose. It stymies the development of a shared sense of global citizenship. And the lack of a global public sphere tends to pit global institutions against national interests. This is partly the result of working out the issues through elites in international society, partly the result of real divergences in national interests, which are played up as a result of these debates taking place in national silos. The lack of a well developed global public sphere results in fragmented understandings of global affairs, and our fragmented understanding of what is happening makes it difficult to come together in global solidarity.

The size and complexity of the world will probably always make it harder to understand what global organizations do. They are simply operating on too big of a field of action for most people to get a handle on their operations. The problem of understanding is only complicated by the sheer number of global organizations, whose purposes can be difficult to grasp due to the lack of a coherent structure that might bind them together.[1132] There is of course no world government. Nor is there any global legislation. Rather, there is international law. And international law is made up of a patchwork of treaties, along with the proclamations of global institutions, which are in most cases impossible to enforce. In this way, understanding why states abide by international law requires a sophisticated comprehension of international society,[1133] which few people possess—and this adds another layer of complexity to understanding what is happening on a global scale.

Where global collective action does occur, it is usually carried out piecemeal by coalitions of organizations. This means that understanding the actions being undertaken requires us to know something of the internal processes of multiple different international actors. The difficulty in understanding what these organizations are doing contributes to the crisis in legitimacy. Their

[1132] Slaughter, Anne Marie. *New World Order.* Princeton University Press. 2005.
[1133] Franck, Thomas. *The Power of Legitimacy Among Nations.* Oxford University Press. 1990.

actions will not be seen as legitimate if they are not understood, and they won't be seen as legitimate if their actions are not believed to be morally justifiable.[1134] But the global public sphere is too weak to serve this purpose.

Consider the failure of the humanitarian groups to explain why people were starving in Yemen in the late 2010s. There were few academic experts on Yemen, and there was little reporting from within the country. Nor did Yemen make the news as much as, say, Palestine or Syria. Rather, most of what we heard about the country was mediated by humanitarian groups, who sounded the alarms about its worsening famine. Their ad campaigns tended to imply that the food crisis was related to a conflict, but seldom was the causal relationship made clear. And articles on Yemen tended to be dominated by quotes from humanitarian groups, who were sworn to neutrality. So, they tended to make what was arguably a political famine appear more of a natural disaster. Seldom did we hear about the Saudi's blockade of the country, its attacks on ports, and its bombing of infrastructure and food warehouses.[1135] Nor was it explained why a supermajority of Democrats and Republicans were joining together in Congress to block arms sales to the Saudis in one of the most polarized periods of American history. Rather, our understanding of, what was dubbed by the United Nations for several years running, "the world's worst humanitarian crisis," was conveyed to us in largely incoherent fragments, which made organizing action to stop it nearly impossible.

International projects tend to be pervaded by a sense of ethical and epistemological confusion, because we seldom carry out the kinds of conversations needed to understand what is actually going on. And we lack the discussions, because we lack the sort of global public sphere, replete with globalized media and legislatures, through which they might occur. If global institutions are to be seen as legitimate, people need to understand and have a say in what they do, and this will probably require that they be made more participatory.[1136] In the process, we might also find that

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[1134] Habermas, Jürgen. *Legitimation Crisis.* Beacon Press. 1975.

[1135] Lackner, Helen. *Yemen in Crisis: Devastating Conflict, Fragile Hope, Second Edition.* Saqi Books. 2023.

[1136] Archibugi, Daniele. *The Global Commonwealth of Citizens.* Princeton University Press. 2008; Jacobs, Didier. *Global Democracy: The Struggle for Political and Civil Rights in the 21st Century.* Vanderbilt University Press. 2007.

the public discussion helps keep global institutions on task, while mobilizing the kind of support for their projects that will be necessary to fund them. In this way, we might imagine ordinary legislators, sitting behind a veil of ignorance, which masks the shape of their own identities, arriving at a set of more participatory global institutions, which would meet multiple overlapping criteria for legitimacy.

To be sure, a world society of solitary actors and organizations already debate among themselves issues of global concern.[1137] And this process of debate has taken root more deeply in a shared international society of diplomats, foreign ministers, heads of state, and bureaucrats.[1138] The United Nations has generated its own dialogical process through which states debate issues of global concern as we have seen, and it has produced a wide range of international agreements regulating global social harms, along with a rich array of human rights norms.[1139] In this way, the rules and norms of the international order have grown out of the debate of an emergent global public sphere.[1140] Yet, the arena in which this activity has occurred has been highly circumscribed, the players with access to it have been greatly limited, and its capacity to produce a wider global imaginary has therefore been constrained.

If the process of globalization were inevitable, we might expect these rules and norms and institutions to become thicker and richer over time. And many of the conditions that have spurred globalization can be expected to increase, like the ease of communication and transportation across borders,[1141] along with the pressure to arrive at a global solution to climate change.[1142] Countless dimensions of globalization continue their great march forward. But as we have seen, ethnic and national imaginaries can also be expected to assert themselves more strongly in the

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[1137] Burton, John W. *World Society.* Cambridge University Press. 1972.
[1138] Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* Columbia University Press. 1977.
[1139] Kennedy, Paul. *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations, pgs. 143-176.* Penguin Press. 2007.
[1140] Habermas, Jurgen. *The Postnational Constellation.* Polity Press. 2015.
[1141] Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity.* Polity Press. 1990.
[1142] Beck, Ulrich and Cronin, Ciara trans. *Cosmopolitan Vision.* Polity Press. 2006.

face of globalization. Thus, the process of globalization will remain dialectical,[1143] with the retreat from globalism probably remaining an enduring feature of it, much as romanticism has remained an enduring feature of modernity.[1144]

And yet, the very process of debating what to do about the great global challenges of this century is generating the global imaginary through which we might find the wherewithal to take them on. For it is through such debate that we identify our shared threats, define their nature, set out our goals for taking them on, prioritize them among a multitude of outstanding global concerns, and forge the institutions that might begin the process of chipping away at their foundations. Deepening this debate will require that global institutions be opened to greater public participation, though. This will probably require some measure of democratization among states, providing greater authority to less wealthy states in organizations like the United Nations and World Bank.

But the process would be galvanized by direct representation in global bodies, whether through the construction of a second directly elected legislative chamber of the United Nations, the formal establishment of a league of democracies, which included richer and poorer democracies alike, or the creation of a global shadow government, which elected representatives from across the world, and formulated resolutions relating to the conduct of humanity.[1145] Global organizations might also seek to acquire greater legitimacy by making themselves more responsive to global public opinion, and the appearance of more global media outlets might transform the way we think about global challenges.

It might be argued that the lack of a global public sphere would render the institutional reforms needed to generate one dead on arrival. But the same might be said of national public spheres, and these have taken shape in states across the world. It might be argued that the reforms needed

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[1143] Steger, Manfred B. T*he Rise of the Global Imaginary: Political Ideologies from the French Revolution to the Global War on Terror.* Oxford University Press. 2009.
[1144] Berlin, Isaiah. *The Roots of Romanticism.* Princeton University Press. 1999.
[1145] Archibugi, Daniele. *The Global Commonwealth of Citizens.* Princeton University Press. 2008; Jacobs, Didier. *Global Democracy: The Struggle for Political and Civil Rights in the 21st Century.* Vanderbilt University Press. 2007.

to make global institutions more participatory could never be implemented due to the desire of major powers to maintain their privileges. But states rise and fall all the time, and subordinate groups commonly use democratic arguments to justify their enfranchisement. It might be argued that the pressures placed on nations by their enemies is essential to their formation of public spheres. But this same pressure can be felt in challenges like climate change and global food security, which may pose greater threats to the continuation of human civilization as we know it than the enemies of most states today.

Global institutions have been growing in size, depth, reach, and scope, alongside an ever richer global imaginary. The prospect of binding them together more tightly may be intriguing, but it is far from necessary to the process of muddling through the great global challenges of this century. And, in fact, it is precisely out of the process of muddling through these challenges that the global institutions that do exist are being developed. Thus, we turn in the final pages of the conclusion to the prospect of a global institutional order that might grow in tandem with the global imaginary.

Conclusion: Toward a Reconstruction of the Global Imaginary

The Meaning of Global Citizenship

Cosmopolitanism as we saw in the introduction is an ancient philosophical system, and it has seen many permutations over its two-and-a-half millennia existence.[1146] It might be defined more generally as the belief that every human being is part of a common global community and that we possess duties to the whole of humanity. In this way, cosmopolitans recognize special capacities that are unique to human beings which merit our respect. And they recognize these capacities in every human being, regardless of the circumstances into which they have been born. Cosmopolitanism extends the sphere of moral concern from more limited groups like nations to the world,[1147] which it treats as a single integral whole.[1148] Yet, it also deepens our understanding of dignity by seeking to articulate what makes us distinctly human.[1149]

A cosmopolitan view of the world that sees humanity as in many respects bound together by an emergent global imaginary was presented in previous chapters, which argued that it is the global imaginary that helps bind us together and strengthens our cosmopolitan commitments. The thesis

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[1146] Brown, Garrett Wallace and Held, David. *The Cosmopolitan Reader.* Polity Press. 2011; Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal.* Belknap Press. 2021.

[1147]Brown, Garrett Wallace and Held, David. *The Cosmopolitan Reader.* Polity Press. 2011.

[1148] Kant, Immanuel, and Bennett, Christopher trans. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals.* Oxford World Classics. 2019.

[1149] Aurelius, Marcus and Grube, G.M.A. trans. *The Meditations.* Hackett Publishing Company. 1983.

emphasized the role of institutions in shaping the global imaginary, for institutions are the grooves along which humanity moves in tandem.[1150] And it downplayed the emphasis on cosmopolitanism, opting instead to look at the background conditions that might support its spread. In this way, it sought to generate an understanding of cosmopolitanism that is more tightly bound up with the construction of global institutions, and the emergence of the global imaginary, for it aimed to provide a vision that might elicit stronger global collective action.[1151] Yet, the project would be remiss without some remarks about how stronger cosmopolitan identities and global institutions might emerge together.

Cosmopolitan commitments address a wide range of institutions and activities, so cosmopolitans are often divided up into types.[1152] Moral cosmopolitans believe that individuals have relatively equal moral duties to the whole of humanity.[1153] Political cosmopolitans believe the duties should be embodied in global political institutions, and that global institutions should be reformed to reflect cosmopolitan moral commitments.[1154] Meanwhile, cultural cosmopolitans believe that the duties are integral to our social identities whose globality deserves more attention.[1155] These are obviously simplified explanations, summarizing whole schools of thought. So, we should not expect them to draw out the nuances of these perspectives, especially so close as we are to completion. Meanwhile, recent decades have seen an increasing number of what might be called

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[1150] Ulas, Luke. *Cosmopolitanism, Self-Interest and World Government.* Political Studies. (2016) Vol.64:15, 105-120.

[1151] Beck, Ulrich and Cronin, Ciara trans. *Cosmopolitan Vision.* Polity Press. 2006.

[1152] Brown, Garrett Wallace and Held, David eds. *The Cosmopolitan Reader.* Polity Press. 2010.

[1153] Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership.* Harvard University Press. 2007; Singer, Peter. *Famine, Affluence, and Morality.* Oxford University Press. 2016; Unger, Peter. *Living High and Letting Die: Our Illusion of Innocence.* Oxford University Press. 1996.

[1154] Brown, Garrett Wallace and Telegdi-Csetri, Aron eds. *Kant's Cosmopolitics: Contemporary Issues and Global Debates.* Edinburgh University Press. 2020; Habermas, Jurgen and Pensky, Max. *The Postnational Constellation.* MIT Press. 2001; Held, David. *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities.* Polity Press. 2010.

[1155] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.* Penguin Press. 2007; Benhabib, Seyla and Post, Robert eds. *Another Cosmopolitanism.* Oxford University Press. 2006; Nussbaum, Martha C. ed. *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism.* Beacon Press. 1996; Sen, Amartya. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny.* Penguin Press. 2007.

eco-cosmopolitans, who seek to extend the sphere of moral concern to the ecosystems and nonhuman life upon which the biosphere, and with it all of humanity, depends for its existence.[1156]

What matters for our purposes is that the different types of cosmopolitanism are complementary and in many ways mutually supportive. Cosmopolitan ethical commitments are easier to enact when they are supported by a cosmopolitan culture and global political institutions.[1157] Cosmopolitan political institutions are more likely to be realized when they emerge from a cosmopolitan culture and ethical commitments. A cosmopolitan culture is more likely to flourish when it is supported by cosmopolitan political institutions and ethical commitments. And a concern for the biosphere and its plenitude of life is more likely to be established when it is supported by them all. In this way, a more holistic understanding of cosmopolitan commitments can highlight their role in fostering a stronger and more resilient global imaginary. And fleshing out the global imaginary can help generate a richer cultural cosmopolitanism by providing a deeper articulation of the forces binding humanity together.

Cosmopolitan commitments can arise in individuals as if from nowhere, because we are all human and we share the same planet.[1158] And however we might imagine it to be shaped, or its political structures to be organized, the idea that the things we share in common with people from across the world make us suited to cooperation with one another is freely accessible to us all.[1159] It is accessible to every free person, in all times and places, but also every person living in bondage, as is so poignantly exhibited by the Roman slave, Epictetus.[1160] This makes the

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[1156] Naess, Arne and Rothenberg, David trans. *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle.* Cambridge University Press. 1989; Rolston III. Holmes. *Environmental Ethics: Duties to and Values in the Natural World.* Temple University Press. 1987; Stone, Christopher D. *Earth and Other Ethics: The Case for Moral Pluralism*. Harper Collins. 1987.

[1157] Ulas, Luke. *Cosmopolitanism, Self-Interest and World Government.* Political Studies. (2016) Vol.64:15, 105-120.

[1158] Kant, Immanuel and Humphrey, Ted trans. *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*. Hackett Publishing Company. 1983.

[1159] Aurelius, Marcus and Hammond, Martin. *Meditations.* Penguin Classics. 2006.

[1160] Epictetus and Dobbin, Robert trans. *Discourses and Selected Writings.* Penguin Classics. 2008.

foundational moral insights of cosmopolitanism a perennial life option. However, there is a utopian quality to a cosmopolitanism untethered from institutions. Its utopianism lies in its idealism, in the philosophical sense of emanating from our own minds, as if its visions of human cooperation must lie in the mists of an abstract and indiscernible future—and it is this amorphousness that we have repeatedly seen cropping up in the global imaginary.

When cosmopolitanism is not tied to institutions, it tends to be literally all over the place. It roams freely across the world, with little to ground it, except our own personal conceptions. That serves as a poor basis for global cooperation, because it makes it hard to forge common understandings about what we are up against. But it can also make the experience of it ungrounding, for it atomizes cosmopolitan individuals, who are forced to battle in a vast and incomprehensible world, armed only with their own philosophical convictions. It is much the same when cosmopolitanism is built on the foundation of multiple overlapping global institutions whose relationships are unclear, when they are unaccountable to public opinion and therefore untethered from a shared global imaginary.[1161] If being a citizen of the world is to be meaningful, it must involve participation in a wider global community, and that requires the emergence of a more coherent global imaginary.

When cosmopolitanism lacks this foundation, it tends to be incoherent—or else too coherent, as in the case of logical constructions and mystical platitudes. For every person adopting it is tasked with making sense of a vast and incomprehensible world on their own. And they are challenged with prioritizing their own ethical commitments with neither institutional nor cultural support. Is it any surprise that the adoption of cosmopolitanism throughout history, outside of its emergence in the Roman Empire, has tended to be limited to a few remarkable individuals at a stretch with little mass support?[1162] The wonder of our age is the extent to which people identify as citizens of the world, even as a mass movement of people from across the planet has plunged into a retreat from globalism.

[1161] Slaughter, Anne-Marie. *A New World Order.* Princeton University Press. 2004.
[1162] Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Cosmopolitan Tradition: A Noble but Flawed Ideal.* Belknap Press. 2021.

This thesis has sought to demonstrate that the retreat from globalism can be largely explained through the incoherence of our current global imaginary, and it can be staunched through the reconstruction of a more inclusive global imaginary more rooted in institutions. The cosmopolitanism of its solution is important because it references our identities and moral commitments. And it provides a normative compass with which to apply insights about the global imaginary. It also helps establish the principles upon which global institutions and the international order itself might be based. It is not enough to conceive of a world, with its vast and incomprehensible multitude of people and occurrences, for there is simply too much going on in it for us to agree on what is most critical to it. Grasping hold of a coherent notion of the world requires deeper participation in a wider global imaginary, and that requires participatory institutions through which we might weave ourselves together into a shared community of fate.[1163]

If polling is to be believed, a majority of people in the world today now think of themselves as global citizens.[1164] They think of themselves as global citizens as we have seen because all of humanity shares the same basic anatomy and physiology. We share the same capacity to reason.[1165] We share the same basic tools and technologies and social practices.[1166] And we share the same planet and risks to its biosphere, which threaten us all.[1167] These shared risks and capacities and experiences lead us to feel that we are part of a common humanity to which we are in some way morally committed. The commitment can be witnessed in the concern that is expressed over the injustices committed in the production of consumer goods and in the distress we feel over suffering on the other side of the planet. But it is not altogether clear what it means to be a citizen of the world.[1168]

[1163] Held, David. *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities.* Polity Press. 2010.
[1164] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism.* Allen Lane. 2019; Reysen, Stephen and Katzarska-Miller, Iva. *The Psychology of Global Citizenship: A Review of Theory and Research.* Lexington Books. 2020.
[1165] Aurelius, Marcus and Hamond, Martin trans. *Meditations.* Penguin Classics. 2006.
[1166] Brown, Donald E. *Human Universals.* McGraw-Hill Education. 1991.
[1167] Beck, Ulrich. *World at Risk.* Polity Press. 2008.
[1168] Damluji, Hassan. *The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism.* Allen Lane. 2019.

It is often argued that you cannot be a citizen of the world if there is no global state.[1169] Yet, there are all kinds of ways to express membership in a group as we have seen, and there are all sorts of groups to which we owe moral commitments.[1170] So, citizens of the world may hold important moral commitments that differ from those typically held by citizens of a state, and it would be pedantic, and in many ways morally obtuse, to discount their importance due to a possible misuse of the language of citizenship. In any case, the language of global citizenship has been used by cosmopolitans since ancient times, and it commonly passes without question in everyday conversation, because most people appear to understand what it means. Meanwhile, the resort to the language of citizenship to express membership in a shared humanity highlights the desire for stronger global institutions that might bind us together in a shared community of fate.[1171]

We have seen this desire expressed in surveys, but we have also reviewed a wide range of processes through which we come to view ourselves as citizens of the world. The language of global citizenship is suggestive of participation in a global community through which we enact real commitments to wider global concerns. And it highlights the sense of being encumbered by moral duties to the whole of humanity, which increasingly impact our choices about what we buy, how we get around, what news we follow, and to which causes we donate. It is also expressive of an aspirational yearning for a stronger cosmopolitan order, which current global institutions have been unable to provide. In this sense, people identify themselves as global citizens as a symbolic show of support for stronger global institutions, in the same way an American might identify themselves as a member of the Green Party.

This thesis has sought to demonstrate, among other things, that this sense of global citizenship is rooted in a rich global imaginary, with ubiquitous historical resonances that bind humanity together across the ages. In this sense, critics of global citizenship tend to be misguided.[1172] Its problem does not lie in its idealism, for people across the world increasingly tell pollsters that

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[1169] Miller, David. *Citizenship and National Identity, pgs. 81-96.* Polity Press. 2000.
[1170] Sen, Amartya. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny.* Penguin Books. 2006.
[1171] Held, David. *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities.* Polity Press. 2010.
[1172] Miller, David. *Citizenship and National Identity.* Polity Press. 2000.

they identify as global citizens, over and above citizens of their own nations. Nor does it have anything to do with a lack of moral commitments, for the moral burden of global concerns is increasingly weighty. And in truth there are quite few responsibilities accompanying actual citizenship in most nations.

No, the real trouble with global citizenship lies in the unstable and amorphous global imaginary through which it has been conceptualized, and this has been given far less attention. Social imaginaries as we have repeatedly seen help to strengthen and stabilize social identities by binding them together around shared narratives and commitments.[1173] Hence, if global citizenship is to be meaningful, citizens of the world need to imagine that they are part of a community that matters. That means sharing a common sense of moral purpose and something like a shared story.[1174] In this sense, it is the failure to construct a more coherent global imaginary that diminishes the meaning of global citizenship, and it starts to get at why it is so difficult to generate meaningful global action on the threats now facing humanity.

The failure of global institutions to ameliorate these threats, coupled with the unsatisfactory results of so many of their projects, can also help explain the difficulty in constructing a more coherent global imaginary. The projects that have been taken on by global institutions are simply too difficult to comprehend, and as we have seen, too many of their missions have been seen to be failures. Yet, the size of the world and the number of people living in it throw up roadblocks to constructing a more coherent imaginary, and they have been essential to our explanations of why institutionalized practices like peacekeeping and development aid have failed to generate more support. So, even as humanity is ever more tightly bound together, and experiences a growing sense of global citizenship, our global identities can feel incoherent,[1175] and this can lead us to downgrade their importance. We downgrade their importance because they do not touch us deeply enough, but they also lack the ability to lend meaning to our experiences—and we lack the ability to tie them to a wider moral community.

[1173] Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age.* Belknap Press. 2007.
[1174] Berry, Thomas. *The Dream of the Earth.* Sierra Club Books. 1988.
[1175] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.* Penguin Press. 2007.

Staunching the retreat from globalism will require the construction of a stronger and more compelling global imaginary, and constructing it will require better functioning global institutions. If global institutions are to function better, they need to be freed up to do their jobs, and that requires that they be better funded.[1176] But as is the case with many organizations, getting them the funding they need requires them to win more support, and that will probably require that they do a better job. Global institutions will need to make faster and more decisive decisions, and they will need to demonstrate their effectiveness by taking on more achievable tasks. But none of this is easy to imagine, and much of it can appear paradoxical under the current global institutional architecture.

This thesis began by exploring the basis of social imaginaries in the intersubjective communication of meanings. Social imaginaries emerge when individuals experience the world, interpret it in their own ways, and share their experiences with others, over and over again, in countless iterations.[1177] For instance, they experience colonial humiliation, struggle with its meaning, and then tell others about their insights, who write about it in their own words, which are internalized by the descendants of colonialists, whose views inform those of their legislators. The process takes place in classroom discussions and the media, kitchen table debates and legislative deliberation. It is in the words of former American President Barack Obama, "an argument across the generations." It resonates with common references, recognizable phrasings, signature interpretations, and iconic court rulings. Each generation struggles with the burden of this shared history, and they reinterpret it in their own terms, for no interpretation of it is ever complete.[1178]

In this way, social imaginaries contribute to the formation of institutions, and they are in turn shaped by them, in a dialectical process of development. It is an endless process of refining the

[1176] Damluji, Hassan. The Responsible Globalist: What Citizens of the World Can Learn from Nationalism. Allen Lane. 2019; Kennedy, Paul. *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations.* Penguin Press. 2007.
[1177] Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality.* Anchor Books. 1966.
[1178] Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays.* Basic Books. 1973.

terms of the debate and the range of acceptable answers. To echo the final lines of T.M. Scanlon's. *What We Owe to Each Other*, "Working out the terms of moral justification is an unending task."[1179] Yet, through a shared public sphere, the terms of debate might resonate more deeply, for they will be made "thick" with the interpretations of countless individuals sharing a common culture.[1180] In this way, participants to such an ongoing debate might build on shared liberal democratic values to generate common understandings around, for instance, how to tackle climate change or stop a genocide. And it is through this process that we might come to generate a richer global imaginary that can provide the groundwork for a more functional global institutional architecture.

Summary

We live on a nearly perfectly rounded planet, amid billions of people, who share far more in common than our seeming discord suggests, as the preceding chapters have sought to demonstrate. From our shared anatomy and physiology to our reliance on cross border trade, from our laughter and tears to our preference for fried dough, the list of cross-cultural commonalities is seemingly endless. It is as deeply rooted in a shared human history as it is in the ontological structure of the world. And it is probably for this reason that people the world over have periodically lifted their heads from the din of existence and declared their solidarity with the whole of humankind. But if the world they have imagined is unified, their visions of it have been fragmentary, and the fragmentation of humanity increasingly threatens our existence.

Cosmopolitans have never declared their allegiance to the exact same world, for the worlds they have imagined have always been different. The scale of the world makes it too complex to come

[1179] Scanlon, T. M. *What We Owe to Each Other, revised edition, pg. 361.* Belknap Press. 2000.
[1180] Walzer, Michael. *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad.* University of Notre Dame Press. 1994.

to agreement on its essence. And the difficulty in summarizing its contents fragments their visions of what binds us together. Hence, religious visionaries and climate advocates, free traders and moral cosmopolitans, have each tended to imagine their own unitary worlds. Each of us must arrive at our own interpretation of the world, and in the diversity of our conceptions we reify our divisions. In this way, it can sometimes seem that humanity is bound together by everything but the global imaginary. Yet, the preceding pages have articulated a robust imaginary and traced the dialectic of its development.

The development of the global imaginary has been a dialectical process that ebbs and flows, but a key focus of this thesis has been its recent retreat. The retreat from globalism threatens humanity, because you cannot take on a world of troubles without the ability to think globally. And you cannot commit to redressing global challenges without moral commitments to the whole of the world. But to understand the retreat, we have had to look more closely at the structure of the global imaginary through which we conceive of the world. For people have been retreating not from the actual world but rather the world of their imaginations. And we found one of its bases, and perhaps the most crucial, to lie in an emergent set of global institutions, which lack the resources and authority to do their jobs.

In the end, we are left with a set of questions that only further research and deeper contemplation can begin to grasp. What is it that binds humanity together in our imaginations? What is it about how we conceive of our relations that tears us apart? How might we strengthen the ties that bind us so that we might take on the risks that threaten us? What might a coherent sense of global citizenship look like, and can it be mobilized to save the world? They are questions for the ages, poignantly framed for the threats to our own.

But it is my hope that this thesis has helped advance answers to them by providing the most thorough articulation of the global imaginary to date. And in so doing, it has sought to demonstrate a far richer and more dynamic global culture than even the most committed cosmopolitans tend to imagine. If the tentative conclusions that have been posited have sometimes appeared arbitrary, it is because the field of inquiry is so extensive. Yet, it is my hope that, in the same way that moral inquiry might deepen moral commitments, thinking about the

nature of the global imaginary might strengthen it. And thus, in advancing our understanding of the global imaginary, we might contribute to the dream of a better world.

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