

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Problematising war: Towards a reconstructive critique of war as a problem of deviance

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(Received 17 June 2020; revised 5 April 2022; accepted 8 May 2022; first published online 4 July 2022)

Abstract

This article redirects extant critiques of the modern problem of war at this problem's underlying logic of deviance. According to this logic, war constitutes a kind of international conduct that contravenes behavioural norms and that can be corrected through diagnostic and didactic means. Thereby, war is rendered into a problem falling within the scope of human agency. However, this agency rests on and reproduces this logic's constitutive blind spots. Therefore, it seems imperative to develop ways of problematising war otherwise. The article provides two starting points for (critical) IR scholarship seeking to undertake such a project. Firstly, it combines two Foucaultian tools, the concept of problematisation and the method of genealogy, to direct critique at the logics underlying our evaluative – analytical, ethical, and political – judgements. Secondly, it uses these tools to trace the contingent emergence of the logic of deviance in a crucial example within the wider genealogy of the problem of war: the Carnegie Endowment's commission of inquiry into the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913. Based on original archival research, I highlight different elements of this inquiry's problematisation of war – its frames, assumptions, ways of knowing, and subjects of knowledge – to make them available for reconstruction.

Keywords: War; Problematisation; Genealogy; Critique; Foucault; Balkan Wars

Introduction

In the late summer of 1913, an international commission of inquiry, nominated and sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP), set out to investigate and produce a report about the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913. Addressing itself 'to the attention of the governments, the people and the press of the civilized world', the commission's report was 'to make plain just what is or may be involved in an international war carried out under modern conditions'.¹ Thereby, the commissioners and the CEIP hoped to generate 'such a reaction ... as to make another war impossible'.² Their ambition turned on the spirit of the age, which saw in war an opportunity for heroism and a driver of progress. In its chosen means, however, the CEIP's initiative was very much in line with the general zeitgeist. The commissioners amassed empirical evidence to demonstrate 'the cruelty and ferocity and the worst outrages' of the Balkan Wars that had occurred 'in spite of the Hague Conventions',³ and to enable their readers 'to learn the absurdity of the notion ... that war can enrich a country' and 'to understand how,

¹Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP), *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1914), Preface.

²CEIP, New York and Washington Offices Records, 1910–1954, Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library Collection (hereafter CEIP Archive), Vol. 121, Letter Dutton to Butler, 23 July 1913.

³CEIP, *Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, p. 14.

even from far off, war reacts on all nations to their discomfort and even to their serious injury.⁴ Thereby, they sought to show that war was ‘an outdated instrument, not only immoral, but ineffective’.⁵ Documenting and recounting the horrors of the Balkan Wars, the Carnegie commission made war into a problem insofar as it deviated from legal, economic, and moral norms, as well as into a problem that could be addressed through the generation and dissemination of scientific knowledge.

Taking the commission’s work as a crucial example within the wider genealogy of the modern problem of war, this article aims to open up for critical discussion the logics of this modern problem. These logics, I contend, comprise the assumptions underlying and the principles structuring efforts at making war problematic, as well as the different ways of knowing and subjects of knowledge constituted within these makings. The logic on which the article centres is that of war as a problem of deviance. The CEIP commission’s work is a prime example of this logic, as are more recent developments such as international stabilisation missions and contemporary perspectives on the power of law over war.⁶ According to the logic of deviance, war constitutes a kind of conduct that contravenes behavioural norms.⁷ As such, it is a problem that can be alleviated, corrected, and potentially even abolished from without – by different means, but crucially through the production and dissemination of empirical knowledge.⁸ In charge of this production and dissemination, in turn, are subjects whose epistemic and ethical capacity for dealing with war depends on their being external to the problem at stake. Ultimately, this logic of war as a problem of deviance serves a particular (and particularly) modern project: namely, the project of decreasing the incidences of and the harm done by war, or vice versa, of increasing the scope of human agency over war.

Given that war was long considered an inevitable fact dictated by divine will or human nature, or also an unquestionable means of statecraft, the assumption that war is a human-made and hence a potentially soluble problem constitutes a remarkable achievement.⁹ Yet this achievement comes at a price. The logic of war as a problem of deviance renders problematic some wars by normalising other wars, and it accords agency over war to some by denying this agency to others.¹⁰ Within this logic, moreover, it is impossible to make sense of war’s constitutive role within modernity.¹¹ Tracing these matters in the example of the CEIP commission, I show that they were based on and reproduced not only the commissioners’ civilisational and orientalist ideas, but, entangled with these, also a specifically modern logic that saw war as a problem insofar as it constituted a deviant or abnormal and hence a corrigible kind of conduct.

For getting to work on this logic, the article utilises two Foucauldian tools: a conception of problematisation as the contingent and conflictual emergence of problems, and a method of genealogy that studies this emergence historically in order to question how problems are

⁴Ibid., p. 236.

⁵CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Note d’Estournelles to Bacon, 18 September 1913.

⁶Tarak Barkawi, ‘From law to history: The politics of war and empire’, *Global Constitutionalism*, 7:3 (2018), pp. 315–29; Marta Iniguez de Heredia, ‘Militarism, states and resistance in Africa: Exploring colonial patterns in stabilisation missions’, *Conflict, Security & Development*, 19:6 (2019), pp. 623–44.

⁷Martin Ceadel, *The Origins of War Prevention: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1730–1854* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1996).

⁸Punishment being the other most important means for correcting deviant international conduct (Wolfgang Wagner and Wouter Werner, ‘War and punitivity under anarchy’, *European Journal of International Security*, 3:3 (2018), pp. 310–25).

⁹Oona A. Hathaway and Scott J. Shapiro, *The Internationalists: And Their Plan to Outlaw War* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2017); John Mueller, ‘Changing attitudes to war: The impact of the First World War’, *British Journal of Political Science*, 21:1 (1991), pp. 1–28.

¹⁰Barkawi, ‘From law to history’; Claudia Brunner, *Epistemische Gewalt: Wissen und Herrschaft in der kolonialen Moderne* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2020).

¹¹Hans Joas and Wolfgang Knöbl, *War in Social Thought*, trans. Alex Skinner (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Teresa Koloma Beck and Klaus Schlichte, *Theorien der Gewalt zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2014); Nelson Maldonado-Torres, *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

constituted contemporarily. In combination, problematisation and genealogy amount to a particular kind of critique that, rather than judging a problem's truth or falsity, directs itself at the underlying logics that enable analytical questions about, normative evaluations of, and practical efforts towards this problem.¹² By probing these logics' non-necessary becomings, this critique seeks to facilitate the conversion of contingency into agency and to enable us 'to change', as Michel Foucault once wrote, 'the given terms of the problem'.¹³ Along these lines, this article's genealogical analysis of the emergence of the problematisation of war as deviant intends to provide a basis on which we may broaden the range of choices available to us in our dealings with war. Specifically, the analysis calls on us to rethink and reconstruct the foundations, the scope, and the means of our agency over war.

In doing so, the article seeks to strike up a conversation within International Relations (IR) about the logics through which war is rendered problematic – including, but not limited to, by our own IR analyses. That war constitutes a problem which our research can help to address is one of the foundational assumptions of the discipline of IR,¹⁴ and mainstream IR analyses of different theoretical persuasions have been holding fast onto the idea that the systematic analysis of war's causes can alleviate the problem that war constitutes.¹⁵ Meanwhile, critical, feminist, poststructuralist, and post- and decolonial scholarship has picked at the static and state-centric frames that mainstream IR applies to war.¹⁶ Criticising that '[t]he problem of war becomes the central question for IR only in a certain kind of way, as major war between sovereign nation states', this scholarship highlights issues that exceed the confines of the problem of war thus understood, including militarism, the continuities of war within peacetime politics and society, and the intersecting nexuses of war and gender relations, and war, imperialism, and colonialism.¹⁷ In addition, a smaller number of critical studies have also looked into how certain ideas about war serve to legitimate and hence enable the continued possibility of war.¹⁸ Taking much inspiration from these critical interrogations, I suggest a twofold extension of their insights. On the one hand, the analysis of the problematisation of war offered in this article shifts the question from *what* the problem of war consists in to *how*, that is, through which logics, war is rendered problematic. On the other hand, the article proposes a reflexive twist to existing critiques: rather than denouncing the role of others' ideas in the reproduction of war, it demands that we question – and either justify or amend – our own (critical) logics for rendering war problematic.

The article proceeds as follows. The first section sketches with broad strokes how war has become the problem that it is today. The second section rereads Foucault on problematisation and genealogy to develop both into tools for the analysis and critique of this problem. The

¹²Michel Foucault, 'Practicing criticism', in Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, trans. Alan Sheridan et al. (London, UK: Routledge, 1990), pp. 152–6.

¹³Michel Foucault, 'An interview with Michel Foucault', in James D. Faubion (ed.), *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, Vol. 3: Power* (New York, NY: The New Press, 1994), pp. 239–97 (p. 288).

¹⁴Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 18–19.

¹⁵Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, *Causes of War* (Malden, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2010); Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

¹⁶Tarak Barkawi and Shane Brighton, 'Powers of war: Fighting, knowledge, and critique', *International Political Sociology*, 5:2 (2011), pp. 126–43; Swati Parashar, 'What war and "war bodies" know about international relations', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 26:4 (2013), pp. 615–30.

¹⁷Tarak Barkawi, 'Decolonising war', *European Journal of International Security*, 1:2 (2016), pp. 199–214 (p. 206). See also Cynthia Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); Iniguez de Heredia, 'Militarism, states and resistance'; Christine Sylvester, *War as Experience: Contributions from International Relations and Feminist Analysis* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013).

¹⁸Jens Bartelson, *War in International Thought* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Anatol Rapoport, 'Editor's introduction', in Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. J. J. Graham (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1968 [orig. pub. 1832]), pp. 11–80; Hidemi Suganami, 'Stories of war origins: A narrativist theory of the causes of war', *Review of International Studies*, 23:4 (1997), pp. 401–18; Maja Zehfuss, *War and the Politics of Ethics* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018).

third section introduces the Carnegie commission as a crucial example within the genealogy of the problematisation of war and attends to different aspects of this problematisation: the frames through which the commission rendered war problematic, the underlying logic that these frames shared, as well as the ways of knowing and subjects of knowledge constituted within this logic. My analysis relies on primary sources collected from the archives of the CEIP's New York and Washington Offices and its Paris-based Centre Européen, dating from October 1912 to July 1914 and comprising planning documents and personal notes; correspondence between the staff at the CEIP's offices, the commissioners, and other interlocutors in the United States and Europe; newspaper clippings; and the commission's published report.¹⁹ The conclusion poses the question of how these aspects of the problematisation of war, given that they continue to operate in the contemporary present, could be changed.

How war became a modern problem

That war is a problem which we can take action against is an idea which comes naturally to us today. Upon closer scrutiny, however, our taken for granted belief in not having to take war for granted turns out to be a historical novelty.²⁰ As Martin Ceadel explains, while moral and religious '[c]ondemnation of war has a very long tradition' both within Europe and beyond, for the longest time, this tradition presumed 'little scope for human agency in such matters'.²¹ It was only from the early nineteenth century onwards that the 'assumption that humans could bring international relations under at least partial control' slowly began to gain currency and that, concurrently, 'the belief that war was the normal condition of international relations was replaced by the belief that it was an abnormal one.'²² Thereafter, it took another century and a half for the idea that war was as an anomalous, yet corrigible kind of international conduct to establish itself as the majority view among politicians, civil society, and the general public, at least in the Global North/West.²³ Culminating, after the Second World War, in the prohibition of the use of force in Article 2.4 of the United Nations Charter, the understanding of war as a problem of deviance has played an important role in international politics ever since.²⁴

The fact that there continue to be wars today does not contradict this. Rather, the notion of war as a problem of deviance provides the underlying logic for the 'normative register' in which today's wars are overwhelmingly conceived.²⁵ This register and its underlying logic demand that those wishing to make the case for war must justify their arguments against the more general countervailing assumption that holds war to be problematic.²⁶ More importantly still, when the questions of what counts as a war (or of which wars count) and what counts as a problem are posed based on this normative register, its underlying logic invites answers that work by differentiating normal from abnormal political conduct. In effect, these answers normalise and invisibilise some kinds of violence in international politics – while rendering other violences deviant, conspicuous, and in need of correction.

As an example of how the modern understanding of the problem of war works in contemporary international politics, consider international stabilisation missions. A 'co-ordinated response to situations of instability' in 'societies experiencing or emerging from violent conflicts', these

¹⁹In 1993, the CEIP reissued the commission's report as a commentary on the then-ongoing wars in Yugoslavia. See also Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 4–5.

²⁰This formulation is inspired by Koloma Beck and Schlichte, *Theorien der Gewalt*, p. 22.

²¹Ceadel, *Origins of War Prevention*, pp. 5–6.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 1.

²³Mueller, 'Changing attitudes to war'.

²⁴See also Koloma Beck and Schlichte, *Theorien der Gewalt*, pp. 27–8, 96–7; Stephen C. Neff, *War and the Law of Nations: A General History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), part IV.

²⁵Barkawi and Brighton, 'Powers of war', p. 141.

²⁶Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), pp. 237–8.

missions operate predominantly on the African continent and often take a robust approach reliant upon military means.²⁷ As Marta Iñiguez de Heredia shows, this approach is frequently justified by recourse to ‘the construction of [African] conflict’ as the opposite of ‘modern and “proper” politics’.²⁸ In this context, the logic of war as a problem of deviance underlies and facilitates not just the robust approach of these stabilisation missions, but also furthers ‘colonial tropes’, ‘racialised frameworks’, and an ‘epistemological Eurocentrism’ that, in combination, ‘circumscribe politics and political agency to the West’ and help to reproduce global power structures.²⁹

These and related assumptions about the deviant and apolitical nature of violent conflict in Africa are also mirrored in and bolstered by academic debates.³⁰ Indeed, scholarship on war more generally often bases itself on the understanding of war as a problem of deviance. A recent example is Oona A. Hathaway and Scott J. Shapiro’s study of how the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact ushered in an overall decline of the incidence of war.³¹ As their critics indicate, their analysis is blind to the historical and contemporary wars and violences inflicted by the Global North on the Global South, as well as to how international law in general and the outlawry of war in particular have contributed to enabling these.³² Moreover, and as Tarak Barkawi points out, Hathaway and Shapiro’s arguments unwittingly ‘erase the historical agency of nearly everyone but a few white Westerners’.³³ In all of this, the authors uncritically found themselves on a ‘modern attitude’ that ‘regard[s] war as uncontroversially bad’, uncivilised, and irrational.³⁴ Aligning themselves with this modern understanding of the problem of war, their analysis provides a particularly stark example of how this understanding’s underlying logic can contribute to reproducing the constitutive blind spots of research on war.

Insofar as the modern understanding of the problem of war thus permeates both international politics and scholarship thereon, how can we account for its emergence? Some scholars argue that changes in ideas about war followed on the heels of political and social, material and technological changes in both warfare itself and war reporting.³⁵ Others make sense of the emergence of the modern problem of war in the context of the more general understanding of modernity as inherently progressing towards non-violence.³⁶ Yet others hold that after a century of limited direct exposure to war, the First and Second World Wars came as particularly awful shocks for many in the West, catalysing the view of war as deeply problematic.³⁷ Finally, the literature also points to the ‘shifting, and sometimes uncomfortable, coalition of voices’ of peace activists who, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, castigated war as ‘immoral, uncivilized, disgusting, futile (particularly economically)’, increasingly superfluous in the face of legal alternatives such as

²⁷Iñiguez de Heredia, ‘Militarism, states and resistance’, p. 625; John Karlsrud, *The UN at War: Peace Operations in a New Era* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

²⁸Iñiguez de Heredia, ‘Militarism, states and resistance’, p. 629.

²⁹Ibid.; see also Zubairu Wai, ‘The empire’s new clothes: Africa, liberal interventionism and contemporary world order’, *Review of African Political Economy*, 41:142 (2014), pp. 483–99.

³⁰See, for example, Paul Collier and Anke Hoefler, ‘On the economic causes of civil war’, *Oxford Economic Papers*, 50 (1998), pp. 563–95.

³¹Hathaway and Shapiro, *The Internationalists*.

³²Anna Geis, ‘Outlawing war is not enough to promote international peace: The ambivalence of liberal interventionism’, *Global Constitutionalism*, 7:3 (2018), pp. 342–57.

³³Barkawi, ‘From law to history’, p. 317.

³⁴Hathaway and Shapiro, *The Internationalists*, p. 9. see also Barkawi, ‘From law to history’, p. 322.

³⁵Antoine Bousquet, ‘The concept of war in world politics’, in Felix Berenskoetter (ed.), *Concepts in World Politics* (London, UK: Sage, 2016), pp. 91–106; Bernd Hüppauf, ‘The emergence of modern war imagery in early photography’, *History and Memory*, 5:1 (1993), pp. 130–51; Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers (eds), *The Changing Character of War* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³⁶Koloma Beck and Schlichte, *Theorien der Gewalt*.

³⁷Barkawi, ‘From law to history’, p. 322; Mueller, ‘Changing attitudes to war’, p. 12.

arbitration, mediation, and international organisation, and also as ‘a mechanism through which the capitalist class carried out its disputes, using the working classes as cannon fodder’.³⁸

However, as far as war as a problem of deviance is concerned, these arguments remain underdetermined. None of them can explain why and how precisely this logic of the problem of war emerged – nor do they make this historical emergence available for critical and reconstructive thought. The remainder of this article begins to take on this task. Thereto, the next section develops a set of conceptual and methodological tools, which I then put to use on the example of the Carnegie commission.

Problems and their logics: Problematisation, genealogy, and critique

To get at the logics of the modern problem of war, this article combines Foucault’s concept of problematisation with his method of genealogy. While both problematisation and genealogy are by now well-established analytical tools in IR, to achieve the particular purposes for which I intend to wield them, they need some sharpening. To this end, I here undertake a rereading of Foucault and some of his interlocutors on problematisation, genealogy, and critique. This rereading conceives of problematisation not only as an object, but also as a mode of critique – and a reconstructive one at that. Thereby, the section lays the basis for the analysis to follow, which considers the contingent and conflictual emergence of the problematisation of war to further problematise it, that is, to afford insights into the logics that would have to be – and that can be – changed in order for the problem of war to be constructed otherwise.

Problems as processes: Rereading Foucault on problematisation

Within recent IR scholarship, the concept of problematisation has been applied to the study of world-political problems ranging from piracy³⁹ to sexual violence⁴⁰ to climate change.⁴¹ Building on Foucault and various of his interlocutors, these analyses yield not only manifold empirical insights, but also a number of theoretical propositions. For instance, readings of Foucault in conjunction with Mitchell Dean conceptualise problematisation as ‘a particular instance in which governing is called into question’,⁴² leading on to theoretical proposals on the role of problematisations in the emergence of global governance, governmentalities, and governed objects.⁴³ Readings of Foucault in combination with Carol Bacchi take problematisations as ‘problem representations’ and theorise their discursive production through as well as their effects on governmental policy processes.⁴⁴ Finally, readings that pair Foucault with John Dewey understand problematisations as sets of ‘practical conditions and institutional mechanisms’ that enable the production of problems; on this basis, they then theorise problematisation as ‘the starting point for politics’.⁴⁵ In this section, I variously draw from these different propositions, but ultimately offer a reading of Foucault on

³⁸Ibid.; see also Ceadel, *Origins of War Prevention*; David Cortright, *Peace: A History of Movement and Ideas* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

³⁹Christian Bueger, ‘Orchestrating the response: Somali piracy and ontological complexity’, *Global Policy*, 4:1 (2013), pp. 86–93.

⁴⁰Samer Abdelnour and Akbar M. Saeed, ‘Technologizing humanitarian space: Darfur advocacy and the rape-stove panacea’, *International Political Sociology*, 8:2 (2014), pp. 145–63.

⁴¹Bentley Allan, ‘Producing the climate: States, scientists, and the constitution of global governance objects’, *International Organization*, 71:1 (2017), pp. 131–62.

⁴²Olaf Corry, *Constructing a Global Polity: Theory, Discourse and Governance* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 60; see also Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London, UK: Sage, 1999).

⁴³Allan, ‘Producing the climate’; Michael Merlingen, ‘From governance to governmentality in CSDP: Towards a Foucauldian research agenda’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49:1 (2011), pp. 149–69.

⁴⁴Bueger, ‘Orchestrating the response’; Marjolein Deros, ‘Problematizations in the EU’s external policies: The case of Singapore as “the other”’, *Asia Europe Journal*, 16 (2018), pp. 423–37; see also Carol Bacchi, *Analysing Policy: What’s the Problem Represented To Be?* (Frenchs Forest, New South Wales, Aus.: Pearson, 2009).

⁴⁵Christian Bueger and Tim Edmunds, ‘Pragmatic ordering: Informality, experimentation, and the maritime security agenda’, *Review of International Studies*, 47:2 (2021), pp. 171–91 (pp. 175–6); see also Bueger, ‘Orchestrating the response’; John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (New York, NY: Swallow Press, 1946).

problematization that differs from them in its empirical focus and theoretical intention. I broaden the analytical scope beyond problems of government to political problems more generally, focus the analysis on practices rather than on discourses, and shift the analytical attention from the politics to which problematisations give rise to the politics arising within problematisations.

Distinguishing problems from other human-made research objects such as behaviours and ideas, Foucault once explained that he had sought ‘to analyze the process of “problematization” – which means: how and why certain things ... became a *problem*’.⁴⁶ Shared by many Foucault-inspired IR analyses, this understanding of problematisation as the processual becoming of problems also serves as a baseline for the conceptualisation suggested here.⁴⁷ Within Foucault’s own work, the understanding of problems as processes is in line with his ‘epiphenomenal’⁴⁸ approach to research and his eluding of given, unified, or ‘natural’ objects of inquiry,⁴⁹ as well as with his view of history as ultimately unfamiliar.⁵⁰ Based on these historico-philosophical tenets, problematisations as processes cannot be thought of, as Martin Saar points out, ‘as *one* becoming or even as *one* historical event’.⁵¹ Moreover, it would be futile to look for generalisable regularities within these processes, to stipulate causal mechanisms, or to seek to predict their future development.⁵² Rather, problematisations must be understood as emerging in a haphazard fashion, through multiple, dispersed, and frequently accidental processes. For empirical analyses of problematisations, this means paying attention to how an object such as war has been rendered problematic not by an ingenious stroke of the pen or at a pivotal meeting, but through manifold larger and smaller, gradual and abrupt changes unfolding over a period of time.

As these kinds of processes, what do problematisations consist of – and which of their aspects can we, their overall unfamiliarity notwithstanding, seek to study empirically? On the one hand, problematisations consist of practices and their conditions of possibility.⁵³ In his inquiry into the problematisation of sexuality, for instance, Foucault was interested in ‘the conditions in which human beings “problematize” what they are, what they do, and the world in which they live’, as well as in ‘the practices on the basis of which these problematizations are formed’.⁵⁴ Problematisations both emerge from earlier practices and are the enabling and constraining conditions for our current (problematizing) practices.⁵⁵ Since problematisations thus consist in ‘what people do’ all the way down, it is, as Paul Veyne explains, through the practices that (re)produce problematisations that they can be observed.⁵⁶

⁴⁶Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles, CA: semiotext(e), 2001), p. 171, emphasis in original.

⁴⁷Abdelnour and Saeed, ‘Technologizing humanitarian space’; Allen, ‘Producing the climate’; Bueger and Edmunds, ‘Pragmatic ordering’.

⁴⁸Philippe Bonditti, Andrew Neal, Sven Opitz, and Chris Zebrowski, ‘Genealogy’, in Claudia Aradau, Jef Huysmans, Andrew Neal, and Nadine Voelkner (eds), *Critical Security Methods: New Frameworks for Analysis* (London, UK: Routledge, 2015), pp. 159–88 (p. 166).

⁴⁹Paul Veyne, ‘Foucault revolutionizes history’, in Arnold I. Davidson (ed.), *Foucault and His Interlocutors* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 146–82 (pp. 149–50).

⁵⁰Michel Foucault, ‘Nietzsche, genealogy, history’, in Paul Rabinow and Rose Nikolas (eds), *The Essential Foucault: Selections from the Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984* (New York, NY: New Press, 2003), pp. 76–100.

⁵¹Martin Saar, ‘Genealogische Kritik’, in Rahel Jaeggi and Thilo Wesche (eds), *Was ist Kritik?* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2013), pp. 247–65 (p. 255, emphasis in original, own translation).

⁵²Joseph MacKay and Christopher David LaRoche, ‘The conduct of history in international relations: Rethinking philosophy of history in IR theory’, *International Theory*, 9:2 (2017), pp. 203–36 (p. 224).

⁵³Similarly: Bueger and Edmunds, ‘Pragmatic ordering’, p. 176; Bueger, ‘Orchestrating the response’, p. 88.

⁵⁴Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Richard Hurley (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 10.

⁵⁵That these conditions of possibility are not transcendental, but themselves made up of historically accumulated practices distinguishes Foucault’s work from that of Marx and Freud, but also from Kant (Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 109–28; see also Veyne, ‘Foucault revolutionizes history’).

⁵⁶Veyne, ‘Foucault revolutionizes history’, pp. 156–7; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London, UK: Penguin, 1995).

On the other hand, empirical analyses of problematisations can focus on the operations of power in the making of problems. Foucault's conceptualisation of power has been widely discussed in IR and beyond. Rather than rehearsing these discussions, for the purposes of this article, I go with Amy Allen's summary, according to which Foucault 'combines a constitutive conception of power – that is, a conception of how power works to constitute subjects ... – with an agential conception – that is, a conception of how power is exercised by agents to constrain or act upon the actions of other agents.'⁵⁷ Since '[w]here there is power, there is resistance', this twofold understanding of power can be realised empirically by paying close attention to competing efforts at problematisation as well as to the conflicts and struggles arising in the context of these efforts.⁵⁸

More concretely, my analysis of the problematisation of war starts from the frames through which war is rendered problematic to then consider their logics, for example, the underlying assumptions of and the principles structuring these frames. I take my cue for distinguishing between frames and logics from Judith Butler's *Frames of War* as well as from IR scholarship that stresses the rationalities of problematisations. On the one hand, Butler contends that frames, by 'selectively producing and enforcing what will count as reality', become 'the means through which social norms are relayed and made effective.'⁵⁹ Frames, that is, have inclusionary as well as exclusionary effects: they produce reality – for instance, the (un)grievability of the lives of different populations exposed to war – by 'always keeping something out' of the frame.⁶⁰ On the other hand, the extant IR literature on problematisations highlights their 'underlying assumptions',⁶¹ 'style[s] of reasoning',⁶² and 'political rationality'.⁶³ Differentiating between frames and their logics is analytically worthwhile because it is with regard to both frames and logics that conflicts and contingencies arise within problematisations. Along these lines, controversies between the commissioners, the CEIP, and other parts of the peace movement concerned not only the commission's frames for rendering war problematic, but also a clash between the logic of deviance underlying these frames and different dialectical alternatives to it. Making visible these kinds of arguments, an analysis that looks both at the frames of problems and at their underlying logics helps us to get at the politics within problematisations.

Moreover, differentiating the frames through which war is rendered problematic from their underlying logics enables an analysis of how ways of knowing and subjects of knowledge are constituted within these logics. Famously, Foucault claimed that rather than knowledge being the antipode of power, 'power and knowledge directly imply one another' so that 'the subject who knows' is the effect of these relations of power-knowledge.⁶⁴ This suggests that we need to inquire into how knowledge comes into play within conflicts about the logics of the problem of war, as well as into how problematisations produce not only war as a problematic object of knowledge and action, but also subjects capable of and responsible for dealing with this object.⁶⁵ Taking inspiration from Foucault's empirical studies of the problematisations of madness, crime, and sexuality, we can do so by focusing on the ways of knowing that take effect within the production of problems and on the subjectivities this production presupposes and brings about.

⁵⁷ Amy Allen, 'Power/knowledge/resistance: Foucault and epistemic injustice', in Ian James Kidd, Gaile Pohlhaus, and José Medina (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice* (London, UK: Routledge, 2017), pp. 187–94 (p. 188).

⁵⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 95.

⁵⁹ Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London, UK: Verso, 2009), pp. xiii, xix.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

⁶¹ Derous, 'Problematizations in the EU's external policies', p. 424.

⁶² Bueger, 'Orchestrating the response', p. 88.

⁶³ Merlingen, 'From governance to governmentality', p. 152.

⁶⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 27; see also Johanna Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 4.

⁶⁵ Bueger, 'Orchestrating the response', p. 88; Vivienne Jabri, *War and the Transformation of Global Politics* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 6.

Finally, a focus on the logics underlying problematisations offers a handle on the resolutely modern character of war as a problem of deviance – as well as on how, by virtue of this logic, the making of this modern problem has played into more widely constituted systems of oppression. On the one hand, insofar as the understanding of war as a problem of deviance is but the flipside of modernity's presumably progressive pacification,⁶⁶ its underlying logic implies that this understanding struggles to adequately grasp not only modern war as a phenomenon in itself, but also the multiple violent contributions of war to the constitution of modernity.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the understanding of war as a problem of deviance relies on the presumption of a rational modern subject singularly capable of authoring epistemic and ethical projects of correction and improvement.⁶⁸ Insofar as it is constituted in contradistinction to non- or not-yet-modern others, this modern subject's capacity for taking action against war is founded on the denial of this capacity to its 'primitive', 'uncivilised', or 'barbarian' others. In sum, the logic of deviance, by presuming modernity as the opposite of war as well as the modern subject as uniquely capable of making it so, implies war to be a problem of others who, however, are incapable of addressing it. Thus, the modern understanding of war as a problem of deviance obscures its reliance on civilisational, orientalist, and racist figures of thought and invisibilises how war as such is a broader problem that has crucially enabled imperial, colonial, and patriarchal violences.

Agency out of contingency: Rereading Foucault on genealogy

To put this conceptualisation of problematisation into action, I turn to genealogy. Basing themselves on Foucault, IR scholars from the late 1980s onwards have written genealogies to question international practices, principles, and institutions⁶⁹ – and have thereby also sought to sound out IR's disciplinary limits.⁷⁰ As a particular kind of historical analysis in IR, genealogy has been stipulated to provide 'political' histories of knowledge⁷¹ and reflexive 'histories of the present as inside stories';⁷² most importantly, it has been claimed as a way of doing history that denaturalises previously taken for granted ideas and practices. Moreover, genealogy has also been discussed as a research tool that is 'effective by virtue of being *episodical* and *exemplary*': that to achieve their denaturalising effect, genealogies do not need to amount to comprehensive, continuous, or representative histories, but rather probe the contingent emergences of the contemporary present across different episodes and examples.⁷³

As there is thus no shortage of discussions of genealogy in IR, and much to agree with in these discussions, my rereading of Foucault on genealogy focuses on one issue in particular: namely, on the question of how insights into historical contingency can serve to foster contemporary agency. No longer content with 'mere' denaturalisation, Foucauldian scholarship in IR and beyond has more recently turned to Foucault's call for historical analyses to 'separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking

⁶⁶Koloma Beck and Schlichte, *Theorien der Gewalt*, p. 29.

⁶⁷Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, pp. 3–4.

⁶⁸Robbie Shilliam, 'Decolonising the grounds of ethical inquiry: A dialogue between Kant, Foucault and Glissant', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 39:3 (2011), pp. 649–65; see also Robbie Shilliam, 'Modernity and modernization', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies* (2011).

⁶⁹Jens Bartelson, *Genealogy of Sovereignty* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995); James Der Derian, *On Diplomacy* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Richard Price, *Chemical Weapons Taboo* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

⁷⁰Scott Hamilton, 'A genealogy of metatheory in IR: How "ontology" emerged from the inter-paradigm debate', *International Theory*, 9:1 (2016), pp. 136–70.

⁷¹Srdjan Vucetic, 'Genealogy as a research tool in international relations', *Review of International Studies*, 37:3 (2011), pp. 1295–312 (p. 1312).

⁷²Bartelson, *Genealogy of Sovereignty*, p. 69.

⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 73, emphasis in original; see also Bonditti et al., 'Genealogy'; Vucetic, 'Genealogy as a research tool', p. 1300.

what we are, do, or think'.⁷⁴ It is along these lines, for instance, that Jens Bartelson's history of the idea of 'ontogenetic war' aims to 'set [people] free' to think differently about war 'by exposing the contingency of all prior conceptualisations'.⁷⁵ Insofar as everything could have been otherwise, that is, it could now be made to be otherwise, too. Operating at such a general level of argument, however, analyses such as Bartelson's struggle to identify more precisely the 'points where change is possible and desirable' and offer precious little guidance on how we might work towards 'the very specific transformations' that Foucault demands.⁷⁶

To facilitate the emergence of agency out of contingency, it does not suffice for genealogy to demonstrate that everything is contingent and hence could have been otherwise. Instead, genealogy can '[invite] specific strategies for either developing alternative practices or improving existing practices', as Colin Koopman argues, '[b]y focusing on the specific ways in which our practices are contingent, and not merely the general fact of their contingency'.⁷⁷ How can genealogy trace these more specific contingencies? On the one hand, this is a question of archival research. Foucault's genealogies famously worked their way through 'a vast accumulation of source material' in order to 'identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals'.⁷⁸ On the other hand, it is also a matter of genealogy as a history of the present that seeks to establish a reflexive relationship between contemporary problematisations and the contingent practices and conditions out of which they have formed.⁷⁹

As a tool for providing insights into contingency that can open up new possibilities for agency, genealogy depends on the existence of an agential subject laying claim to these possibilities. In this context, I offer a final rereading of Foucault, whose genealogies are often taken as wholesale rejections of this kind of subject. According to Amy Allen and Johanna Oksala, Foucault renounced the Enlightenment subject capable of self-reflection as an ahistorical constant, yet allowed for and indeed counted on this subject as an historical actuality. In line with the conception of power suggested above, this means that for Foucault, freedom – for instance, the freedom to think differently about and act otherwise towards war as problematic – 'is not only a non-subjective opening of possibilities'. Rather, it is also exercised by the subject who is 'critically reflecting on itself and its behavior, on beliefs and the social field of which it is part'.⁸⁰ By delving into the contingencies that made not only our problems, but also us as subjects in charge of working on them, genealogy thus offers us resources for critical reflection on the specifics of these contingencies. Thereby, it seeks to enable us not just to rethink, but also to practically remake ourselves and our problems.

Problematisation and genealogy as critique

As this last point already hints at, genealogical analyses of problematisations can themselves constitute problematising practices. In particular, this is the case when such analyses self-consciously set about to further the problematisations they are inquiring into – when, as Koopman puts it,

⁷⁴Michel Foucault, 'What is enlightenment?', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp. 32–50 (p. 46).

⁷⁵Jens Bartelson, 'A reply to my critics: War and historical ontology', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 48:1 (2019), pp. 105–14 (p. 111); see also Bartelson, *War*.

⁷⁶Foucault, 'What is enlightenment', p. 46. For a related criticism, see also Marta Bashovski, 'The looping effects of IR's concepts: Bartelson on ontogenetic war and the politics of classification', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 48:1 (2019), pp. 79–89.

⁷⁷Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*, pp. 141–2.

⁷⁸Foucault, 'Nietzsche, genealogy, history', pp. 76–7, 81. Whereas Nietzsche's genealogies, to denounce our moral values, rely on a small number of frequently speculative examples, Foucault's genealogies contain excessive empirics to enable an experimentation with these values (Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*, pp. 61–2).

⁷⁹The argument is not that something of the past continues to exist, unchangedly, in the present, but that it acts to enable/constrain present possibilities (Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 12; Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom*, p. 192).

⁸⁰Oksala, *Foucault on Freedom*, p. 190; see also Allen, 'Power/knowledge/resistance'.

'[t]he critical inquirer observes practical problematizations that are already extant' in order to 'draw up, organize, and engage' them and thus to 'contribute to the ongoing reproduction of problematizations already under way'.⁸¹ Foucault's work is exemplary of this particular mode of critical inquiry and practice.⁸² His genealogies of the becoming problematic of madness, crime, and sexuality are profoundly historical, yet simultaneously, he also sought to problematise how these problems are formed in the present. Thereby, they amount to a 'critique of who we are' that, or so Foucault hoped, 'is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them'.⁸³

In doing so, genealogies of problematisations constitute a particular kind of critique, which, in contrast to those kinds of critique that aim to judge things or circumstances as good or bad, directs itself at the logics that enable these analytical, ethical, and political judgements. For Foucault, critique 'is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest'.⁸⁴ Or, as Judith Butler writes, 'the primary task of critique will not be to evaluate whether its objects ... are good or bad, valued highly or demeaned, but to bring into relief the very framework of evaluation itself'.⁸⁵ Probing this framework and hence the preconditions of our ways of knowing about problems and of making problematic, genealogies of problematisations seek out the constraints these place on our contemporary problematising practices.

Their aim in doing so is ultimately a reconstructive one: to enable changes in our modes of thought, our ways of taking action upon our problems, and ourselves as subjects in charge of the problems we face. Genealogies of problematisations work to realise this aim by making the remaking of problems a more urgent task. They 'descriptively clarify extant problems' in order to 'normatively intensify the force we feel in confronting these problems'.⁸⁶ What is more, genealogies of problematisations also provide us with insights which we can use to get to work on reconstructing our problems. As Paul Rabinow explains, Foucault's genealogies of problematisations examined 'the previous forms that had been articulated as responses to a specific set of historical problems, thereby making them available for a different use or set of uses: as intellectual instrumentalities to illuminate contemporary problems and possible solutions'.⁸⁷ By tracing the contingencies and conflicts out of which our contemporary problems have emerged, genealogies of problematisations enable us to see more precisely our (imperfect) freedom in seeking out new ways of rendering problematic and equip us with insights that we can ultimately use to construct our problems otherwise. In this way, problematisation, far from being merely an object, is also a mode of critical inquiry and action.

The Carnegie commission of inquiry and its problematisation of war

After the First Balkan War (October 1912 to May 1913) had pitted the Balkan League, an alliance comprised of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia, against the Ottoman Empire, the Second

⁸¹Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*, p. 99; see also Bonditti et al., 'Genealogy', p. 169.

⁸²Importantly, this is also so beyond problematisation and genealogy as academic tools of critique, as is evidenced by Foucault's activism – which often stood in marked tension to his theoretical work. See, for instance, Mugambi Jouet, 'Foucault, prison, and human rights: A dialectic of theory and criminal justice reform', *Theoretical Criminology* (online first); Anna Terwiel, 'Problematization as an activist practice: Reconsidering Foucault', *Theory & Event*, 23:1 (2020), pp. 66–84.

⁸³Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, p. 10.

⁸⁴Foucault, 'Practicing criticism', p. 154.

⁸⁵Judith Butler, 'What is critique? An essay on Foucault's virtue', in David Ingram (ed.), *The Political: Readings in Continental Philosophy* (London, UK: Basil Blackwell, 2002), pp. 212–27 (p. 214).

⁸⁶Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*, p. 100.

⁸⁷Paul Rabinow, 'Dewey and Foucault: What's the problem?', *Foucault Studies*, 11 (2011), pp. 11–19 (p. 16); see also Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*, pp. 135–6.

Balkan War (June to July 1913) was waged between the former allies, and later on also Romania and the Ottoman Empire. This second war was still ongoing when Nicholas Murray Butler, the Director of the Carnegie Endowment's Division of Intercourse and Education, suggested to Elihu Root, the president of the CEIP, that the wars 'give us great opportunity for prompt action. If you approve I will send [a] notable commission at once to [the] Balkans to ascertain facts and to fix responsibility for prolonging hostilities and commencing outrages.'⁸⁸ Overriding the reservations of Andrew Carnegie, the CEIP's founder, the commission Butler envisioned was soon constituted under the presidency of Paul Henri d'Estournelles de Constant, a French diplomat, senator, and Nobel laureate who headed the CEIP's Centre Européen. And so, on 20 August 1913, ten days after the Treaty of Bucharest had concluded the Second Balkan War, four commissioners left Paris for Belgrade: Henry Noel Brailsford, a British journalist; Samuel Train Dutton, the head of Teacher's College at Columbia University; Justin Godart, a French lawyer and politician; and Paul Milioukoff, a Russian historian and member of parliament.⁸⁹ Upon their return on 28 September 1913, a lengthy and complicated writing process ensued. Finally, in May 1914, their report was published.

Given the outbreak of the First World War mere weeks later, the CEIP commission obviously did not succeed in achieving its stated aims – its work did not make another war impossible. Nonetheless, this work makes for a crucial example within the wider genealogy of the modern problematisation of war. For one, the Carnegie commission constitutes the first instance in which an international commission of inquiry – an institutional form codified by the Hague conventions – was used to study 'vital' matters of international conflict.⁹⁰ Moreover, the CEIP more generally was an influential proponent of the pacifying force of scientific knowledge in international affairs. Besides the department headed by Butler, it also housed two research departments specialising in the study of war from the perspectives of economic history and international law, respectively. Overall, through its various knowledge-production activities, the Carnegie Endowment played a decisive role in establishing the international 'normative framework within which experts and the wider public discussed competing knowledge claims' about war and peace.⁹¹

Finally, many of the actors involved in the commission later on carried forward the understanding of the problem of war that the commission had propagated. Brailsford went on to publish almost three dozen books, among them many anti-militarist and anti-imperialist titles.⁹² D'Estournelles, who remained a French senator and the head of the CEIP's Centre Européen until his death in 1924, became a major critic of the Versailles Treaty's terms and an avid supporter of the League of Nations.⁹³ Butler, by contrast, advocated against the United States' membership in the League and for its entry into both the First and the Second World War – and he also actively supported the Kellogg-Briand Pact. While these positions might seem contradictory, they all rested on the same framing of war as a legal problem that had already animated Butler's work for the Carnegie commission.⁹⁴

⁸⁸CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Telegram Butler to Root, 19 July 1913.

⁸⁹A further three members – the German law professor Walther Schücking, the Austrian law professor Paul Redlich, and the British editor Francis W. Hirst – only collaborated afterwards (Frances Trix, 'Peace-mongering in 1913: The Carnegie International Commission of Inquiry and its report on the Balkan Wars', *First World War Studies*, 5:2 (2014), pp. 147–62 (pp. 148–9)).

⁹⁰Shane Darcy, 'Laying the foundations: Commissions of inquiry and the development of international law', in Christian Henderson (ed.), *Commissions of Inquiry: Problems and Prospects* (Oxford, UK: Hart, 2016), pp. 231–56.

⁹¹Jens Wegener, 'Creating an "International Mind"? The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Europe, 1911–1940' (PhD thesis, European University Institutel, 2015), p. 14.

⁹²F. M. Leventhal, *The Last Dissenter: H. N. Brailsford and His World* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1985).

⁹³Adolf Wild, *Baron d'Estournelles (1852–1924): Das Wirken eines Friedensnobelpreisträgers für die Deutsch-Französische Verständigung und Europäische Einigung* (München: Schön Verlag, 1973).

⁹⁴C. F. Howlett, 'Nicholas Murray Butler's Crusade for a warless world', *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 67:2 (1983–1984), pp. 99–120 (pp. 107–08).

The problem of war: Legal, economic, and moral frames

In the work of the Carnegie commission as among international lawyers and peace activists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries more generally, there were two contending ideas about what exactly war as a legal problem consisted in. Exemplifying the first of these two ideas, some of the correspondence originating from the CEIP's Centre Européen references 'la guerre elle-même' as the problem that the commission was to tackle,⁹⁵ and some of the commission's members also toyed with the idea that their report was aimed 'against war in general'.⁹⁶ Ultimately, however, the commission found that claiming war per se to be problematic would undermine its intention of rendering war into a problem that could be addressed by practical means: 'If [the commission] discovers that the atrocities were inevitable, inseparable from the condition of war, what an exposure of the powerlessness of civilization!'⁹⁷ A focus on certain violent acts within war – on 'outrages' or 'atrocities' against civilians, such as murder, arson, pillage, and rape – promised to make for a better addressable problem.⁹⁸

The primary sources also indicate how hard won an achievement this more focused problematization of war was, necessitating both reconsideration of long-standing lines of thought and minute editorial decisions. A first draft of Chapter VI of the report argued that '[t]he devastations were of two kinds, those made necessary by war, [and] those that were irregular',⁹⁹ but was revised to read that '[t]he havoc committed was of two kinds, one lawful and the other directed against private property'.¹⁰⁰ The added emphasis on the actual perpetration of wartime violence and the distinction now drawn between lawful and unlawful instances of such violence exemplify the manifold questions of detail that went into rendering war problematic. At the same time, the commission also had to negotiate the more general framework provided by international law, which pitted the problem of war as such against the problem of wartime violence. In the final report's introduction, d'Estournelles reflects that while, as a participant of the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907, he had been of the view that '[t]o humanize war' constituted 'a hypocrisy and a satire, leading to its being too easily accepted', he had since changed his mind and now believed that '[t]o refuse to humanize war for fear of making it too frequent, is to let the weight of the governments' fault fall upon the soldier'.¹⁰¹ The final report's chapter on questions of international law arising from the Balkan Wars affirms d'Estournelles's newfound conviction. Weighing the prospects of rendering either the opening of hostilities or excessive wartime violence into violations of international law, it embraces the latter line of argument.¹⁰²

Alongside these frames of war as a legal problem, the commission's work also pointed to war's economically and morally problematic aspects. 'From the economic point of view', Chapter IV opens, 'war is a destruction of wealth'.¹⁰³ The chapter goes on to outline the problem in detail. Already 'before war is declared the prospect of conflict between the countries ... affects the financial situation', as '[c]redit facilities are restricted; monetary circulation disturbed; production slackened; orders falling off to a marked degree; and an uncertainty prevails which reacts harmfully on trade.' With 'the declaration of war and mobilization', 'able bodied men' are drafted, and 'work stops in factories and in the fields', with negative repercussions for individual households

⁹⁵CEIP Archive, Vol. 201, Letter Prudhommeaux to Haskell, 6 January 1914; see also CEIP Archive, Vol. 201, Letter d'Estournelles to Butler, 19 February 1914.

⁹⁶CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, L'Humanité, *La mission Carnegie poursuit son enquête*, 9 September 1913.

⁹⁷CEIP, *Report*, p. 3.

⁹⁸CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Letter Butler to Root, 19 July 1913.

⁹⁹CEIP Carnegie Endowment for International Peace European Center Records, 1911–1940, Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library Collection (hereafter CEIP European Archive), Box 11, Folder 11.5, Godart, Draft of Chapter VI, p. 9a.

¹⁰⁰CEIP, *Report*, p. 244.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, p. 208.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, p. 235.

and national economies. Once ‘the fighting begins’, ‘[t]housands of human lives are sacrificed’, in particular the lives of those most capable of ‘fruitful labor’. Yet the economically destructive nature of war is not limited to the annihilation of human lives: ‘highly expensive supplies of cannon, gun carriages and arms are ruined’, and ‘there is destructive bombardment of towns, villages in flames, the harvests stamped down or burned, bridges, the most costly items of a railway, blown up.’ ‘Outrages’ against civilians are accompanied by further economic destruction, as ‘non-combatants have to suffer ... invasion, excesses and it may be flight, with the loss of their goods.’¹⁰⁴ In sum: ‘Hundreds of thousands of deaths, soldiers crippled, ruin, suffering, hatred and, to crown all, misery and poverty after victory. War results in destruction and poverty in every direction.’¹⁰⁵

The commissioners’ frames for rendering war into a moral problem, in turn, hinged on the notion that excessive wartime violence would yield negative consequences for ‘the psychological and ethical development of peoples’.¹⁰⁶ The commission’s concern with the ‘moral effects of the atrocities’ lay with individuals and collectives, and moreover with ‘the sufferers as well as those guilty of committing them’.¹⁰⁷ Discussing orders to commit violence against civilians, the report notes these orders’ ‘moral effect upon hundreds and thousands of young men’ and declares that ‘the moral loss is irretrievable.’¹⁰⁸ At the collective level, too, the deleterious effect of the ‘revolting’ events of the wars was feared to manifest itself ‘in the inner consciousness of moral deterioration and in the loss of self respect that the nations will chiefly suffer.’¹⁰⁹ This moral problem of war is notable not least for its combination of ethical and psychological reasoning: it fuses the notion that an object, an action, or a state of being could be deemed good, right, or proper with ideas about external stimuli and behavioural responses. Thereby, war becomes a moral problem not only insofar as certain occurrences within war are ethically problematic, but also because it has negative psychological consequences.

Competing logics for problematising war: Deviance vs transcendence

To appreciate what the commission’s frames for rendering war into a legal, economic, and moral problem have in common, it is instructive to take a closer look at two alternative frames of the problem at stake: a Marxist understanding of war as expressive of and instrumental for class struggle, and a Hegelian idea of war as heroic and a driver of progress.¹¹⁰ In contrast to these two notions’ dialectical structuring of war as a problem to be transcended from within, according to the frames of the commission’s problematisation war was a problem of behavioural deviance that could be corrected from without.

The Marxist understanding of war as an expression and a means of class struggle was at the heart of a letter sent to the CEIP ten days prior the commission’s departure. Its author, Victor Bérard, took the Balkan Wars as exemplary of the broader conflicts ‘between the farmer and the exploited slave and the Greek proprietor or exploiter’.¹¹¹ D’Estournelles had invited Bérard, a French peace activist, to participate in the commission. Declining the invitation, Bérard went on to explain that the Balkan Wars had ‘revived the days of our France between 1570 and 1589 [*sic*]. And the towns of this Balkan ... have revived the life of our Paris, between March and May 1871.’¹¹² In his view, the Balkan Wars and their violence were a smaller part of a

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 264.

¹⁰⁶CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Letter Butler to d’Estournelles, 29 September 1913.

¹⁰⁷CEIP, *Report*, pp. 266–7.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 267.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 269, 185–6.

¹¹⁰The terms ‘Marxist’ and ‘Hegelian’ are based on Joas and Knöbl, *War in Social Thought*.

¹¹¹CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Letter Bérard to d’Estournelles, 18 August 1913.

¹¹²Ibid.

larger problem: the problem of class relations. What is more, they also formed part of this problem's solution.

Since the more radical parts of the Western European peace movement were not among its intended audiences,¹¹³ the commission mostly ignored this alternative problematisation of war. Therefore, the few instances in which the commissioners did expressly seek to counter it are all the more interesting. When d'Estournelles sent a copy of Bérard's letter to Butler, he paraphrased that in Bérard's opinion, 'the massacres have their origin in social hatred more than in religious or political ones.'¹¹⁴ For the CEIP, this 'social' problem of war had nothing to do with class relations. Rather, it blended war's economically and morally problematic aspects:

There is one other fact, partly economic but distinctly social, which should not be overlooked. ... upward of a million and a half of men have been under arms during the past year. ... To be withdrawn from useful productive labor is bad enough; but life in the barracks, with much idleness ..., is sure to be demoralizing and harmful. ... War causes many kinds of human waste and this is one of them. The life of the recruits who are kept in service under present conditions in the Balkan States is unnatural and not favorable to moral growth.¹¹⁵

Here, 'labor' did not constitute the point in which exploitative class relations crystallised for revolution to take its origin. Instead, the removal of individuals from 'productive labor' was a mechanism through which war led to economic and moral anomalies and precarities. By offering this alternative account of war as a social problem, the Carnegie commission thus refuted by subversion the Marxist idea of war as a means and expression of class struggle.

Much more than any peace activist's Marxist framing of the problem of war, the Hegelian idea of war as heroic and a driver of progress – as constituting an 'open door to glory and renown' and as stimulating the development of a 'class of better human traits'¹¹⁶ – was what the commissioners and the CEIP were arguing against. It is interesting, therefore, that this Hegelian understanding of war can sometimes also be read between the lines of the final report, especially in some of the passages that were originally drafted by Milioukoff. Because of '[t]he intoxication of combat', Milioukoff argued, soldiers were sometimes not 'able to deliberate and choose' in a rational way: caught in the 'horrors of battle itself, ... men were actuated and dominated solely by [battle's] fury'.¹¹⁷ Yet since this nature of combat ran counter to human nature, war's excesses would ultimately bring about a progressive counter-reaction: 'The things we have described ... show in their very horror abnormal conditions which can not last. Fortunately for humanity, nature herself revolts against "excesses"'.¹¹⁸ Through this dialectic of intoxication and revolt, the problem of war would transcend itself and ultimately further human progress.

The Hegelian understanding of war as heroic and a driver of progress was the conventional view of war at the time. To further the CEIP's official position – which consisted in a wholesale condemnation of war¹¹⁹ – without alienating public opinion, the commission therefore took an ambiguous stance on it. The report agreed with public opinion that the First Balkan War had been an emancipatory war of liberation, but emphasised that 'this first war was only the prelude to the second fratricidal war', which had also been 'the more atrocious of the two'.¹²⁰ Again, this

¹¹³CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Letter Butler to d'Estournelles, 21 July 1913; Vol. 201, Letter Prudhommeaux to Haskell, 21 November 1913.

¹¹⁴CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Letter d'Estournelles to Butler, 27 August 1913. Emphasis in original.

¹¹⁵CEIP, *Report*, p. 269.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 265.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹¹⁹CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Andrew Carnegie, Entry into the guestbook of the Centre Européen, 2 July 1913.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 1.

was also an editorial issue: in redacting the report's chapters, Butler took great care to ensure that the text would not stray too far from the CEIP's official views.¹²¹ In addition, the commission also sought to develop the idea that peace could provide for exactly the kind of progress that, according to the Hegelian view, war was assumed to bring about: 'In default of a war, courage applies itself to fertile invention, towards exploration, to dangerous scientific experiments, to aerial and submarine navigation.'¹²² Finally, the commission's problematisation of war also challenged the Hegelian view's dialectical logic of the problem of war more directly. On the one hand, it diluted claims about the 'nature' of war by emphasising questions of human agency, responsibility, and culpability.¹²³ On the other hand, it proposed a dialectical counter-claim of its own: 'violence carries its own punishment with it and [therefore] something very different from armed force will be needed to establish order and peace in the Balkans.'¹²⁴

Taken together, the Carnegie commission rejected dialectical logics of the problem of war, whether the view of war as expressive of class struggle or the idea of war as a driver of historical progress, in favour of a logic of deviance according to which war was problematic insofar as its economic costs and moral downsides outweighed its benefits and advantages.¹²⁵ These two logics differed with regard to how war actually constituted a problem. Following a dialectical logic, war was a problem to be transcended: a driver for getting from one state of being to the next, better state, war was a problem to be recognised and overcome from within. By contrast, according to the rational logic favoured by the Carnegie commission, war was a problem to which there could be a solution: it was an anomalous and deviant kind of behaviour to be diagnosed and corrected from without.

Taking action against war: Empirical vs metaphysical knowledge

Specifically, the underlying logic of the Carnegie commission's problematisation of war called for corrective action directed at politicians, journalists, and civil society in the 'civilised' parts of the world. If their report succeeded in educating their intended audiences, the commissioners hoped, this would go a long way towards the prevention of future wars. Out of its intended audiences, it was the general public that the CEIP was most concerned to impress: 'Public opinion needs to be directed and held to this point', for '[i]t is too easily carried away by admiration for feats of arms, exalted by historians and poets.'¹²⁶

To correct these erroneously idealistic views of war, the commissioners developed what they referred to as a 'scientific' way of knowing war. What characterised this way of knowing was that in producing empirical insights about the Balkan Wars, it sought to emulate, as far as possible, the epistemological ideal of direct observation.¹²⁷ Butler, for one, was delighted that the commissioners were going to deliver neither 'philosophical articles on war' nor 'descriptions of battles', but rather had 'gone into territory war has devastated and studied its moral, economic and social [consequences] by the inductive method of observation'.¹²⁸ More generally, the CEIP and the commissioners attributed a unique didactic value to observation-based, empirical knowledge: 'For the education of public opinion, nothing compares to precise examples taken directly from reality.'¹²⁹

¹²¹For an example, compare the draft of Chapter VI (CEIP European Archive, Box 11, Folder 11.5, Godart, Draft of Chapter VI, p. 9a) with the final report (CEIP, *Report*, pp. 244–5).

¹²²CEIP, *Report*, p. 4.

¹²³*Ibid.*, pp. 19, 49, 68.

¹²⁴CEIP, *Report*, p. 15.

¹²⁵CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Explanatory note d'Estournelles to Bacon, 18 September 1913.

¹²⁶CEIP, *Report*, p. 236.

¹²⁷See also Dzovinar Kévonian, 'L'enquête, le délit, la preuve: les "atrocités" balkanique de 1912–1913 à l'épreuve du droit de la guerre', *Le Mouvement Social*, 222:1 (2008), pp. 13–40.

¹²⁸CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Letter Butler to d'Estournelles, 7 October 1913.

¹²⁹CEIP Archive, Vol. 199, Letter Prudhommeaux to Haskell, 20 December 1912; see also Vol. 201, Letter Prudhommeaux to Butler, 6 January 1914.

However, this belief in the utility of empirical knowledge was not uncontested at the time. In a letter to Butler, Léon Montluc, a French jurist and peace activist,¹³⁰ objected:

With reference to the evils of war, common sense suffices to teach us that war is inseparable with frightful proceedings, all sorts of delinquencies, crime and atrocities? ... It is clear that it is a very hard and almost unattainable task, to aim at evidencing atrocities, crimes, delinquencies committed during a period of warfare! ... Therefore my humble opinion is that the Commission took a great deal of trouble to meet with a very puny benefit, a benefit which is no other than to circulate and enhance the horrid effects of war People are learning all sorts of things, indeed, but prescinding of the clear notion of moral duties founded on true philosophy or Christian religion, I am afraid no good can be derived from the diffusion of extensive but shallow knowledge all over the people.¹³¹

As Montluc's letter indicates, the commission's problematisation of war was not only up against alternative logics of the problem at stake, but also against the view that knowledge founded on metaphysical systems such as philosophy or religion constituted a corrective device far superior to the observation-based, empirical knowledge the commission offered. Montluc had no intention of desacralising the 'evil' problem of war and feared that producing and disseminating empirical knowledge about war would distract people's 'clear notion of moral duties'. Yet within the CEIP commission's archive, Montluc's philippic is an outlier. The vast majority of the primary sources convey an unsuspecting enthusiasm for what Butler, d'Estournelles, and many of their contemporaries understood to be '[t]he first study ever made by the same scientific method that would be used in a laboratory, of the moral, social and economic effects of the war.'¹³²

Subjects responsible for and capable of action against war

According to the logic of deviance underlying the commission's problematisation, the production and dissemination of 'scientific' knowledge about war amounted to action against war – and the actors first and foremost responsible for taking such action were those who could be deemed capable of producing this kind of knowledge. What overtly qualified the commissioners in this regard was that they were 'men of eminent moral and intellectual virtues',¹³³ qualities that rested on their 'experience', 'conscience', and 'responsibility'.¹³⁴ When an inquiry was conducted by '[m]en of great worth and of the sincerest good will', the final report's introduction explains, then '[t]hese words, truth, independence and disinterestedness' ceased to be 'vain words', but became actualised.¹³⁵ As a contemporary of the commissioners put it, '[t]he value of this mass of evidence', and more generally of the knowledge they had produced, 'must depend on the acuteness of the commissioners.'¹³⁶

In this, the commissioners established their epistemic and ethical virtue by drawing an hierarchical distinction between themselves as 'Europeans who are searching for the truth'¹³⁷ and the 'peasants' and 'plain people, such as shop-keepers, workmen, private soldiers, and others'¹³⁸ whom they encountered on their journey. Most of these encounters were chance occurrences.

¹³⁰At the time, Montluc was 'one of the correspondents of the [CEIP's] Division of International Law, member of the Court of Appeals of France, and member of the Institute of International Law, and also President of the "Breton Group of Peace and Liberty"' (CEIP Archive, Vol. 41, Letter Butler to North, 26 August 1913).

¹³¹CEIP Archive, Vol. 39, Letter Montluc to Butler, 10 December 1914.

¹³²CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Letter Butler to Carnegie, 25 October 1913.

¹³³CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Letter d'Estournelles to Butler, 1 August 1913.

¹³⁴CEIP Archive, Vol. 201, Letter d'Estournelles to Butler, 24 November 1913.

¹³⁵CEIP, *Report*, p. 5.

¹³⁶T. S. Woolsey, 'Report of the International Commission to inquire into the causes and conduct of the Balkan Wars', *American Journal of International Law*, 9:1 (1915), pp. 279–81 (p. 280).

¹³⁷CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Letter D'Estournelle to Butler, 6 September 1913.

¹³⁸CEIP Archive, Vol. 200, Letter Butler to d'Estournelles, 31 July 1913.

Originally, the commissioners had imagined that their report would draw on conversations with high-ranking representatives of governments as well as on official statistics. Yet in some parts, government officials were unwilling to meet with the commissioners, and in other cases, official statistics were inexistent.¹³⁹ Forced to adapt their approach, the commissioners increasingly resorted to interviewing ‘plain’ people, whom they assumed to be ‘telling the truth’ because, being ‘villagers, simple, uneducated, and stunned by their sufferings’, they were ‘incapable of invention’.¹⁴⁰ When the commissioners did encounter people who seemed to possess what, in themselves, they would have considered adequate epistemic faculties, these interlocutors were taken as exceptions that proved the rule – so that, for instance, ‘an elderly woman of the middle class ... told her painful and dramatic story with more intelligence and feeling than most of the peasant witnesses’.¹⁴¹ In sum, the commissioners deemed most of the people they spoke with to be incapable of recognising or taking responsibility for the truth of their own accounts. Therefore, ‘the Commission assumes responsibility, in the sense that it believes that the witnesses told the truth’.¹⁴²

This hierarchical ordering of subjects according to their ability for recognising and bearing responsibility for true knowledge was based not only on sexist and classist ideas, but also on civilisational, orientalist, and racist assumptions of European modernity as a uniquely suitable spatio-temporal starting point from which to undertake the project of problematising war. The commission believed the worst of the violences it documented to have been ‘the direct heritage of slavery and war’ that the Balkan states had experienced at the hands of the Ottoman Empire¹⁴³ and saw the inhabitants of the Balkans as ‘primitive’,¹⁴⁴ yet not innately so: if their new ‘patrons, the Great Powers of Europe’, gave them ‘roads, and railways, and waterways, schools, laboratories, museums, hospitals and public works’, they could indeed become ‘civilised’.¹⁴⁵ Yet until such a point was reached, it fell to squarely modern subjects such as the Carnegie commissioners to produce true knowledge about the Balkans Wars.

In the end, however, the CEIP abandoned any plans it had initially entertained for instructing and improving the ‘less civilised’ people and governments of the Balkan states. It neither organised a conference on the problem of war specifically in the Balkans, nor did it otherwise ‘assist each government in repairing [the damage caused by war], by making known ... the real aims and resources of the country’.¹⁴⁶ Instead, the commissioners brought their capacity for epistemological and ethical action to bear on the cause of peace globally (that is, in the West). To influence ‘civilised’ public opinion towards this end, the commissioners took the Balkan Wars as examples of modern and, at the same time, ‘uncivilised’ warfare. On the one hand, these wars were fought on European soil and as such constituted examples of ‘just what is or may be involved in an international war carried out under modern conditions’ that showed ‘the shocking horrors which modern warfare entailed’.¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, they were fought by countries and people whom the commissioners and their audience considered to be ‘uncivilised’, neither fully modern nor fully European.

The argument is noteworthy not only for the inherent contradictions of the Balkan Wars as examples of the problem of modern war, but also for what fell by its wayside. As an anonymous critic of the commission put it: ‘What are you going to do in the Balkans, you French, you Americans, you English, you Russians, you Germans? Have you not enough to do with

¹³⁹CEIP, *Report*, pp. 7–8, 243–4.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 100–01.

¹⁴¹Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁴²Ibid., pp. 103, 138.

¹⁴³CEIP, *Report*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁴See, for example, *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 19; see also Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*.

¹⁴⁶Letter D’Estournelles to commission, 21 August 1913; see also CEIP, *Report*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁷CEIP, *Report*, p. x.

Morocco to look after, with Mexico, with South Africa, India, Persia?'. However, this broad hint at the wars waged by the commissioners' respective countries of origin was dismissed out of hand by D'Estournelles: 'Yes, we have plenty to do at home, but let us give up all exterior action if we pretend to wait until everything in our own house or conduct is reformed, before we can attempt to help others.'¹⁴⁸ Shared by the other members of the commission and the CEIP, this stance rendered deviant the atrocities of the Balkan Wars not least by turning a blind eye to the violences of numerous other wars that, when it came to the problem of 'modern' war, would arguably have made for more obviously fitting examples.

Conclusion

Building on existing critiques of the modern understanding of the problem of war, this article has sought to direct our critical attention towards this problem's underlying logic of deviance. To this end, I firstly provided an abbreviated sketch of the emergence of the modern understanding of the problem of war from the early nineteenth century to the contemporary present. This sketch highlighted how the logic of deviance underlying this modern understanding renders some wars problematic by normalising and invisibilising other wars; how it endows some actors with agency over war by denying this agency to others; and how it builds upon and reproduces more general assumptions about modernity as inherently rational, civilised, and progressively non-violent. Next, a rereading of Foucault and some of his interlocutors within and beyond IR developed problematisation and genealogy into analytical tools for reconstructive critique. In particular, I argued for conceptualising problematisation as the contingent and conflictual emergence of problems, and for genealogy as an analysis of such emergences that opens up new and specific possibilities for agency.

Finally, the article traced the contingent emergence of the problematisation of war in the work of the Carnegie commission, a crucial example within the wider genealogy of war as a problem of deviance. The analysis centred on the logics structuring this problematisation. For the commissioners and the CEIP, modern war was neither a dialectical problem to be overcome through violent action from within nor a problem to be addressed first and foremost by means of metaphysical knowledge. Rather, it was a problem of behavioural deviance that could be corrected through diagnostic and didactic action from without. This meant that agency over war necessitated empirical knowledge that, in turn, was to be produced from a position to the outside of the problem war constituted. Accordingly, the commissioners deliberately refrained from relating the problem of modern war to wars 'at home', and they deemed themselves epistemically and ethically capable of problematising war by denying these very faculties to the 'primitive' and 'uncivilised' people they encountered on their research journey.

Overall, by tracing the contingent and conflictual emergence of the problematisation of war in the example of the Carnegie commission, this article's genealogical analysis has put into question the foundations, the scope, and the means of the modern understanding of war as a problem of deviance. By this, I do not mean to suggest that war was perhaps not so problematic after all. Rather, precisely because war continues to be a problem, I want to raise the question of *how* exactly it is so. It is to this end that I have sought to highlight the logics of war as a problem of deviance and to make more specific aspects of these logics – their frames, underlying assumptions, ways of knowing, and subjects of knowledge – available for reconstructive critique. Insofar as the article has abstained from suggesting a way ahead, this is not because there were no alternative logics available to us on which we might draw for problematising war otherwise.¹⁴⁹ Instead, it is because problematisation as proposed in this article is but a starting point for critical thought

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹See, for example, Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*. But see also attempts at critiquing the violence of colonial modernity beyond the paradigm of war, for example, Henrique Tavares Furtado, 'Confronting the gated community: Towards a decolonial critique of violence beyond the paradigm of war', *Review of International Studies* (online first).

and action. In this spirit, this article's genealogical analysis of the problematisation of war hopes to be of help to attempts at finding new ways to think differently about and act otherwise towards the problem of war.

Acknowledgements. This article has taken many twists and turns, and I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the many people who have provided feedback on earlier versions: Claudia Aradau, Tarak Barkawi, Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Kerry Goettlich, Stefano Guzzini, Katharina Krause, Keith Krause, Marco Krüger, Katarina Kušić, Milja Kurki, Birgit Poopuu, and Elisabeth Schweiger, as well as audiences at the 2019 Pan-European Conference on International Relations, the 2019 Millennium Conference, and the 2021 EISA ECR Workshop 'What is War?'. In addition, very many thanks are due to Jen Comins and the staff at Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the three anonymous reviewers for their very constructive, incisive, and encouraging comments, which helped to significantly improve this piece, as well as to the RIS editors for their kind guidance and advice all throughout the review process. Of course, any errors and omissions remain my own. Finally, I gratefully acknowledge financial support: A Doctoral Career Development Scholarship from Aberystwyth University and a Fulbright Scholarship for Visiting Researchers to the United States enabled the research on which this article is based, and funding from Technical University Dresden made possible its open access publication.

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