

<John Dewey as Prophet of Interdependence>

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## JOHN DEWEY AND INTERNATIONAL INTERDEPENDENCE

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The sub-discipline of international relations has always been uneasy about its value and purpose. Although there are lively debates within political theory about the respective merits of the nation state and cosmopolitanism as the sources of obligation, international relations scholars tend not to justify their field with ethical considerations but with its presumed use-value. The field of international relations is seen as being valuable because it is useful, raising the question of precisely how and to whom it is useful. The last two decades have seen dueling polemics over these questions, largely conducted between scholars who believe that international relations scholarship is valuable when it is directly relevant to policy makers, and scholars who argue that it is valuable because it helps build up scientific knowledge about international affairs. The former deplore “false divisions” between scholarship and policy-making, arguing that much contemporary scholarship is of dubious value because it focuses on narrow hypothesis testing rather than grand theory building, and tests these hypotheses with rebarbative statistical techniques that render their findings incomprehensible to policy makers (Nye 2008, Mearsheimer and Walt 2013, Avey and Desch 2014, Desch 2015). The latter complain that traditional international relations debates are less aimed at confronting mid-level problems than perpetuating schisms between rival theoretical cults, each with its own zealous sectaries and obscurantist theology (Lake 2011, 2013).

In this article, I lay out an alternative understanding of how international relations is useful and to whom. Unlike existing approaches, I turn explicitly to political theory to ground my understanding - specifically the pragmatist account of politics laid out by John Dewey. Pragmatism has enjoyed a significant revival in international relations in the last few years, but

with a few exceptions (Cochran 2002, 2010, Widmaier 2004), international relations pragmatists have focused on developing a pragmatist account of habit and action in international affairs, in contradistinction to rationalist theories that separate strategies from goals. The account I present here, while compatible with this approach, does not require it - as scholars influenced by rational choice such as Jack Knight and James Johnson (1999) have argued, pragmatist inquiry can incorporate strategic analysis as a useful tool for political inquiry. Instead, I start from Dewey's work on interdependence, arguing that it provides insights that are highly relevant to international politics, and indeed perhaps better suited to understanding the practical problems of globalization than dominant approaches that start from nation states as a given. I trace Dewey's continuing concern with the relationship between interdependent problems, 'states' and international affairs through his work and public commentary, demonstrating that *The Public and Its Problems*, which is often thought of as being his major contribution to the understanding of democratic politics in America, is also, quite self-consciously, an inquiry into the relationship between national and international politics in a world of interdependence.

Because Dewey starts from problems of interdependence, and the publics that form around them, he treats states as being largely contingent to the problems from which they arise. Yet Dewey also argues that problems of interdependence will only give rise to publics when those publics have the requisite understanding of how their choices are interdependent that they can form and begin to inquire into how best to resolve the resulting problems. Dewey argues that social scientists can play a crucial role in this process, by elucidating problems that would otherwise remain hidden, and hence help publics, where appropriate, to coalesce around them. This then provides the beginning of a quite different understanding of the role of international relations than prevailing accounts. International relations scholarship should serve neither as a resource for elite decision makers nor as a body of knowledge that is neutral as to its ultimate use and allocation. Instead, it should be constructed so that it can best be applied to deliberately uncover problems of interdependence, hence allowing concerned publics to form around these problems, who can perhaps, in turn, help discover institutional solutions that can help solve them.

I demonstrate that this provides a quite different understanding of international relations by inquiring into two areas of international politics, one involving political economy, the other

security. Arguments about the battle between the global liberal economic order and nationalist populism take on a different set of valences when understood through a pragmatist lens. The same is true of arguments over security and privacy. I show how in each of these areas, international relations scholarship could and should engage in a very different kind of inquiry as to the cross-national effects of state policies, potentially alerting individuals to the ways in which their activities have become intertwined, and hence helping new publics to form and inquire into the conditions that have produced them.

*The usefulness of international relations*

International relations debates have been less profoundly shaped by positivism than the other major sub-fields of political science in the US, American politics and comparative politics. Many international relations scholars, rather than seeing their field as one of neutral social scientific inquiry, cast it instead as one of theoretical argument, in which scholarship has been shaped by successive (somewhat grandiosely titled) ‘Great Debates.’ Other scholars, attracted by different and newer approaches to empirical inquiry, have voiced their frustration with these tendencies to grand theory, advocating instead for an international relations scholarship that is guided by the scientific impulse to create coherent research agendas aimed at establishing reasonable consensus around manageable and researchable questions. The two sides have exchanged regular polemics over the last two decades.

What is notable, however, is how much international relations scholars agree on underneath the clamor of their broadsides. Specifically, there is a reasonably broad consensus that international relations scholarship ought to be useful. On the one hand, after initial disagreements over whether international relations ought to be an abstract social science or a guide to policy makers (Waltz 2010, Morgenthau 1948), realists and other traditional international relations scholars have returned to the claim that international relations scholarship ought be relevant to policy makers (Mearsheimer and Walt 2013). Many realists and liberals complain of the growing gap between policy makers and international relations scholars, which they perceive as a product of the abstracting inward-oriented tendencies of social science. They

have looked to “bridge the gap” (Jentleson and Ratner 2011) by encouraging international relations scholars to better understand elite policy debate and how they might contribute to it.

On the other, those who have called for a more social scientific approach to international relations readily agree with the contention that social science ought to be useful. For example, Lake (2011, 2013) grounds his call for a more rigorous approach to international relations theory in the argument that international politics is simply too important to get wrong. In a world where “the human condition is precarious,” (Lake 2013:580), there is a demonstrated need for well tested social scientific knowledge of international politics. For Lake, as for other intelligent critics of traditional approaches, usefulness is a *sine qua non*, without which international relations theory would have difficulty justifying itself.

Hence, the disagreement between traditionalists and non-traditionalists is not one between one group who are calling for policy-relevant and useful international relations, and another that is not. It is a disagreement between two different accounts of how international relations could best make itself useful.

However, exactly because both sides to the disagreement take usefulness as the appropriate starting metric, neither inquires into it very closely. As pragmatists have argued, usefulness is not as simple a justification as it seems at first to be. For example, if one wants to adopt usefulness as a metric to evaluate international relations, one needs to specify useful *for what* and useful *to whom* (Farrell and Finnemore 2009). This is a particularly vexing question for international relations scholars since, after all, international politics is a system in which no one source of authority is capable of establishing the general legitimacy of its rule, and imposing its understanding of order on everyone else. Indeed, as interdependence has increased, international politics have become vastly more complicated than they used to be, so that the different wants and imperatives of various governments and non-state entities spill over borders, generating new conflicts over rules and authority (Berger 2000, Farrell and Newman 2014, 2015, 2016). Interdependence not only generates new problems to be solved, but new questions about which means are appropriate to solving them, and which actors most appropriate to address in the search for new solutions.

Scholars who argue that international relations scholars ought provide expert advice to (US) policy makers can appeal to a long history of engagement between academia and foreign policy making. Most scholars adopting this understanding appeal implicitly or explicitly to some notion of liberal nationalism, arguing that scholars owe particular responsibilities to their fellow citizens (and, by extension, the governments legitimately elected by those citizens) rather than to the nationals of other countries. Realists and liberal institutionalists may disagree on the best means to protect the national interest, but they largely agree that the national interest is paramount.

Yet the breaking of the circuit between Harvard Yard and Foggy Bottom is not simply the product of declining clubmanship in the political establishment as critics might suggest, or increased tendencies to academic obscurantism within the academy (as the defenders of the old regime might argue). As the world has become more interdependent, it has also become less clear that scholars should orient themselves to their national government, or even to governments at all, if they are to proffer useful findings and information. Other actors, who may not be situated in one's home jurisdiction, may be more effectual recipients of advice. The ethics of providing scholarly knowledge in a truly interdependent world have also become murkier. It is unclear whose interests ought one pay attention to (one's fellow citizens? the citizens of other countries? some imprecise amalgam of the above?) when deciding how to pitch it.

Those who look to rebuild international relations on a sturdier social scientific framework have no very specific answers to provide either. They are certainly aware of the ways in which interdependence is complicating the world. Lake (2013), for example describes how economic globalization, the threat of terrorism, the challenge of global warming and other problems of interdependence raise urgent challenges that international relations scholarship can help address.

Yet Lake and his colleagues provide no systematic advice about how international relations scholars can best address these problems or whom they ought to direct their research towards informing. While they surely recognize that generating useful knowledge involves more than just reaching sound social-scientific conclusions and making them generally available, their

approach offers no very specific understanding of how international relations scholars ought decide on publicly relevant questions, how they should provide their information so as to be most useful, and how they should incorporate feedback from the utility of their research into future work. Perhaps like natural scientists, they are diffident about too direct an engagement between the process of scientific consensus formation, and the political and social processes through which that consensus may be brought to bear on policy, for fear that the latter might begin to contaminate the former.

In short, different accounts of the field of international relations agree that it ought be useful. Yet they fail to inquire into exactly how international relations scholarship can make itself useful in an interdependent world where one's own national decision makers are no longer the only relevant actors, and to whom.

### *Pragmatism and usefulness*

A better approach might be to start from the beginning, orienting international relations inquiry to the twin questions of how international relations might be most useful, and whom it ought to be directed towards informing. These questions are, fundamentally, pragmatist questions. The most important differences between pragmatist and positivist approaches involve orientation rather than methodology (as the work of Pearce and others demonstrates, standard scientific techniques fit quite comfortably with a pragmatist orientation).

Pragmatism begins from the proposition that knowledge ought to be useful, and inquires into how it may best achieve this aim. John Dewey is perhaps the most influential pragmatist philosopher. His work suggests that the social sciences will be highly useful when they work towards elucidating the complex and often initially invisible interdependencies between the interaction of different human beings. Furthermore, Dewey's version of pragmatism is inseparably bound up with a democratic - and even radical democratic - account of human possibility. Social science works best when it uncovers interdependencies in ways that allow human beings to themselves effectuate solutions to the complexities in which they have

embroiled themselves through forming appropriate political institutions ('states' - which, like 'publics,' have a particular meaning within Dewey's work).

Dewey's understanding of cooperation and interdependence begins in his early arguments that human beings are fundamentally social, so that it is impossible for individuals to think of themselves in pure isolation (2016 [1908], p. 268). Especially in his early work, this leads Dewey to an overweening optimism about the possibility of resolving social problems through cooperation. However, as his work progresses (and the early tincture of Hegelianism is increasingly diluted by the bitter distillation of experience) he increasingly recognizes that different groups will disagree, and that powerful individuals' understanding of politics are likely to be grossly distorted by their interests and privileges. In *The Public and Its Problems*, he treats human interdependence as the

“objective fact that human acts have consequences upon others, that some of these consequences are perceived, and that their perception leads to subsequent effort to control action so as to secure some consequences and avoid others. Following this clew, we are led to remark that the consequences are of two kinds, those which affect the persons directly engaged in a transaction, and those which affect others beyond those immediately concerned.”

Consequences of the former kind are not relevant to politics, since their effects are usually immediately visible and limited to the small number of actors directly involved. Consequences of the latter sort, are, in contrast, what politics is all about. They may involve very large numbers of people indeed. Moreover, many or all of these people may be unaware of the consequences, or, if they are aware, may not understand their scale.

For Dewey, then the core questions of modern politics involve the indirect consequences of 'conjoint action.' The public for a particular kind of action, is formed of those who are “indirectly and seriously affected for good or for evil” by such actions (p.35). However, to become a true public, those actors who are indirectly affected by a given set of consequences need to be informed about it. It is a lively intelligence about their situation and shared interests

that translates an inchoate grouping of people into a public - an organized entity that can reason collectively about what its shared interests are, and how best to preserve them.

The public needs some means of agency through which it may prosecute its interests. This is where the state comes in. Dewey objects to accounts in which the state is a mere “mask for private desires for power and position” or a fraud, although he recognizes that state actors are often driven by the desire for peculation. Instead, the state is a set of “special agencies and measures” or an “existing group” that takes on new responsibilities, in order to remake the conditions of behavior so as to shape consequences. States involve officials who are specially charged with resolving problems of broader fallout from actions. They are not needed in direct face-to-face relationships such as those in a family, or even in a small community, where custom and ad-hoc accommodations can resolve most problems of indirect effects. They do not exist in situations where there is not sufficient shared interest to justify them. The state is that specialized entity, involving officials, through which a public organizes itself.

“Somewhere between associations that are narrow, close and intimate and those which are so remote as to have only infrequent and casual contact lies, then, the province of a state.” (Dewey 2012)

This account notably does not derive states from the existing system of nation states or anything like it. Instead, one may expect to encounter many different forms of the ‘state,’ depending on the extent to which a self-identified public has come into being, that public’s particular needs, and the extent to which existing political conditions allow the public to become self-aware and active. The last is crucial: the extent to which a given political organization *actually reflects* the needs of a given public is historically contingent. States may come into being because of mistaken understandings about how to solve problems. Furthermore, “the power and prestige which attend command of official position render rule something to be grasped and exploited for its own sake.” This may mean that publics may long remain disorganized because they cannot “use inherited political agencies” that not only reflect defunct understandings of social problems, but also may actively organize themselves so as to prevent new and better states from arising. Even as the public which generated the original state

disappears (because, perhaps the nature of the problem has changed), the officials and agencies of that state look to retard other developments because of “the power and lust of possession.” It is for that reason that “change of the form of states is so often effected only by revolution.”

It also differs from traditional liberal accounts of politics, which often seek to limit the state so that it does not encroach upon the liberties of individuals. Dewey recognizes no *a priori* separation between areas where the state should intervene and areas where it should not, instead arguing that the limits of state intervention should depend on its usefulness rather than individualistic notions. Where the conjoint behavior of a group creates a large public interest, it may be necessary to reconstruct that group, whether it be a church, trade union, business corporation or family institution.

This account of how publics form and organize themselves imply a strong relationship between social science and politics. If the ever-changing boundaries of the public depend on an understanding of the indirect consequences of certain kinds of behavior, then the mapping out of these consequences will have formative consequences for the public. To discover (and, crucially, to disseminate knowledge of that discovery) that a certain kind of behavior has consequences for those who are not engaged in a transaction is to change the boundaries of a public, or perhaps even to create one. The crucial engine creating indirect consequential relationships among people in modern society is technological and economic change. Yet these effects and relationships are not sufficient on their own to create publics, unless these publics have reasonably accurate knowledge of the specific ways in which they rework human relationships, More broadly, to constitute a proper public means ensuring that it is well informed about the manifold and complex causal relationships that connect actions to their indirect (and sometimes likely unintended) consequences.

“Opinions and beliefs concerning the public presuppose effective and organized inquiry. Unless there are methods for detecting the energies which are at work and tracing them through an intricate network of interactions to their consequences, what passes as public opinion will be “opinion” in its derogatory sense rather than truly public, no matter how widespread the opinion is. (Dewey 2012, p.177)”

More broadly, Dewey argues that:

“What actually happens in consequence of industrial forces is dependent upon the presence or absence of perception and communication of consequences, upon foresight and its effect upon desire and endeavor. Economic agencies produce one result when they are left to work themselves out on the merely physical level, or on that level modified only as the knowledge, skill and technique which the community has accumulated are transmitted to its members unequally and by chance. They have a different outcome in the degree in which knowledge of consequences is equitably distributed, and action is animated by an informed and lively sense of a shared interest” (Dewey 2012, p.156)

This provides social science with an important role as guide to public debate, and as alternative to the triviality of conventional media. The social sciences need to abandon their current role, which is to “rationalize” social structures as the working out of ineluctable general laws, and to show instead how they are the result of “the play of human beliefs and choices, wise or unwise.” (Dewey 1918, p.383). In Dewey’s description, political science needs to cease being an “idle spectator” of events, and become engaged with actual politics (Farr 1999). This does not mean that scholars ought become activists, but that they need to engage directly in public debate so as to elucidate and *publicly* explain the “intricate network of interactions” through which human actions have complex consequences.

“[I]t may well sound ridiculous to say that a genuine social science would manifest its reality in the daily press, while learned books and articles supply and polish tools of inquiry. But the inquiry which alone can furnish knowledge as a precondition of public judgments must be contemporary and quotidian. Even if social sciences as a specialized apparatus of inquiry were more advanced than they are, they would be comparatively impotent in the office of directing opinion on matters of concern to the public as long as they are remote from application in the daily and unremitting assembly and interpretation of “news.” On the other hand, the tools of social inquiry will be clumsy as long as they are forged in places and under conditions remote from contemporary events.” (p.180)

For Dewey, political science, as it is currently constituted, does more to justify existing political and social arrangements by suggesting that they are the ineluctable outcome of general laws, than to organize lively inquiry into these arrangements. He argues both explicitly and implicitly against the claims of Walter Lippmann that social science ought provide guidance to political elites, who are the only actors capable of comprehending the general interest and acting on it. Instead, the role of social scientists is more public facing and more limited. Rather than building the knowledge that allows elites to govern, social scientists should look to discover the hidden and complex causal relationships that characterize political interdependence, and hence help publics come into being.

While social scientists and other experts can play a key role in explicating complex relations of interdependence, and discovering best how to solve them, their role is one of technical advice. “The man who wears the shoe knows best that it pinches and where it pinches, even if the expert shoemaker is the best judge of how the trouble is to be remedied.” Social scientists and other experts should not look to build grand schemes of reform which they then present to the public. Instead, they should provide the knowledge of hidden interdependent relationships that allow publics to organize to make better sense of their situations, and decide how best to deal with them in a continuing dialogue.

In short, Dewey offers a novel, and valuable understanding of exactly how social science can be useful, and to whom. It can make itself useful by providing an understanding of the complex webs of interdependence, their implications, and (once needs have been initially identified), the best apparent ways of solving them. This will be useful to publics - both nascent publics that might not identify their common interests at all, were it not for the initial impetus of grounded and accessible social science research, and existing publics, with whom social scientists ought engage in a continuing dialogue where goals and the best means to achieve those goals are defined and redefined in response to experience.

Dewey is traditionally interpreted as an observer of American democracy, and his arguments about the role of social science are not aimed specifically at international relations (which did not exist as a coherent subfield at the time that Dewey was writing). Yet Dewey's account of publics and their problems is directly relevant to international as well as US domestic politics. Indeed, it is deliberately and quite explicitly framed so that it addresses problems that extend beyond the borders of the US, or indeed any currently constituted state.

Rather than starting from questions of shared obligation, like Rawlsian liberals and their cosmopolitan critics, Dewey starts from common problems. Such problems arise from the interdependence of human action, shaping both the publics that become aware of them and the state institutions that these publics might build to resolve them. As the world becomes more complex and interconnected, we may expect that there will be more problems of conjoint action that flow across existing state borders rather than remaining confined within them. This is not only readily accommodated by Dewey's argument; it is explicitly anticipated by it. There is, for Dewey, no *a priori* reason why we need deal with problems only through the existing politics of the state system. Indeed, Dewey argues that this state system is a set of institutions that have survived from a previous set of notions about the relevant publics, and is poorly constituted for current tasks.

These arguments stem from Dewey's broader political commitments. Much of Dewey's work as a public intellectual was devoted to international causes, sometimes problematic (such as the jingoism for World War I that led Randolph Bourne to attack Dewey in a series of devastating essays), or quixotic (as in his brief attachment to a group of intellectuals calling for war to be declared illegal under international law - see Dewey (1923)). He disliked traditional diplomacy and power politics, which he saw as an emanation of European conservatism, advocating instead for a variety of international arrangements intended to limit or replace them. During World War I and its immediate aftermath, Dewey believed that the US was uniquely free among the great powers of status-seeking conservatism, being committed instead "most completely to the ethics of industry and exchange." This led him to adopt a cheery optimism about America's commitment to World War I, and its role immediately afterwards in helping to set up a League of Nations, and protecting (as Dewey saw it) weaker states like China from the

depredations of the old powers. This optimism was swiftly undermined by the post World War I order, the refusal of the US to participate in the League of Nations and that organization's powerlessness, and the unsurprising revelation that the US could be quite as self-interested as any other state in its international dealings.

The arguments developed in *The Public and Its Problems* build on these commitments to internationalism, but do not depend on US exceptionalism, presenting a more considered understanding of international relations. Rather than calling for the outlawry of war, or appealing to one country's manifest destiny to bring greater freedom to the world, Dewey begins from a more realistic assessment of the difficulties of creating new arrangements. First, he notes that technological change means that politics has escaped from genuine community life. This has consequences for the internal politics of countries like the US which can no longer be a "congeries of self-governing communities." Yet these changes also have great consequences for international relations too. New technologies of transport and communication have destroyed distance, with the consequence that people who were previously disconnected from each other, in the sense that their actions had little consequence for each other, now find themselves in a situation of interdependence that is liable to lead to conflict. The interdependence between conjoint actions which Dewey sees as crucial to the formation of publics, is not confined inside the boundaries of nation states.

"If there were ever any reasonable doubt of the import of technological factors with respect to socially significant human consequences, that time is well past. Nor is the importance of technological development confined to domestic issues, great as it is in this field. The enormously increased destructiveness of war, previously mentioned, is the immediate outcome of modern technological developments. And the frictions and conflicts which are the immediate occasions of wars are due to the *infinitely multiplied and more intricate points of contact between peoples which are in turn the direct result of technological developments.*" [Dewey 2012 My italics]

When Dewey looks for a specific and urgent example of how interdependence has outstripped existing institutions, he turns not to American politics but international relations. The

“Great War” - World War I - shows how how this increase in interdependence can have enormously important consequences for world affairs.

“We think of all wars as much the same thing, only the last one was horrible beyond others. ... Literally every continent upon the globe was involved. Indirect effects were as broad as they were direct [sic]. Not merely soldiers, but finance, industry and opinion were mobilized and consolidated. Neutrality was a precarious affair. There was a critical epoch in the history of the world when the Roman Empire assembled in itself the lands and peoples of the Mediterranean basin. The World War stands out as an indubitable proof that what happened for a region has now happened for the world, only there is now no comprehensive political organization to include the various divided yet interdependent countries. ... Extensive, enduring, intricate and serious indirect consequences of the conjoint activity of a comparatively few persons traverse the globe.” (Dewey 2012)

However, the causal connections through which these effects traveled are obscure and difficult to discern:

“The connections and ties which transferred energies set in motion in one spot to all parts of the earth were not tangible and visible; they do not stand out as do politically bounded states. But the war is there to show that they are as real, and to prove that they are not organized and regulated.” (Dewey 2012)

Addressing and regulating these connections will require new institutional arrangements; in effect, new publics and new states that are not organized according to existing national boundaries, but which reorganize themselves around the new problems that have been identified.

“existing political and legal forms and arrangements are incompetent to deal with the situation. For the latter is the joint product of the existing constitution of the political state and the working of non-political forces not adjusted to political forms. We cannot expect the causes of a disease to combine effectually to cure the disease they create. The need is

that the non-political forces organize themselves to transform existing structures: that the divided and troubled publics integrate.” (Dewey 2012)

Thus Dewey’s arguments explicitly point to a re-organization of the existing system of politics and states so that new publics are formed to address the interdependent relations that have sprung up across existing national boundaries, and new ‘states’ (or, more prosaically, institutions) come into being in order to make these publics effectual.

The international aspect of Dewey’s thought is habitually neglected. However, its importance to Dewey himself is clear. When the book was re-issued twenty years after its initial publication, his new Introduction was largely devoted to discussing the United Nations, which he saw as evidence that “isolationism” was dwindling, and that “there is developing the sense that relations between nations are taking on the properties that constitute a public, and hence call for some measure of political organization.” Dewey was deliberately vague about the form that this organization should take - he considered this to be a pragmatic question rather than one that should be settled *a priori*. By analogy, he suggested that the question of where the line ought be drawn between national affairs and international ones is similar to the line between “affairs left to private consideration and those subject to political adjudication.” While the question is formally universal, it is, in application, a practical and concrete one, that ought be addressed with respect to the particulars of a given situation. Finally, Dewey re-emphasized the need for “steady and systematic effort to develop that effective intelligence named scientific method in the case of human transactions.”

In short, Dewey’s understanding of the relationship between domestic and international politics is, in contrast to much existing work in both international relations and political theory, contingent upon the underlying context of interdependent relations. He does not posit any sharp distinction between the two, such that international politics and domestic politics are governed by fundamentally different orders, or that our relations to our fellow citizens are profoundly different to our relations to the citizens of other countries, or, for that matter, that we owe any universal duties and obligations to others such that closer bonds are irrelevant. Instead, he treats all these relationships as the provisional consequence of changing technologies, which bring

people into closer contact or not, depending on their particular modalities. As technologies of transportation and communication improve, we may expect that people's actions will come to have greater indirect consequences for a far wider circle of others. In traditional communities, one may know nearly everyone who is affected by one's actions in more than a tangential way. As communication and transport improve though, so too does the sphere of conjoint action expand, so that one's joint and separate actions may have consequences for a far wider circle of people, with whom one may not be even slightly more intimate. Greater ties of communication and transportation between countries may be expected to increase the interdependence of people across borders, as national boundaries correspond less and less with the complex social and economic relationships through which people have intercourse with each other.

Dewey, in his later work, does not look to spell out what these institutions should look like, in part because of his pragmatism, and in part because his earlier enthusiasm has been at least partly tempered by experience. Nor is he specific about the processes through which they come about, although he does identify the great barriers that existing institutions, and those who benefit from them, may pose for those who want to help foster new publics and new ways of solving problems. Yet he makes it clear that increased international interdependence implies the need for new publics, which are aware of the benefits and problems of conjoint actions across borders, and arm themselves with the necessary institutions to regulate this conjoint action.

This diagnosis of the problems of international and domestic politics lies behind his argument about how social scientists ought to orient themselves towards these problems, and implies that international relations scholars might have a particular role. Political scientists in general need to reorient themselves away from a search for general laws that serve only to justify existing arrangements, and towards more a specific understanding of the contingencies of interdependent choices and actions (which may not be too far from the 'mid-level theories' that Lake and others aspire to). International relations scholars, by extension, might valuably look to identify the *cross-national interdependencies* that result from technological and other changes, helping explain these to a broad audience across different borders, and hence providing the necessary information that might help a self-aware public to form around these interdependencies.

Thus, Dewey offers a quite different account of the role of social science than do existing accounts of international relations. Social science should not be aimed primarily at informing elite actors, but at providing (perhaps nascent) publics with the knowledge that they need to organize themselves.

This is quite different from the approach of the 'bridging the gap' approach, which starts from the assumption that political elites should be the core target of scholarly advice. That project - of bridging the gap between scholars and policy makers - is much more closely aligned with the arguments of Dewey's interlocutor and rival, Walter Lippmann than with those of Dewey. Yet Dewey is also far more closely concerned than advocates of a more 'scientific' approach to international relations with bringing scholarly debate and public debate into close, and even intimate connection. Social science knowledge is useful when it helps publics to become self aware of their situation. Specifically, it helps map out the interdependencies among the choices and actions of myriads of human actors, so that nascent publics can identify their common interests, and begin to reason through how best to defend them. Non-experts are likely not able to draw these connections themselves, although they may think usefully about them, and how to rectify associated problems, once they have been identified by the relevant experts. Under this account, social science should not merely target public awareness, but draw on the knowledge of the public in a continuing dialogue, where experts provide the understanding of hidden interdependencies, and publics provide guidance about the practical day to day consequences of these interdependencies and the priorities that they represent.

It is important to note that Dewey's agenda does not necessarily imply radical change in the structures and institutions governing international politics. While he occasionally entertained semi-utopian notions of reform, his persistent concerns are practical and pragmatic ones. Whenever he applies himself to concrete questions - the situation of China, the foreign policy of the US, he wishes to build from what is already there to discover what may be better, while recognizing that there will inevitably be strong opposition to reform from well entrenched actors. Building a new 'state' - that is, reformed political institutions, will only be possible when the state reflects the needs of a new public. There is no necessary reason why such a new set of

institutions must completely supplant existing arrangements, especially if these arrangements still reflect the needs and wants of existing publics. Thus, while Dewey's arguments have some features in common with functionalists and neo-functionalists such as Mitrany and Haas (and perhaps still more with Deutsch) he does not presuppose any necessary or ineluctable transition from a world of individual states to a more unified polity. There is a broad spectrum of possible arrangements through which interdependencies across national borders could be recognized and better handled - assessing which ones are better or worse is more plausibly discovered through intelligent experimentation than preconceived notions, and should always be subject to democratic assessment and revision. Dewey's radicalism is not one of grand plans, but rather one of persistent and continuous inquiry into the relations between states and the publics they serve, and of how state forms may be changed, when appropriate, to better serve these publics.

*The liberal economic order*

A Deweyan perspective can usefully be applied to arguments about the global liberal order and populist nationalism. The last year has seen two major shocks to the global liberal order. Brexit - the decision by popular referendum that the United Kingdom should withdraw from the European Union - was swiftly followed by the election of Donald Trump as US president on a platform that called for sharp controls on trade and immigration. This, in turn, has led to enormous upset among scholars, commentators and politicians who were committed to a 'global liberal order' based on the free movement of goods, investment and (more half-heartedly) people across national borders. The defenders of global liberal order perceive themselves as besieged by nationalist populists.

There is a notable degree of mutual influence between policy actors' and economists' understanding of the global liberal order, which has spilled over into international relations too. The openness agenda has united center-left and center-right political elites in most advanced industrialized democracies. It also dominates both the discipline of economics and 'open economy politics,' (OEP) the dominant approach in international political economy (McNamara 2009). OEP is effectively a particular application of neoclassical economics and trade theory to the study of how domestic preferences and institutions shape global economic outcomes (Lake

2009). Like economists, open economy politics (OEP) scholars start from the presumption that comparative advantage and dynamic efficiencies mean that all states are better off if they engage in international economic exchange. The question then becomes: why is it that international economic liberalization has encountered obstacles and opposition? The answer lies in specific domestic interest groups who would suffer from increased competition under a liberalized trade regime, and which may (depending on institutional configurations) be able to influence the preferences of government. If the playing field were even, these groups would surely lose. For example, in Lake's (2009, p. 228) summary of the field:

Large constituencies—at the extreme, a single electoral district for the entire country—incline policy towards the general welfare, assumed to be the free flow of goods, services, and factors of production, while small constituencies bias policy toward more protectionist groups.

Scholars of open political economy have furthermore argued that openness is self-reinforcing over time, because it undermines the interests that seek to militate against it. Again, in Lake's description (2009, p.238):

free trade has systematically harmed scarce factors of production and shrunk their political strength, as witnessed by the declining labor movements of most industrialized countries; correspondingly, comparatively disadvantaged industries have slowly disappeared, as in the footwear industry in North America, once a vibrant force in the protectionist coalition ... the political equipoise within many countries has been decisively turned over time in ways that reinforce the initial bias in policy towards free trade. As a result of this evolution, the constellation of interests in North America, Europe, and Japan over trade policy is vastly different today from that in the 1960s and 1970s.

Open economy politics assumptions have generated a rich literature describing and testing the circumstances under which such assumptions would lead to increased flows of goods,

services, capital and people across borders, and the circumstances under which such flows would remain impeded.

However, these assumptions and conclusions face striking difficulties in explaining recent political outcomes. It is difficult to imagine a more straightforward test of the assumption that an unimpeded national constituency would vote in favor of free flows of goods, services and factors of production than the 2016 UK vote on Brexit, yet that vote had the opposite result to that which OEP predicted. While a majority of citizens did not vote to elect President Trump in the 2016 elections, it is nonetheless clear that the liberal order is not a set of ‘self-reinforcing’ institutions in the sense identified by Greif and Laitin (2004). Instead, it appears to be generating self-undermining tendencies.

How might one arrive at a better diagnosis of the ills of the liberal order? A pragmatist account of international relations might start by noting that the standard approach among both policy actors and academics rests on a stunted account of what the liberal international order actually involves. For sure, the underlying framework of comparative advantage provides an attractive set of political justifications for increased openness. It also has substantial intellectual attractions, allowing scholars to build straightforward accounts of the specific interests of particular actors or economic sectors, depending on which ancillary assumptions (e.g. Ricardo-Viner or Stolper-Samuelson accounts of interests and preferences) they choose to invoke. Yet this framework rests on the notion that economic openness is obviously a good thing, emphasizing its Pareto-enhancing virtues (and sometimes eliding the ways in which it may lead to specific harms to particular sectors or factors of production), and treating opposition to openness as inherently retrograde.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See N. Gregory Mankiw, “Beyond the Noise on Free Trade,” *The New York Times* March 16, 2008 for a particularly ripe example of elision. “No issue divides economists and mere Muggles more than the debate over globalization and international trade. Where the high priests of the dismal science see opportunity through the magic of the market’s invisible hand, Joe Sixpack sees a threat to his livelihood.” Basic economic theory would suggest that Joe Sixpack, depending on sector or abundance/scarcity of labor, is likely to be correct in his surmise.

By focusing on the presumed efficiency-enhancing aspects of trade, these accounts ignore a variety of other ways in which greater international openness affects societies and individuals. This, in turn can have unfortunate political consequences, reinforcing the perception that elite political actors are out of touch with the actual and multiple consequences of the policies that they advocate. Specifically, the liberal order been treated primarily as a set of trade and financial efficiencies that benefit all, systematically discounting the other political consequences of globalization.

This, in turn, has encouraged the creation of oppositional nationalist forces in many countries, which take the obverse stance, highlighting the negative consequences of the liberal order for specific constituencies, and looking to insulate countries from the international liberal system through restrictions on trade, immigration, financial flows and purported foreign influences. Nearly two decades ago, Suzanne Berger (2000, p.58) observed that globalization was far more politically fraught than liberals assumed, because it imposed pressure on existing national bargains. In her description, citizens looked for “protection from the unregulated flow of capital, labor and information from outside national territory,” which they saw not as the product of some impersonal process, but as a situation “created by their own government’s actions in opening the frontiers, in negotiating new trade treaties, and in legislating about immigration.” Her warnings have come home to roost.

The opposition between elites (who obfuscate the ways in which the global liberal order has real and often perverse democratic consequences) and right-populists (who see only the perversion and not the benefits) has stunted democratic politics and debate. International relations scholars, who tend to follow the lead of economists, have mostly either presented their work as empirical rather than normative, or have frankly sided with elite opinion, or have tried to solder together some uneasy amalgam of these two positions.

A pragmatist international relations scholar would look to a different understanding of international political economy to both. Rather than either defending a stunted understanding of economic openness, or casting her lot with the enemies of the open society, she would undertake two tasks. First, she would specifically seek to elucidate the occulted pathways through which

greater openness has had consequences for people's lives across different countries. Second, she would look to see whether there were possibilities for building on such understandings to help bring better informed publics into being, and hence foster genuinely democratic debate. Some - but certainly not all - of the resistance to globalization could be guided to help nurture the formation of new transnational publics. Equally, some, but not all of the existing liberal order has broad benefits that can be better translated for broader understanding, and the formation of publics around those understandings. Presenting a pragmatic account of the specifics of the global liberal order would require a much closer attention to the intricacies of the causal relations through which the liberal order is maintained.

Space precludes even a skimpy treatment of the mechanisms underlying the global liberal order, a regime which is complex in itself, and even more complex in its underlying mechanisms. Instead, I offer a sketch of one particular debate regarding the institutions facilitating the free flow of global capital. International flows of investment capital have been made possible by bilateral Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) agreements, which are supposed to allow foreign capital holders to invest in countries without having to fear that their investments will be nationalized (Wellhausen 2015). These institutions both help maintain the global liberal order (by fostering free flows of information) and undermine it (by generating political consequences that lead to strong opposition).

From the perspective of liberalism, ISDS can be seen as a form of "self-binding" or "tying the king's hands" (North and Weingast 1989, Simmons and Danner 2010) - restraining sovereign authority so as to give business actors confidence that their investments will not be summarily expropriated (Buethe and Milner 2008). OEP scholars have argued that these protections are particularly valuable for firms involved in global value chains (Kim, Milner et al., 2017), giving states a competitive rationale for adopting them so as to attract investment (Elkins, Guzman and Simmons, 2006).

However, as Sweetland Edwards (2016) has pointed out, these agreements have consequences far beyond businesses' relations with governments. Investment tribunals have been willing to define expropriation so broadly as e.g. to grant substantial compensation to a US toxic

waste disposal firm that disliked Canadian regulations which banned a toxic chemical compound that was banned in the US too. In the colorful description of the lawyer who pioneered these actions, “It wouldn’t matter if a substance was liquid plutonium destined for a child’s breakfast cereal. . . . If the government bans a product and a U.S.-based company loses profits, the company can claim damages.” (Quoted by Sweetland Edwards 2016, pp.66-67). Such rulings, combined with the substantial amounts of compensation that states are expected to pay, has led to a “deep crisis of legitimacy” in the ISDS regime (Peinhardt and Wellhausen 2016). Many states have withdrawn from ISDS treaties, while retaining some, more limited involvement in the international investor protection system.

A pragmatist research agenda focusing on these relations and their consequences might focus on issues such as the below.

(1) The relationship between investment treaties and popular sovereignty. Much of the controversy surrounding ISDS comes from the perception that democratically elected governments may find themselves paying enormous penalties for sovereign actions that are in the interests of the public and would previously have been unexceptionable (Sweetland Edwards 2016). From an IPE perspective, limits on sovereign free action are exactly the point (Buethe and Milner 2008), and are likely to provide broad benefits (higher economic growth over the long term). There is little - or no -literature on the practical trade-offs between the two for national constituencies, let alone cross-national ones. Nor is there any considered attention to the relationship between the (national) publics that elect governments in democratic countries and the (cross-national) public whose members benefit or otherwise from a broad multilateral regime.

(2) The relationship between investment treaties, corporate form and ISDS forum shopping. Initial evidence suggests that multinational corporations have been adept at using nationally based subsidiaries in order to take cases under ISDS. Indeed, some businesses have set up paper subsidiaries in countries like the Netherlands which are nexuses for bilateral treaties, so as to sue particular states (Gray 2015). This creates a political dynamic where the power of publics is plausibly weakened. States, which are the representatives of national publics, are hampered by a system that allows the suing party to shop across multiple forums for the most

advantageous treaty. This system is furthermore almost completely insulated from the legal systems of third countries within which the rulings physically take place (Sweetland Edwards 2016).

(3) The systematic exclusion of publics from negotiations over ISDS and from the ISDS system itself. ISDS disputes take place under secretive tribunals, where there is no scope for involvement by parties other than the states and business. As ISDS has come under fire, international negotiators have sought to block public involvement. For example, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), under negotiation between the European Commission and the US, has been highly controversial in Europe, because of its provisions for ISDS. The European Commission, however, has acted to block citizens' movements from registering initiatives that would allow them to gather signatures from citizens and require the Commission to officially respond to their concerns. In a recent ruling, the European Court of Justice has found against the Commission's efforts to block the initiative, finding that "nothing justifies excluding legal acts from democratic debate."

Further investigation of these empirical relations would produce a far more substantial understanding of ISDS. Specifically, it would highlight the causal relations through which ISDS is creating unexpected interdependencies between the actors and rule systems of different countries. The ISDS system evolved in almost complete exclusion from public debate, yet it has turned out to have enormous consequences for publics across many jurisdictions, building unexplored interdependencies between them. This plausibly creates some shared interests, albeit interests that have to be balanced. Thus publics might want to reconcile the broad economic benefits of economic growth that result from sovereign restraint with the costs imposed when ordinary individuals are excluded from voice in a system that considers their government's actions solely in light of their consequences for investment). It also creates some clashes of interest between members of the public belonging to different constituencies (those whose interests might align with investors, and those whose interests might align with states). More self-aware cross national publics, which understand these interdependent interests will not spring fully fledged from the brows of international relations scholars. Still, addressing these interdependencies will help inform the nascent cross national publics that are beginning to take shape (such as European TTIP protestors and their antagonists), pushing them towards greater

awareness of the cross-national dimensions of the problems, and to articulate their arguments, pro and against, in the light of these interdependencies.

ISDS thus provides a pilot case for a more general Deweyan perspective on the global liberal economic order. This order has come into being largely without popular involvement, being instead a deliberate construction of elites, built in the interstices of presumed passive public assent. That is one of the key reasons why it is under attack from nationalist populism. A successful response to this attack cannot just restate the pieties of international liberalism. It must try to start building a broader popular politics of internationalism, which will necessarily interrogate existing international institutions, and in particular those institutions that appear designed to exclude broader public engagement. International relations scholars can contribute to this politics in a tentative but nonetheless meaningful way by looking to inform it with a more precise - yet comprehensibly stated - account of how the international politics of the liberal order actually works, how it intersects with existing national institutions, how and when it creates common and antagonistic interests of nascent publics across borders and, when those publics are better developed, how publics might constitute institutions better fitted to the tasks of managing those interests.

### *Interdependence and International Surveillance*

The problem of government surveillance - government monitoring, typically clandestine, of communications that people believe to be private, aptly illustrates the value of a Deweyan perspective on international relations and interdependence. In the wake of Edward Snowden's revelations about US surveillance practices (Landau 2013, 2014), scholarly and public controversy in the US has mostly centered on its consequences for US citizens. Internationalized communications, and the erosion of distinctions between international and domestic communications, has arguably reshaped the domestic bargain over privacy. However, an important set of alternative questions largely goes unaddressed. Debates over surveillance typically take place within specific national settings, and concern the relationship between

national governments and their own citizens. This focus on domestic relations elides the ways in which domestic bargains shape international outcomes. It is no longer plausible to argue that the actual 'public' for surveillance questions is national - it is cross-national.

Changes in surveillance practice have been driven by security actors' fears over growing interdependence. On the one hand, as Rosa Brooks describes the common wisdom, increased interdependence multiplies the 'threat surfaces' that industrialized societies need to protect (2016: p.10):

Our increasing global interconnectedness has created new vulnerabilities, as has our increasing dependence on the Internet and other forms of electronic communication. North Korean hackers can now bring down major U.S. media websites; terrorist ideologues in Yemen can use the Internet to disseminate bomb-making instructions to extremists in Boston or London; Mexican drug cartels can launder money through a series of near-instantaneous electronic transactions; the self-styled Islamic State can bring videos of brutal hostage beheadings into every American living room via YouTube; and everything from pollution to bio-engineered viruses can spread rapidly around the globe.

On the other, interdependence makes it harder to address these threats without undermining civil liberties. The law of the US and other democratic jurisdictions draws a strong distinction between monitoring the communications of nationals (covered by legal protections) and foreigners (which are typically not). This is far harder in a world of interdependent networks where the two increasingly blur. This has led policy officials to dismantle information sharing firewalls between domestic law enforcement and international intelligence after September 11. It has also led to scandal and proposed reforms, as security agencies have tended to merge these activities together, and as the NSA has secretly suborned the networks of US firms, and subverted cryptographic standards intended to protect US communications, in order to better be able to tap into the communications of non-US actors. (Granick 2017, Diffie and Landau 2010, Landau 2013, 2014). New technologies have also transformed the problem of surveillance by making it vastly easier to carry out surveillance at scale, for example monitoring the telephone traffic of an entire country for interesting information (Donohue 2015, 2016). Spying used to be

expensive and difficult, and hence did not affect mass publics. That has changed, and will change more as ordinary communications devices such as cellphones, cars and computers gather large amounts of information about individual behavior.

Existing debates over the relationship between surveillance and privacy usually pitch two perspectives against each other. The first is security-centric, and starts from the claim that the vastly increased threat surface justifies new measures and restrictions to protect national security and the well-being of a given country's citizens (MacDonald 2003, Baker 2010). This implies that the state can no longer be so fastidious as to draw a sharp distinction between the domestic and the international realm. Thus, the state can only maintain its compact with its citizens (to provide security) by updating its practices to respond to the threat of interdependence.

The second is civil liberties-centric and starts from the proposition that technological changes and the blurring of domestic and international communications threaten traditional civil liberties (Donohue 2016, Granick 2017). New technologies, as has been discussed, allow surveillance to be carried out at scale. It is increasingly easy for security agencies to evade controls that are intended to prevent them surveilling their own countries' citizens, through fancy legal footwork, cooperating with other intelligence agencies that operate under different strictures, or through taking intelligence that has been nominally or actually gathered for foreign surveillance, and repurposing it, where it provides useful information, to gather information on domestic citizens.

These two perspectives arrive at very different conclusions and policy recommendations. Yet they start from similar understandings of the public to be protected and the state that either protects them, spies upon them, or is involved in some combination of the two. Each, furthermore, implicitly or explicitly distinguishes between the realm of international politics, where surveillance is broadly acceptable within a set of very loose norms, and the realm of domestic politics, where surveillance should be more restricted. Defenders of surveillance argue that national wellbeing will be compromised if the standards appropriate to domestic civil liberties are allowed to subordinate international security concerns. Defenders of civil liberties, for their part tend to argue that domestic civil liberties will be traduced if an international

security approach is applied to the communications of citizens. Each worries that the logic of one sphere may overwhelm the other if it is left unconstrained.

There are, of course, excellent and practical reasons why people looking to emphasize civil liberties might start by trying to build upon the (national) institutional structures that are most readily available, and people looking to emphasize national security would look to national populations and the states that protect them. Yet a Deweyan approach to inquiry would suggest that these steps, while potentially important, reflect an insufficient analysis of the public that is implicated in modern surveillance, or of its plausible interests. The defenders of civil liberties and the defenders of national security both start from the premiss of an *existing and static national public*, which needs to be protected from new threats. Naturally, they disagree radically on what those threats are. A Deweyan process of inquiry, in contrast, would lead one to ask whether changes in technology are *leading to the creation of a new nascent public*, and then look to uncover the causal relations through which the problems of conjoint action creates or does not create common interests within this public, such that the public ought become aware of itself and then look to shape new institutions (or a new 'state') in Dewey's terminology, to secure those interests. International relations scholars, in particular, have tools for understanding the relationship between international and domestic politics that could be turned to elucidate the specific causal relations through which conjoint action has consequences across borders, and could hence be used to sketch out the plausible contours of the public, as well as the means that this public could employ.

The initial outlines of such an inquiry are not difficult to sketch. Dewey's arguments illustrated how the First World War and other wars were a product of conjoint action in an interdependent global system. Technological developments meant that both that people from different countries had far more contact with each other, increasing the risk of friction, and that the actions of a few key decision makers could reverberate around the globe. A Deweyan international relations scholar, then, would plausibly begin with the question of the technological developments underlying both modern globalization and modern surveillance. She would then inquire into the question of how or whether these developments were changing the composition and extent of the relevant public, and look to elucidate the causal relations through which the

members of this public found that their fates were bound up together. Next, she would assess the usefulness of existing state arrangements for addressing the plausible needs of this public. Finally, she would engage in a process of broader education, intended to provide members of the public with the necessary intellectual resources to make sense of their situation, understand how their specific circumstances intermeshed with broader and less visible social relations, and come to relevant decisions about the kinds of institutions needed to address their common interests.

Existing scholarship makes it clear that the security challenges and the civil liberties challenges of interdependence are not, indeed, confined within any country's borders. A Deweyan would thus think, barring extraordinary circumstances, that the relevant public too must be a cross national one.

From the perspective of security, the threats of interdependence spring precisely from conjoint action. The laws, rules, decisions and behaviors of policy makers and citizens in one jurisdiction may have potent consequences for the policy makers and citizens of another. Differences between national approaches and gaps in information sharing might not have been very important in a less interdependent world, but are quite important indeed where interdependence is high. This is exacerbated by the interaction effects of surveillance and civil liberties. While advocates of security complain that civil-liberties minded foreigners damage the security of their own country's citizens (see Baker 2010, *passim*), the security measures taken by one country may equally have profound consequences for civil liberties in another (surveillance data on foreigners can be used without much effective recourse to deny entry at borders, to prevent financial transactions, and even to render innocent people to countries with a record of torture). Mass surveillance can not only be aimed at entire populations, but at everyone using e.g. popular online services such as Google or Facebook, regardless of their nationality. Finally, the difficulty of maintaining a strict boundary between international and domestic communications provides rich opportunities for rule arbitrage, so that the freedom states enjoy in conducting international espionage may bleed over into increased data collection on their own citizens.

Thus, the public is surely a cross-national one, composed of people across the various countries whose existing state arrangements for security and civil liberties practices impinge

upon each other. They live in a world of interdependent action, where the choices made in one country have important consequences for people in other countries and vice-versa. A brief sketch of the relevant causal relations reveals a plethora of interdependent relationships.

It is important to note that the US is far from the only country undertaking surveillance activities with large scale implications for privacy and civil liberties. The Snowden leaks reveal that the UK's GCHQ has engaged in wide scale surveillance, including, for example, the surreptitious hijacking of webcam images from more than 1.8 million people worldwide, to train optical recognition software. This included a substantial collection of images of people's private sexual activity (which GCHQ nervously sought to insulate from the prurient curiosity of its employees).<sup>2</sup> Just as there are no legal protections for foreign persons against US surveillance, there are no legal protections for US persons who are surveilled by foreign governments.<sup>3</sup> There are no parallel leaks from the intelligence services of non-English speaking countries with substantial surveillance capabilities. However, it would be remarkable to find that they were much more scrupulous than the US and UK (and quite plausible, at the least, that they were less so).

Do existing state institutions address the plausible needs of this public? Only extended guided inquiry by that public itself, with reference to expertise as necessary, can answer the question properly. However, existing international relations scholarship indicates at the least that existing institutions are heavily skewed towards the security aspects of interdependence rather than the civil liberties aspects, in ways that don't reflect any sophisticated cross-national public debate.

In part, this is because of a lack of institutions that obliges states to take account of the interests of each other's citizens. Surveillance, like other aspects of espionage, is not covered by international law, allowing individual states to act more or less as they see fit. Thus, for example, while the US (the country about whose data practices we know the most) later filters data it has

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<sup>2</sup> See Spencer Ackerman and James Ball, "Optic Nerve: Millions of Yahoo Webcam Images Intercepted by GCHQ," *The Guardian*, February 28 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Countries in the 'Five Eyes' grouping apparently accord mutual protections to each others' citizens as a matter of policy, but it is unclear how scrupulous they are in practice.

gathered so as to exclude US persons, its procedures for doing so are at best imperfect, and currently allow for information that has been gathered accidentally on US persons to be used for a variety of ex post purposes. While the Obama administration introduced a Presidential Policy Directive in the wake of the Snowden revelations directing that “all persons should be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their nationality ... and have legitimate privacy expectations” with respect to surveillance, these statements were mostly cosmetic (Severson 2015). Again, other states probably behave in ways that are similar to the US or worse.

In part, it is because actual institutions tend to reflect the desires of security actors rather than civil liberties. There are a plethora of international arrangements fostering security cooperation over surveillance. The UN Financial Action Task Force coordinates the monitoring of financial activity across member states. Trans-Atlantic working groups on conflicts over security and privacy were deliberately designed so as to minimize the role of civil liberties focused actors (Farrell and Newman, forthcoming). Intelligence clubs such as the ‘Five Eyes’ of English speaking nations, and Trans-Atlantic information-sharing arrangements among security services foster publicly invisible forms of cooperation. US and UK intelligence agencies have quietly provided help and assistance to the intelligence agencies of other countries in pushing to roll back inconvenient laws that limit the extent of allowable surveillance.<sup>4</sup> There are few comparable arrangements covering civil liberties.

While it is surely possible that an informed public could reach the conclusion that this prioritization of security over civil liberties is appropriate and warranted, such a consensus is not, in fact, what has produced this outcome. Instead, the existing institutions reflect the primacy of security in areas where states cannot reach agreement, and the domination of security interests in actual channels of state cooperation. Such discussions of balancing security against civil liberties as there are focus nearly exclusively on how to strike that balance within individual states, discounting many of the interests of a nascent international public.

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<sup>4</sup> See Julian Borger, “GCHQ and European Spy Agencies Worked Together on Mass Surveillance,” *The Guardian*, November 1, 2013.

A Deweyan inquiry would look to fill in the blank parts of the sketch above, or as necessary to revise and correct it, so as to better inform a nascent cross-national public. International relations scholars would elucidate further the causal relationships described above, examining them not from the implicit perspective of a given state, but instead looking to inform a nascent cross-national public of its interests. This inquiry would analyze specific security proposals in the light of how they might affect the security and civil liberties of people living in other countries, and also inquire into how proposals for the protection of liberties in one country might have consequences for security and civil liberties in others.

Given the absence of a self-conscious cross-national public, this inquiry would initially be aimed at introducing cross-national questions into primarily national debates. When, for example, proposed or existing policies in one country clearly have consequences for people in others, international relations scholars could clearly describe these connections and their implications for a broader public. A burgeoning public sphere of online publications aimed at building connections between scholarship and a broader public could help international relations scholars accomplish this.<sup>5</sup> Such communication would help civil society organizations cooperate and communicate better over the short run, making it more likely, for example that ‘boomerang effects’ and similar could reshape policy. Over the longer run, this could help build up more substantial forms of cross national communication and the building of organizations that sought not simply to reflect the problems of interdependence within specific national spaces but to build across them.

Existing approaches to justifying international relations typically stress that it ought to be useful, and typically fail to explain how it ought be useful and to whom in an interdependent world. More traditional mandarin accounts have an implicit notion of whom international relations scholarship ought to be useful for - senior national policy makers, and stress the value of intimate connections between the academy and the policy making elite. Here, the problem is not only that these connections are strained; it is that they may not be the right kinds of

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to blogs such as the Washington Post’s Monkey Cage, publications such as the *Boston Review*, *Democracy*, and the *National Interest*, provide a ready outlet for intelligent publications aimed at explaining complex problems to a broader public, and have equivalents in other countries.

connections in an interdependent world. ‘Mid-range’ scientific accounts, in contrast, stress the complexity of a global world and the urgent need for useful social science to make sense of it, but have no very obvious sense of who social science ought to be aimed at informing to solve global challenges.

### *Conclusion*

In this paper, I have set out an alternative account, building on the work of John Dewey. For Dewey, international relations scholarship, like other social science scholarship, is useful when it uncovers otherwise obscured causal relations between individuals, exposing the channels of conjoint action to scrutiny. The ‘whom’ to which it useful are publics rather than elites, helping these publics to understand their shared and conflicting interests, and to think through institutional changes that might address the interdependencies of action. This account is especially congenial to international relations theory, since Dewey was quite explicitly concerned with the question of how institutions change, as interdependencies begin to work across borders. Most modern interpretations of Dewey discount or ignore this aspect of his thought - yet it is not only perfectly clear, but of fundamental importance to his understanding of politics and democracy. Put differently - as interdependencies increase across border, purely nationally focused institutions will increasingly fall out of tune with the actual publics, whether conscious or unconscious, that are formed by the unplanned consequences of conjoint action. I have then applied these arguments to current cases, showing how they potentially generate a different way of thinking about the usefulness of international relations in revealing otherwise obscure forms of conjoint action, and hence helping facilitate the birth of new publics.

I conclude by pointing out some ambiguities of the account (perhaps to be worked out better in later versions). First - that Dewey’s belief that there are latent publics, sleeping in anticipation of the kiss of social science - presupposes a much more straightforward link between potential interests and actual group formation than social science would suggest is plausible. Some shared interests are more likely to give rise to publics than others, and explaining which ones might do so and which not is an important research project in its own right, especially when one wishes to explain how cross-national publics, or publics that reshape the contours of the

national, might emerge. Second, that the Dewey approach is notably vague about the precise processes through which new publics translate into new states (or, as we might say today to avoid ambiguity, new institutions). This is baked into Dewey's theoretical approach, which is one of exploration and bold, persistent experimentation, rather than long term planning, or structural accounts that skimp on the potentialities of human agency and reimagining. It may, however, effectively turn into a kind of voluntarism, without some clear sense of what the limits are. I hope to return to both these points in a more satisfactory way in later versions.

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