Abstract: Hierarchical or asymmetrical power relationships among states have long been a focus of scholarly attention. Material conceptions of the “capacity to hurt” is only one expression of power, with an alternative form being to gain and exercise authority, or “rightful rule.” I use game theoretic and latent variable approaches to capture informal, social authority relationships among international states and explore the effects of these hierarchies on security and economic behavior. I posit that states adopt one of two social roles—that of a dominant or a subordinate. Each subordinate chooses a degree of autonomy—ranging from complete autonomy to complete control—that it is willing to cede to the dominant in exchange for a corresponding degree of protection. The model indicates that the probability of a subordinate initiating a conflict or enacting illiberal economic policies is inversely related to its degree of subordination. When conflict or illiberal actions do occur, dominant states are more likely to intervene when the target of the action is located at a higher position in the dominant’s social hierarchy than the aggressor state. Empirical analysis of states within the US hierarchy (1950-2000) and colonies within the UK hierarchy (1870-1913) using strategic probit models supports these theoretical predictions.

Revised & Resubmit

“Moments In Time: An Analysis of Temporal Patterns in European Conflict Using a Change-Point Model.” *Journal of Peace Research*. Revised & Resubmit

Abstract: Recent advances in economic norms theory suggest that the causes of international conflict may be contextual rather than constant over time (Mousseau 2003). Empirically, this means that the direction and significance of coefficients on the key explanatory variables—such as trade and democracy—may change over time. I use a Bayesian MCMC change-point model to explore the temporal patterns in the predictors of conflict in data on European conflict between 1870 and 2001. I find that the period can be divided into two qualitatively distinct time periods, each with its own distinct causes of conflict. For example, while democracy has a positive effect on conflict in the period between 1870-1938, it has a negative effect from 1938-2001. Likewise, trade initially has no impact on conflict but later exerts a pacifying effect. The post-estimation analysis suggests that such patterns may be explained by the externalization of contractual norms, which is consistent with economic norms theory.

Under Review

“The Spatial Dimensions of State Fiscal Capacity: The Mechanisms of International Influence on Domestic Extractive Efforts.” (with Cameron G. Thies and Olgia Chyzh)

Abstract: This paper expands traditional predatory theory approaches to state fiscal capacity by adopting spatial analytical reasoning and methods. While previous work in the predatory theory tradition has often incorporated interdependent external influences, such as war and trade, it has often done so in a way that maintains a theoretical and empirical autonomy of the state. Theoretically, we suggest four mechanisms (competition, learning, emulation and socialization) that operate to channel information through territorial contiguity, trade networks, and the political space associated with regime type and intergovernmental organization membership. We test our predictions using a multi-parametric spatio-temporal autoregressive model with four spatial lags capturing the four mechanisms. Our empirical results provide support for the competition and socialization mechanisms.

“Emerging Powers, Identity and Conflict Behavior: Is There a China Threat?” (with Cameron G. Thies)

Abstract: Emerging powers like China present a conundrum for both policymakers and academics, since they are unlike the majority of states for which diplomacy and theory has been developed. Uncertainty about China’s rise and its intentions has led some in foreign policy circles to decry the “China threat,” while others see China integrating peacefully into the existing international order. Structural theories of international relations expect that China’s rise should lead rather deterministically to conflict. Foreign policy approaches suggest that internal and external shocks may promote change, but recognize many factors also work to promote foreign policy stability. We investigate whether and how China has changed its foreign policy orientation and conflict behavior in international affairs using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Drawing upon foreign policy role theory, we analyze China’s self-conceived identity from the establishment of the PRC to the present day. China’s role set has not changed as dramatically as structural theories might expect, and if anything, has changed in the direction of peaceful, systemic support. We also examine changes in Chinese conflict behavior using statistical techniques designed to capture structural breaks. Despite the loud voices proclaiming the “China threat,” we find little evidence in Chinese words or deeds that China’s foreign policy orientation or conflict behavior has changed dramatically.

“Property Rights Regimes, Technological Innovation, and Foreign Direct Investment” (with Cameron G. Thies)

Abstract: States compete for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows because they are an important source of employment and technology. However, the role played by a state’s regime type in attracting FDI remains mired in debate. Some scholars find a positive relationship with democracy, whereas others do not, while some suggest that property rights are responsible for attracting FDI. We argue that democratic institutions influence property rights in attracting FDI by providing: 1) a coherent logic to the property rights regime that is created in a state and 2) a legitimate way to manage conflicts that arise in dynamic economies. This leads to the expectation that the marginal effect of
property rights in attracting FDI has grown stronger over time as the rate of technological dynamism has increased. We evaluate this expectation using data from 1970 to 2008 and employing a non-nested multilevel modeling strategy. Our theoretical and empirical analyses demonstrate that the effect of property rights on attracting FDI is contingent on democratic institutions and that this effect becomes more pronounced over time. This effect holds for both developing and developed countries across all regions.

**Working Papers**

“The Return on Social Bonds: The Effect of Social Contracts on International Conflict.”

*Abstract:* Hierarchical or asymmetrical power relationships among states have long been a focus of scholarly attention (e.g., asymmetrical alliances, trade dependencies). A major impediment to the study of power asymmetries, however, is that rather than being explicitly documented, such arrangements are often informal. I use a latent variable approach to capture such informal hierarchies and explore their effect on the probability of conflict initiation. I theorize that each state adopts one of two social roles: that of a dominant or a subordinate. Each subordinate chooses a degree of autonomy that it is willing to cede to the dominant in exchange for a corresponding degree of protection. Ranging from complete autonomy to complete control, these dyadic bargains make up a social international hierarchy. This hierarchy affects the relationships between each subordinate and the dominant, as well as the relationships among subordinates. The probability of conflict initiation is inversely related to the degree of subordination. When conflict does occur, the targets tend to be located at lower positions within the hierarchy than the initiators. Empirical analyses of states within the US hierarchy (1950-2000) using a two-stage strategic probit support these predictions.

*Status:* Finalizing for submission in August 2013.

“Statistical Analysis of Strategic Interaction with Unobservable Player Actions: Introducing a Censored Strategic Probit.”

*Abstract:* The strategic nature of political interactions has long captured the attention of political scientists. Traditional statistical approaches to strategic interactions usually involve multi-stage estimation (e.g. Signorino 1999, 2003). The idea is to improve parameter estimates associated with one stage by using the information from other stages of actor interactions. The application of such multi-stage approaches, however, imposes rather strict demands on data availability, and are difficult or impossible in cases with limited or no data on some of the stages. Political science data, especially in the fields of international relations and comparative politics, are not always structured in a manner that is conducive to these approaches. For example, we observe and have plentiful data on the occurrence of civil wars, but not the preceding stages in which the opposition groups decide to rebel or governments decide to repress. I build on Signorino’s strategic probit to derive a novel statistical model that probabilistically estimates unobservable actor choices related to earlier stages of strategic interactions. I demonstrate the advantages of the estimator over the traditional approaches, both using Monte Carlo simulations and applying the model to re-estimate the results of an existing study of civil war onset.

*Status:* Finalizing for submission in September 2013.

“Putting Together the FDI Puzzle: An Endogenous Model of Foreign Direct Investment, Democracy, Economic Development, and Human Capital.”

*Abstract:* I draw on endogenous growth theory to develop a dynamic formal model that treats foreign direct investment (FDI), economic growth, democracy, and human capital as endogenous and mutually dependent. Economic growth and democracy are thought to encourage FDI. But the amount of FDI a country can receive is limited by the availability of human capital. This ceiling acts as a carrying capacity, as FDI utilizes existing human capital, eventually exhausting its supply. Yet, FDI is sought, in part, because it increases the level of human capital via direct knowledge transfers and by stimulating the economy, thus creating more resources to be dedicated towards human capital. As such, the carrying capacity—the idea that ‘another mouth to feed is also another pair of hands to work’—is an important variable in the model—a variable that is rarely accounted for. Once included in the model, carrying capacity leads to previously untested predictions that posit non-linear relationships among variables. I test the model’s predictions using a system of simultaneous equations and find support for the hypotheses. I conclude that foreign investment and human capital growth lead to greater per capita economic growth in developed than in developing countries.

*Status:* I am currently re-framing the theory and adding robustness checks. I intend to have it back under review in Fall 2013.
“Hierarchy, Structure, and International Relations: A Complete Information Account.” (with Douglas Dion)

Abstract: It has long been claimed that states exist in a state of anarchy. However, scholars have hinted at the possibility that some levels of hierarchy exist. Lake (2009) suggests that hierarchy can be thought of as a social contract between dominant and subordinate states. This paper formalizes the hierarchical relationship as a game between a dominant and subordinate state, similar to the one-shot chain-store paradox (Selten 1978). Payoffs are modified to include structural features such as benefits of the existing order, costs of challenge, stakes, and risk. A series of hypotheses are generated from this model, including novel accounts of why subordinate states challenge dominant states, why dominant states acquiesce, and why conflict is observed in cases where the subordinate state is very likely to lose.

Status: We are simulating substantive effects and clarifying the model’s intuition using illustrative examples related to territorial claims. We intend to submit it by January 2014.

“Power, Status and Conflict Behavior: Brazil as an Emerging Power in the International System.” (with Cameron G. Thies)

Abstract: Emerging powers like Brazil present a conundrum for both policymakers and academics, since they are unlike the majority of states for which diplomacy and theory has been developed. Uncertainty about Brazil’s rise and its intentions appears to have led some Latin American states, such as Venezuela, to try and balance against potential Brazilian dominance, while others, such as Argentina and Chile, attempt to work out ways to define the limits of Brazilian leadership through more cooperative means. Structural theories of international relations expect that Brazil’s rise in status, like those of all would-be great powers, should lead rather deterministically to conflict. Foreign policy approaches suggest that internal and external shocks may promote change, but recognize many factors also work to promote foreign policy stability. We investigate whether and how Brazil has changed its foreign policy orientation and conflict behavior in international affairs using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Drawing upon foreign policy role theory, we analyze Brazil’s status in Latin America from 1960 to the present. We also examine changes in Brazilian conflict behavior using Bayesian MCMC Poisson change-point statistical models designed to capture structural breaks. Despite Brazil’s increasing claims to occupy the status of regional leader in recent years, we find little evidence of changes in Brazilian conflict behavior. Thus far, it appears that Brazil’s emergence as a potential great power has caused little disruption to the international system.

Status: This paper is part of a book manuscript about the foreign policies of the emerging BRICS countries.


Abstract: If global economic concerns are truly a primary calculation of state leaders, this should hold regarding even the most salient of issues, such as ownership or access to territory, rivers, and maritime possessions. This paper proposes that dyads with more open economic political structures resolve conflicts more peacefully and in a more efficient manner owing to these legal norms than those of closed states. Rather than measuring trade openness by using an ex post measure—such as a measure of trade that has already occurred—this study looks at the domestic policies of the state itself. Using data of available dyads in the Western Hemisphere, Europe, and the Middle East between 1970-2000, this study tests these two aspects of economic integration on conflict resolution. The results indicate dyads with more open economic policies are less likely to engage in violent clashes even when confronted with potentially contentious disputes. They are also more likely to seek peaceful resolution to these conflicts and more efficiently resolve the entirety of disputed claims.

Status: I am re-estimating the empirical tests using a strategic probit estimator and extending the temporal and geographical domain of the data.

Conference Presentations

“Power, Status and Conflict Behavior: Brazil as an Emerging Power in the International System (with Cameron G. Thies)” American Political Science Association: Chicago, IL, August 31, 2013.


“Emerging Powers, Identity and Conflict Behavior: Is There a China Threat? (with Cameron G.


“Statistical Analysis of Strategic Interaction when Player Actions are Unobservable: Introducing a Censored Strategic Probit.” St. Louis Area Methods Meeting (SLAMM!): Iowa City, IA, April 19, 2013.


“Moving Ceilings: Foreign Direct Investment, Democracy, and Human Capital.” Midwest Political


“Does Democracy Impact FDI Inflows? (with Yong Ouk Cho).” Midwest Political Science Association: Chicago, IL, April 3-6, 2008.

Honors and Awards

- 2013 American Political Science Association Travel Grant ($150)
- 2013 Department of Political Science, University of Iowa, Travel Grant ($1000)
- 2013 International Studies Association Travel Grant ($250)
- 2013 Executive Council of Graduate & Professional Students, Travel Grant ($117)
- 2012-2013 Ada Louisa Ballard and Seashore Dissertation Year Fellowship ($18000)
- 2012 Society for Political Methodology Summer Meeting NSF Scholarship ($750)
- 2012 American Political Science Association Travel Grant ($300)
- 2012 Graduate Student Senate Travel Funds Award ($400)
- 2012 International Programs Graduate Student Conference Travel Award ($500)
- 2011 Society for Political Methodology Summer Meeting NSF Scholarship ($650)
- 2011 Political Science Department Graduate Student Summer Workshop Funding ($1500)
- 2009 Excellence in Teaching “Thank a Teacher” Recipient
- 2008-2013 Laurence Fairall Scholarship ($25000)
- 2008 James A. Socknat Memorial Fellowship ($1000)
- 2008 Donald E. Boles Outstanding Graduate Student Award and Scholarship ($500)
- 2007 Graduate Teaching Excellence Award

Academic Experience

University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

Research Assistant
- ICOW data set: Coding Maritime Claims
  - Summer 2009, Fall 2010-Summer 2012
  - I worked under the supervision of Sara Mitchell to compile, record, and code event data from newspapers and scholarly articles related to disputed maritime territorial claims, claim settlement attempts, and claim resolutions.

Teaching Assistant
- Introduction to Political Behavior
  - Fall 2009-Spring 2010
- Introduction to American Public Policy
  - Spring 2009
- Introduction to American Politics
  - Fall 2008

World Bank, Washington, DC

James A. Socknat Fellow
- Human Development Network-Education Sector
  - July-August 2008
  - I worked under the supervision of Hana Yoshimoto to provide data analysis for International Development Association publications and website, update all statistics on the Education Sector website, and answer inquiries from field operatives.

Iowa State University, Ames, IA

Research Assistant
- Congressional Human Rights Voting
  - June 2008
  - I worked under the supervision of James McCormick to record and code congressional votes regarding human rights.

Teaching Assistant
- Introduction to International Relations
  - Fall 2006, Fall 2007-Spring 2008
Electronic Democracy (Distance Learning)  
Introduction to Comparative Politics  
Introduction to American Politics  
International Security Politics  
Iowa Caucus Class (Distance Learning)  

Professional Memberships  
- American Political Science Association, Conflict Processes  
- Midwest Political Science Association, St. Louis Area Methods Meeting  
- International Studies Association  
- Peace Science Society  
- Scientific Study of International Processes  
- St. Louis Area Methods Meeting  
- Society of Political Methodology

Professional Service  
Reviewer:  

Conference Assistant:  

Conference Discussant:  
- Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, April 12-15, 2011.  

Department Service:  
- Committee Member, Assistant Professor in International Relations Search Committee, Fall 2012.  
- Senior Graduate Student Representative, Graduate Association of Political Science, 2011-2012.  
- Secretary/Treasurer, Graduate Association of Political Science, 2010-2011.

Software  
Statistical: Stata, R, SPSS  
Applications: \LaTeX, Beamer, common Windows database, spreadsheet, and presentation software

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