2 Uncertainty, Risk, Power and the Limits of International Relations Theory

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Power is not ending, as the public intellectual and former editor of the journal *Foreign Policy*, Moisés Naím, argues.[1] But it is true that in different political arenas big players are challenged by small ones who are using new playbooks that make power both more available and more evanescent. Naím's description of power dynamics is often on target; his exclusive focus on the erosion of control power is not. Otto von Bismarck, Germany's "Iron Chancellor," knew better. He did not aspire to "control the current of events, only occasionally to deflect them."[2] In a world of risk mixed with uncertainty it is the relations between protean and control power that shape the security of states, the competitiveness of economies, and the resilience of societies.

This is not how international relations scholarship typically views the world. In the consensus view, power is normally measured by material military, economic, or political capabilities – presumptive causes of change in international politics, such as the putative decline of the United States and the rise of China. Power, however, is not a property. It is a relationship. Drawing on some of the main writings on power, David Baldwin has reminded us that it is a mistake to equate the resource base and instruments of power with power itself.[3] Different indicators, for example, of military capability – the size of the armed forces, military budgets, preparedness for cyber-warfare, nuclear weapons – cannot be aggregated into one measure of military power. And different kinds of military, economic, diplomatic, and social power are not fungible. Problems of aggregation and conversion make pointless efforts to construct general power indices. Power is always context-specific. It matters when assessing the power of an architect whether she or he plans "to build a birdhouse or a cathedral," and whether she or he has good or bad relations with clients, zoning boards, and investors.[4] Baldwin's careful engagement with international relations scholarship is forcefully insisting that power must be understood relationally and situationally, and

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[1] Naím 2013. Also see Owen 2015: 3–4, 9, 19. [2] Davies 1996: 760. [3] Baldwin 2016.
[4] Baldwin 2013: 277.

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should highlight both the causes and the effects of power.[5] For the most part, and especially in America, international relations scholarship has not heeded Baldwin's call.

This book is built around the distinction between control and protean power. Control is exercised through coercion, institutions and structures of domination. Wielders of power everywhere can manipulate their relations with others, steer institutional agendas, and shape their structural positions to gain direct and indirect advantages. Furthermore, they derive advantages from controlling options external to the power relation between the parties in question.[6] Susan Strange, for example, applies this style of analysis to states operating in four domains of power: security, production, finance, and knowledge.[7] International structures, Strange argues, generate social power that give priority to some values over others and yield patterns of domination with or without intentional rule.[8] Unfortunately, Strange's realist analysis stops at this point. Her reticence is shared by Nye's liberal style of inquiry. His careful discussion of the relations between structural and soft power refers in a lengthy footnote to "unconventional" theories.[9] But he refrains from engaging them – since doing so would, he writes, "be purchased at too high a price in terms of conceptual complexity and clarity."[10] Both Strange and Nye thus disregard important strands of theorizing that point beyond the concept of control power.

The concepts of control and protean power are both about the causal force of agency; in addition, protean power focuses attention on the effects of power. In recent years the shift from state to non-state actors and from government to governance points to power dynamics that require us to understand both the causes and the effects of power. Power is reconfigured and augmented as it reaches all corners of global and domestic politics.[11] This change resonates with the arrival of disruptive technological innovations in recent years.[12] Yet there is no reason to believe that protean power is a late arrival on the stage of world politics. The history of the human rights revolution, LGBT movements,

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[5] Ibid.: 288. Baldwin 2016: 3, 32, 43–44, 45–47, 69. See also Goddard and Nexon 2016.
[6] Culpepper and Reinke 2014: 429–32; Fairfield 2015: 3–15; Paster 2015; Guzzini 2012: 7–8; Kremer and Pustovitovskij 2012.
[7] Strange 1988: 45, 62–63, 71–72, 88, 115. See also May 2000.
[8] Strange 1996: 23–27; Guzzini 2012. Baldwin dismisses Strange's contribution because it incorporates unintended effects. Baldwin 2016: 81.
[9] Going beyond realism, liberalism, and constructivism as the three main paradigms of international relations, critical security scholarship has offered fresh insights, drawing, broadly speaking, on the fourth face of power. See Seybert and Katzenstein (Chapter 1, fn. 28), Guzzini 1993; Barnett and Duvall 2005.
[10] Nye 2011: 16, 242, fn. 37.   [11] Guzzini 2012: 2–3.   [12] Owen 2015.

migration, and jihad (Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 9), among others, offer many examples of protean power, stretching back decades and centuries. The argument of this book is not dealing with possibly ephemeral recent technological change.

Power dynamics unfold in the interplay of experience and context. Actors experience the world as anywhere from mostly risky to deeply uncertain, thus triggering control and protean power dynamics. Underlying contexts of risk and uncertainty also affect these dynamics. The congruence (or lack thereof) between experience and context matters greatly. Drawing on some of the evidence in the case studies this chapter addresses these issues in the first section. In the second section, we show that on questions of security and political economy scholars of international relations view the world in terms of risk only, and commonly focus only on control power. Thus, they ignore protean power dynamics operating under conditions of uncertainty and fail to grapple with the unexpected in world politics.

Power Practices, Risk, and Uncertainty

Uncertainty permeates the life of individuals everywhere. Yet it cuts against the grain of institutional and organized life in the twenty-first century. International relations scholarship reacts strongly to the second fact while all but disregarding the first. Our risk-based thinking expresses a deep desire for and faith in control.[13] This may explain why in the analysis of international relations "uncertainty" is often either conflated with "risk" or neglected altogether. To make matters even more confusing, some of the main research traditions in international relations define these terms differently.[14] The misleading affinity between the two concepts is even more problematic when a neglect of uncertainty turns risk calculations into "fictional expectations" and "visions" of a future that is unforeseeable.[15] Resting on assumptions about regular and incremental change we are prone to rely on accounts that are partial to the direction by and diffusion of control power even though they are often derailed by actor agility and unexpected creative effects in the circulation of protean power.

Focusing on risk and uncertainty, however, should not blind us to the fact that many actors are experiencing politics in terms of certainties, misplaced and otherwise. Actors may be overly confident that they know their adversaries' capabilities and intentions or both when, actually, they

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[13] Eidinow 2011: 158; Scott 1998: 321–22.   [14] Rathbun 2007.
[15] Beckert 2016; Berenskoetter 2011: 648.

do not. Between states this can lead to security dilemmas and spirals toward war. In the world of known unknowns, or operational uncertainty, standard risk models apply. In the world of unknown unknowns, or radical uncertainty, emotions can create misplaced certainty and instill overconfidence.[16] Religious believers also perceive central aspects of their lives to be certain. They draw on deep reservoirs of convictions that give them the courage to cope, often creatively. Religion, for example, provides the certainty that ISIS fighters need while planning and committing atrocities (Chapter 9). Terrorism is all about the creation of fear and uncertainty; yet suicide bombers yearn for a certainty that affirms the value of their criminal self-sacrifice. The unfailing courage of many migrants who face forbidding odds is also often grounded in strong religious beliefs (Chapter 5). Their faith is a perfectly logical response to uncertainty.[17] Religion offers a confidence-inspiring language that, interspersed with everyday speech, provides a normative orientation to a migrant's unpredictable journey.[18]

Mastery of risk defines an important boundary between tradition and modernity. That the future can serve the present and that the chance of loss is also an opportunity for gain was once a revolutionary idea.[19] In modern, secular societies actors typically experience life as variable mixtures of risk and uncertainty. For example, migrants experience the unpredictable every hour along their shifting Odyssey (Chapter 5). When they play the odds – encountering border guards, gangs, relief workers, fellow migrants – they do so based on their experience, reasonable guesswork, and intuition while operating in the domain of uncertainty. Making mistakes can be costly, even fatal. In finance, uncertainty both exists as an objective fact and is also experienced subjectively as an indelible part of financial markets (Chapter 8). In contrast to migrants, bankers do not die when they make big mistakes in investing other peoples' money; often they emerge scot-free. They rely on sophisticated risk models to place their bets, informed by what they think are rational expectations. Yet, in the volatile world of finance, such expectations can easily be proven wrong and morph into panics. What is true of migrants and bankers is true more generally: subjective experiences of uncertainty meet objectively uncertain features of a given context. There exist, then, two ways to encounter uncertainty: through subjective experience and as objective reality. The two influence one another and blend together; whichever way the dial may shift in particular settings, the

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[16] Mitzen and Schweller 2011.   [17] Brigden 2015: 254–55.   [18] Brigden 2013: 218–23.
[19] Bernstein 1996: 1, 337.

resulting effects cannot readily be explicated without invoking the concept of protean power.

To the extent that actors convince themselves that they live in a world marked only by risk they "may have become slaves of a new religion, a creed that is just as implacable, confining, and arbitrary as the old."[20] We are not products only of an inevitable or probable future. Uncertainty creates a kind of freedom.[21] When probability fails us in the domain of uncertainty we find, in the words of Kenneth Arrow, "the tentative, creative nature of the human mind in the face of the unknown" – illustrated among migrants just as much as among bankers.[22] Generally speaking, though, those controlling power rely on risk analysis as a political idiom that unlocks homogenizing social conventions as a preferred method to stabilize a world filled with unpredictable possibilities. Conventions emanate from knowledge, laws, rules, norms, and practices. They reflect and often reinforce asymmetries of control power. Peoples living in precarious circumstances can and do resist control.[23] They live in uncertain contexts experienced as such, and must cope the best they can with the unpredictable. Uncertainty and protean power thus exert a permanent pull on efforts to establish or perpetuate control.

In such a fluid world, choices are often contingent and respond to, reinforce, or create diverse power relations. Rather than thinking at the micro-level only in terms of the diffusion of control power as the sum of individual calculations, we should think also of interactive processes of translation viewed from the perspective of protean power.[24] Whenever power unfolds in "assemblages, distributed networks and circuits," rather than in homogeneous populations that share common knowledge, "translation becomes essential ... things never unfold quite as planned."[25] Assemblages are heterogeneous, not reducible to a single logic, yield unexpected relationships, and locate agency both in state and non-state actors, but also in "agentic swarms."[26] Assemblages can be found in deep structural or social contexts, often viewed exclusively as settings of purportedly stability-inducing control power. But they operate also in fluid conditions of improvisation and innovation with their effects on protean power dynamics.[27] In the "diffusion model," commands are obeyed and

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[20] Ibid.: 7.   [21] Ibid.: 229.   [22] Ibid.: 220.   [23] Douglas 1990: 3.
[24] Latour 1986; Callon 1986.   [25] Best and Walters 2013: 232.
[26] McKeen-Edwards and Porter 2013: 24–27, 31–33.
[27] Itçaina, Roger, and Smith 2016: 22–31. Because actor-network theory denies the existence of a social context external to action, in contrast to sociological institutionalism, it does not focus on socially embedded action. See also Munro 2009. Recent applications of principal–agent, rational choice theory are beginning to examine the importance of stakeholders that influence indirectly what traditionally has been modeled strictly as a direct relationship among actors. See Johnson 2014: vi–vii.

disseminated because of an impetus from their original source. It assumes that for the most part actors share in the same knowledge of the world and rely only on "information updating." The "translation model" works differently. Agents observe would-be commands, following their own specific reasons as they translate, or are enrolled into, the projects of those who wield control power.[28] Translation into their own life experience and meaning thus becomes an important first step by which actors respond. That response often amounts to improvisation, a kind of Everyman's muddling through.[29]

Models of decision-making typically focus on choice that aligns means to ends under conditions of risk. Translation processes reveal a different kind of choice that bring into play both calculative and non-calculative practices under conditions of uncertainty. In a world of risk, choice is control-oriented and aims at the best tactics and strategy. Under conditions of uncertainty, choice is situationally adaptive to immediate circumstances and is indeterminate with respect to the specific and general outcomes it creates. James Scott has coined the term "infrapolitics" to describe the unobtrusive realm of discursive political struggle revealed in "hidden transcripts."[30] That struggle prepares the ground for organized political action, which may eventually produce control, as the last rather than the first stage.[31] Yet prior to that point, when agility truly matters, infrapolitics exemplifies the circulation of protean power. The pull that the world of uncertainty and protean power exerts on the world of control and risk is strong. It inheres in the fields of power potentialities that encompass and often undermine power probabilities.

This is illustrated by the political translations of local LGBT actors of the social and legal norms that emanate from international, non-governmental actors as well as the European Union (EU) (Chapter 4). The process can move in both directions. Actors translate norms and practices flowing downward in the initial stage of the propagation and partial adoption of LGBT rights as part of EU enlargement. And they can also translate norms and practices flowing upward during periods of backlash. This happened also in the case of individual rights after the Second World War. Newly independent, post-colonial states were able to use new forums, such as the United Nations, to universalize human rights, redefine the right to self-determination, and delegitimize the institution of empire (Chapter 3). Similarly, terrorists trafficking in the production of fears that are grounded

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[28] Chabot 2002. The delegation of power or authority from principal to agent differs in that it proceeds by rules and the discretion such rules may confer. This results in negotiation in established orders rather than innovation and the attempt to create new ones. Between these two ideal types, empirical reality is likely to produce different mixtures.
[29] Lindblom 1959.   [30] Scott 1990: 183–201.   [31] Scott 1985: 28–47.

Practice   **Affirmation**   **Refusal**   **Improvisation**   **Innovation**

Type of
power

Control
Power

Protean
Power

Type of Congruence
between Actor
Experience / Context
Attribute

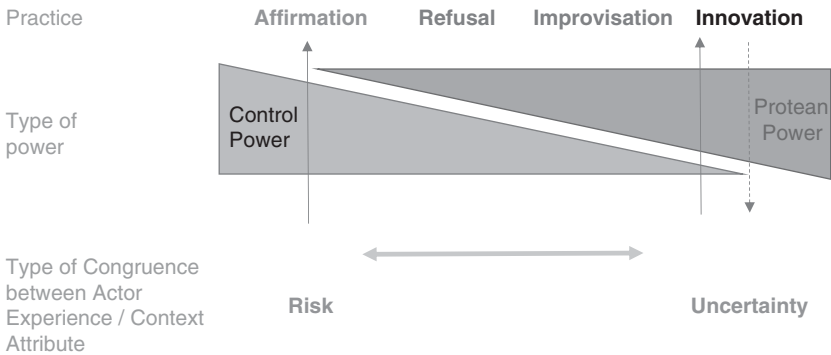**Risk**   **Uncertainty**

Figure 2.1 Risk and Uncertainty, Power Type, and Political Practice★

★ The horizontal arrow captures different constellations of risk and
uncertainty that create various relations between protean and control
power. In the interest of simplicity of presentation, the figure does not
capture in further detail mismatches between context and experience
depicted in Seybert and Katzenstein, in Chapter 1, Figure 1.1, p. 13.

in uncertainty try to reveal to everybody the shallowness of the state's
coercive controls and the high costs they may entail for life and liberty
(Chapter 9). They do so with the hope that states will come to understand
the futility of counterterrorism policies and accede to the demands of
terrorist groups. Finally, private actors serving as regulators of a voluntary
carbon offset market leveraged their power through translation when states
were ready to shift to the policy position that NGOs had advocated all along
(Chapter 12).

Figure 2.1 identifies affirmation, refusal, improvisation, and
innovation as illustrations of four practices that arise from the
interaction between the two dimensions introduced previously in
Figure 1.1: attributes of the underlying context (as risky or uncer-
tain) and actor experience of the surrounding context (as risky or
uncertain). The two endpoints of the spectrum linking affirmation
to control and innovation to protean power characterize situations
where the experiences of actors and the context in which they
operate coincide to create contrasting worlds of unambiguous risk
and radical uncertainty. In the first case, affirmation generates risk-
based control power, in the second, innovation uncertainty-inflected
protean power. In-between, refusal and improvisation are shaped by
a mismatch between experience and context. This results in differ-
ent types of interaction between protean and control power that are
illustrated abundantly in the empirical chapters of this book.

Figure 2.1 shares the premise of virtually all power theories: power relations cannot be analyzed by assuming the existence of actors in isolation. Since the control power wedge reaches deep into the domain of uncertainty, and the protean power wedge deep into the domain of risk, characteristic practices are not tightly wedded to the two kinds of power. Control-producing practices are a possible response in the domain of uncertainty where they lead to indeterminacy. Through disregard of new variables that occur outside established probability calculations, such practices can affect future power potentialities; we label them as refusal. Conversely, innovation is a possible response in the domain of risk, leading perhaps to anticipated gains or shocking reversals. There exists, however, an important difference here. Affirmation facilitating the diffusion of control power operates more often than not directly. In less direct ways, refusal, improvisation, and innovation can trigger with increasing intensity a circulation of protean power. Rather than focusing on narrow power effects in dyadic relations, this conceptualization highlights the broader context and actors' experiences. Depending on the balance between protean and control power, knowledge can dismantle or build up social conformity by freeing or disciplining multitudes of individuals or organizations at the micro-level and entire populations at the macro-level. In short, this conceptualization and the empirical studies in this book highlight fluid power relations that can show up in unexpected places.[32]

Reading Figure 2.1 from left to right traces different configurations of control and protean power. Despite the figure's simplified one-dimensional depiction of the categories, it seeks to convey the fluidity of real-life situations that oscillate between risk and uncertainty as a result of particular actions taken by actors, whose immediate experiences of context matter a great deal. On one end, affirmation is a response associated primarily with control power. We know control power worked if "actor B" gives in to "actor A," regardless of the reasons for such behavior: pluralist competition (Dahl), limited alternatives (Bachrach and Baratz), the structural shaping of what is considered desirable or normal (Lukes, Foucault), or persuasive and admirable traits or practices (Nye).[33] In principle, one can access probabilities of outcomes surrounding control and develop expectations about the behavior and likelihood of success by those who exercise power and those who submit to it.

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[32] Control and protean power analysis differ in their understanding of causation. While efficient causes are linked to clear effects of control power, protean power analysis relies, in addition, on constitutive causation, indicated in Figure 2.1 by two vertical arrows, representing a response to uncertainty that innovation deepens further. See also Seybert and Katzenstein, Chapter 1, pp. 19–20, above.

[33] Dahl 1957; Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Lukes 2006a; Foucault 1982; Nye 2011.

For the present argument, *affirmation* characterizes situations in which experience and context meet in the domain of risk. The empirical contributions in this book frequently acknowledge an element of giving-in to authority. But they also consider instances where practices travel along the continuum. Migrants retain agency even when they experience a loss of freedom, exploitation, and degradation by the predatory exercise of protean power by individual smugglers and criminal organizations. Though affirmation takes the outward form of submission, at times migrants conspire quietly to regain their freedom (Chapter 5). There is nothing quiet about the change from affirmation to refusal as Poland, once it had been granted EU membership, developed a backlash against the international and transnational propagation of LGBT norms (Chapter 4). Similarly, while not seeking to compete with Hollywood head on, localized, niche, and diaspora-driven film industries manage to co-exist with the dominant channels of commercial distribution and cultural production, and still thrive through improvising or innovative practices that can sideline Hollywood's dominance (Chapter 10). Similarly, gas supply crises and near-crises trace the reinvented market relations and technological innovations to serve as unexpected improvisations, even for actors lacking resource endowments (Chapter 7).

It is therefore inaccurate to quip that "where control power stops, protean power begins." For experience and context often are not congruent. This opens an expansive analytical space between the two ends of the spectrum depicted in Figure 2.1. The evidence in this volume shows that it is a mistake to focus only either on the affirmation of evolving control power arrangements or on creative innovation in the domain of protean power. The zone demarcating "uncertainty about probability" most closely approximates the environment most actors face or assume they are facing in international politics. Figure 2.1 depicts this analytical space as a mixture of risk and uncertainty. It produces the practices of refusal on one side of this intermediate range and more disruptive improvisation on the other. The tension between and co-existence of risk and uncertainty in this context matters greatly. While many risk-accessible variables exist, there is much room for alternative approaches. Like skiing in fog, limited visibility and gravity remain important factors but may matter less than sudden icy patches, panicked fellow skiers, or diminished confidence. Refusal of the known is insufficient, even irrelevant; instead, resorting to trial and error, and continuous improvisation characterize such worlds. As the fog of uncertainty descends, obscuring the sight of previous paths, new ones need to be uncovered, possibly changing the course altogether.

In more direct contact with the world of risk than uncertainty, *refusal* does not so much dismiss as challenge underlying probabilities. It can take the form of outright resistance captured by images of heroic street action. Often, however, it takes more mundane forms. James Scott, for example, gives a rich account of the hidden transcripts that help to constitute refusal practices of power relations. He argues that hidden transcripts are "a condition of practical resistance, rather than a substitute for it . . . Under the appropriate conditions the accumulation of petty acts can, rather like snowflakes on a steep mountainside, set off an avalanche."[34] Similarly, Hayek's concept of spontaneous ordering entails refusal and creative circumvention by individual or collective actors endowed with tacit knowledge.[35] This can recreate or fundamentally change the exercise of control power. For Hayek "reliance on spontaneous order both extends and limits our powers of control."[36] Although they do not agree on much else, Foucault concurs with Hayek on the importance of refusal. For Foucault, "there is no power without potential refusal or revolt."[37] Power begets refusal that focuses on the immediate enemy and small zones of autonomy more than long-term and perhaps utopian dreams.[38] Explication of such fluid situations depends on the particular position occupied by each actor,[39] and is reflected in the sense-making practices that test the limits of control. Such practices can lead to refusal through diversion and the choice of alternatives.

For example, the refusal of skeptical, large states shifted the arms control negotiation strategies of NGOs and small states, intent on accommodating them, on both the Cluster Munition Convention (2008) and the Conventional Arms Trade Treaty (2013) (Chapter 11). Similarly, NGOs updating the terms of the climate change conversation found ways to creatively navigate a world where basic rules were firmly set by state actors, but the uncertainty surrounding the issue left ample room for maneuver (Chapter 12). The case of migration, too, supports the idea that protean power is better suited for creative refusal than for controlling the direction of state policy (Chapter 5). That said, it would be infinitely better for the migrants to have a revolution in US migration policy than to have to rely on the "weapons of the weak."[40]

Brought about through *improvisation and innovation* in an uncertain world, protean power dynamics make it impossible to anticipate which choices and practices will lead to which outcomes. Nor is that the objective. The fog of uncertainty clears only with hindsight, when we look back

[34] Scott 1990: 191–92.   [35] Hayek 1973: 46.   [36] Ibid.: 41.   [37] Foucault 1981: 253.
[38] Foucault 1982; 2007: 357; Lipschutz 2007: 239–41; Neumann and Sending 2010: 24–25, 159–60.
[39] Fligstein and McAdam 2012: 11.   [40] Scott 1985.

to identify how actors, deemed successful, navigated the fluid environment surrounding them. Knowledge is not only expressed in individual actors' calculated intentions and ensuing practices, it is also embodied in networks that react to acts of individual or social creativity and imagination and bottom-up, unexpected effects.

The case studies in this book provide many instances of improvisation and innovation when protean power is in play: smugglers discovering the useful deception of migrants singing religious hymns to conceal the group's true identity while passing the road blocks set up by crime cartels; US border guards profiling as they seek to identify illegal immigrants (Chapter 5); scientists and engineers improvising in their quest for new ideas and products (Chapter 6); Canada proposing a meeting of states favoring the Anti-Personnel Landmine Treaty outside the UN framework, beyond the reach of opposing states such as the United States (Chapter 11); firms developing negotiation strategies that exploit long-term trust and technological innovation in hydrocarbons (Chapter 7); ISIS developing tactics of attack and strategies of state-building in the case of terrorism (Chapter 9); Polish activists appealing to EU norms and subsequently translating these norms for different use in changed circumstances (Chapter 4); human rights advocates exploiting norm indeterminacy, cross-fertilization, and localization in their struggles for civil and political rights (Chapter 3); NGOs establishing parallel markets for carbon sinks and agile states subsequently appropriating approaches developed by NGOs (Chapter 12); financial firms developing over-the-counter derivatives and novel legal strategies in sovereign debt markets (Chapter 8); and, finally, Nollywood and other foreign movie industries both feeding off and bypassing Hollywood (Chapter 10).

Charles Tilly offers a helpful musical metaphor for our understanding of improvisation and innovation. We can appreciate musical practices better through focusing on the effects they have on the transformative potential of the relations they activate than their substantive content which, by definition, is case-specific and fleeting. In jazz, Tilly stresses "individual dexterity, knowledge, and disciplined preparation" without concrete knowledge of what the final result will be. Fundamentally innovative practices take the form of "improvised interaction, surprise, incessant error and error-correction, alternation between solo and ensemble action, and repeated responses to understandings shared by at least pairs of players."[41] In jazz, as in political life, "improvisation on a theme" and "free improvisation" illustrate the

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[41] Tilly 2000: 723. We thank Dan Nexon for bringing this analogy to our attention.

range of practices covering conditions of risk and uncertainty. In deeply uncertain contexts, the potential for exercising power is not eliminated. On the contrary, Patrick Jackson reminds us that contingency breeds agency.[42] And nothing is more contingent than an uncertain world. The circulation of protean power operates through improvisation and innovation by actors that can engage and transform those involved. In the words of Emmanuel Adler, power lies in offering previously unavailable modes of consciousness that "break new social ground."[43]

Actors find themselves improvising, rather than innovating, when the uncertainty they encounter takes the form of inaccessible knowledge about where previously established strategies may lead. The kind of crisis that this produces is an emergency. In a risk-based world, the recommended course of action is often the taking of cognitive shortcuts. The misguidedness of that approach, however, is well documented in Kurt Weyland's account of the surprising failure of both the 1848 revolutions in Europe and the Arab Spring of 2011.[44] Such crises necessitate improvisation both as a strategy of political change and mere survival. By contrast, uncertainty invites innovation as the means to plant new stakes in continuously shifting grounds. This characterizes the world of unknown unknowns that scientific and technological innovation explores through processes of knowledge creation (Chapter 6).

As we move to uncertainty, it becomes clear that improvisation and innovation are not simply responses to external promptings. They are often endogenously created, a manifestation of protean power, as in Hayward's formulation of power as a field of possibilities.[45] Albert Hirschman's "principle of the hiding hand," for example, underlines the paradox that creative resources can come fully into play because of a prior misjudgment of the nature of the task at hand – of thinking of it as more routine and undemanding of creativity than it turned out to be.[46] The hiding hand principle commits risk-averters to change course and become venture-seekers. If the problem of misjudging the task at hand is one of "falling into error," the creativity it engenders is its opposite, "falling into truth." Normal language conspires to conceal falling into truth, just as control power conspires to conceal protean power. Under conditions of uncertainty, improvisation and innovation unfold largely beyond the reach of relations of control; it is what actors do to respond to uncertainty. One of its effects is to enhance creativity and the circulation of protean power.

[42] Jackson 2006: 33.   [43] Adler 2008: 203.   [44] Weyland 2012.
[45] Hayward 1998: 9–18; Latour 1986.   [46] Hirschman 1967: 13, 20.

Reading Figure 2.1 from top to bottom connects practices to power effects and underlying constellations of context and experience. Protean power starts with individual agents reacting to uncertainty but then multiplies the unknowns not only for specific individual experiences but also for the broader context and future potentialities. For example, in the case of migration viewing power dynamics through the lenses of individuals or organizations brings different phenomena into view (Chapter 5). Scholarship on hydrocarbons that focuses on states and corporations blends out the unceasing, variable renegotiations among firms, an important mechanism for coping with uncertainty in markets (Chapter 7). Most case studies in this book thus report and analyze power dynamics that cut across different levels of analysis connecting individuals to states, markets, corporations, movements, and regional organizations. The "level of analysis problem" in international relations turns out to be not a problem but a defining characteristic of protean power dynamics. Standing in for many other chapters, the case study on LGBT rights (Chapter 4) shows clearly how individuals are enmeshed with and connected to various levels: national movements, states, and regional organizations such as the EU.

Though opposed conceptually, the two ends of the axis depicted in Figure 2.1 are in reality inextricably connected. "The issue of power," writes Ulrich Beck, "is ignited especially by the knowledge that consequences cannot be predicted in advance ... The very power and characteristics that are supposed to create a new quality of security and certainty simultaneously determine the extent of absolute uncontrollability that exists ... All attempts at minimizing or eliminating risk technologically simply multiply the uncertainty into which we are plunging the world."[47] Variations in the diffusion of control power can mask deep-seated uncertainties that complicate probabilistic reasoning and open up possibilities for the circulation of protean power. This reworking of social relations through control and protean power dynamics is what Charles Tilly must have had in mind when he suggested that the "history of a social relation transform[s] that relation."[48]

Relying on their repertoire of coercive, institutional, and structural tools or positions, dominant actors are not masters of the universe, endowed with a special knack for controlling the main forms of social knowledge and political practices. If they were, we would be living in a world of risk only, accessible entirely to the power of calculation and prediction. However, we also encounter uncertainty, rapid change, and sudden shocks when established heuristics no longer work.[49] History does not only

[47] Beck 2005: 101–2.   [48] Tilly 2000. One could readily substitute "power" for "social."
[49] Ostrom 2010a: 20.

crawl; it also jumps.[50] Living with the expectation of the unexpected creates a systemic lack of organizational capacities, inherent limitations to knowledge, a weakening of control power, and an increasing relevance of protean power.[51] Intent as they are on exercising control, leaders cannot avoid but dealing with what Copeland calls "the pernicious problem of uncertainty."[52] More generally, uncertainty can create conditions ripe for improvisation. It can also incite unexpected innovations as political actors try to make the future meaningful by linking the self to something bigger than its singular, present existence.[53]

The distinction between control and protean power rests on underlying assumptions about the knowability of the world. The boundary between what is known and unknown is clear only in the abstract. "Social interactions are by definition indeterminate. They are inexhaustible sources of uncertainty … While we can never eliminate social uncertainty, we can strive to contain it … The core technology for managing social uncertainty, though, are institutions."[54] But institutions can also harbor politically possible worlds, not only constraining but also enlarging the realm of uncertainty. Chris Reus-Smit (Chapter 3) argues that institutions contain many control-resisting nooks and crannies. Furthermore, institutional norms are sites of uncertainty, as their meanings are inherently indeterminate. Both conditions create opportunities for control-defying innovations. The boundary between uncertainty and risk, control and protean power is unavoidably porous and is often difficult to discern empirically. While reflecting on his life in finance as head of Goldman Sachs and in politics as Secretary of the Treasury under President Clinton, Robert Rubin mused. "Luck or skill? We'll never know … it seemed indispensable to be lucky, but it wasn't so bad to be smart either, if you could arrange both."[55] Rubin echoes a theme that has been prominent throughout the ages.[56] It agrees with the strong note of caution with which Tetlock and Gardner conclude their study of forecasting. "We frequently pass through phases of history riddled with irreducible uncertainty – phases in which luck trumps skill."[57] In those times we should have the humility to accept that the dynamics of power can easily produce unpredictable practices and outcomes.[58] Put differently, we should be prepared to accept a world in which protean power plays an important part.

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[50] Tetlock and Gardner 2015: 240.   [51] Gordon 1991: 16–22; Walters 2012: 37–38.
[52] Copeland 2000: 206.   [53] Berenskoetter 2011: 652–54.   [54] Schedler 2013: 23.
[55] Weisberg 1998; Tetlock and Gardner 2015: 142–43.   [56] Eidinow 2011; Frank 2016.
[57] Tetlock and Gardner 2015: 272.   [58] McCloskey 1991: 35–36.

International Relations Scholarship's Exclusive Focus on Risk and Control

Important strands of international relations scholarship have followed the intellectual ascendance of economics and focus attention largely on the putatively controllable world of risk, while largely neglecting the uncontrollable world of uncertainty. By doing so, they train our sight only on control power, sideline protean power, and are unable to analyze the unpredictable. For example, in her authoritative and sophisticated analysis of risk-taking in international politics Rose McDermott writes that risk inheres in any situation where there exists uncertainty.[59] She combines both risk and uncertainty as she identifies underlying mechanisms of risk propensity that occur under conditions of "high" uncertainty. While it is impossible to scale the magnitude of uncertainty, it is possible to distinguish between two different kinds of uncertainty. Known unknowns create operational uncertainty, which, given more or better knowledge and information, may transform into calculable risk. Far from being a panacea, however, in situations of operational uncertainty more or better knowledge or information, as in the squeezing of a balloon, simply pushes radical uncertainty into some other, unrecognized part of the political context. Unknown unknowns are unknowable and cannot be converted to risk. Although she does not make the distinction between the two kinds of unknowns, McDermott acknowledges the importance of operational unknowns. She writes "most complex choices fall under the framework of judgment under uncertainty and decision-making under risk because it is impossible to predict the characteristics of many different variables simultaneously in advance, especially when they may have unknown interaction effects. Even the nature of many of the critical variables may be unknown beforehand."[60] Yet, in line with current practice of international relations scholarship, as she further develops and applies prospect theory, McDermott puts aside the problem of uncertainty. She thus makes invisible the practice-driven, protean power-generating actor responses to such uncertainty. The present framework insists on the need for completeness, rather than narrow selectiveness, in studying world politics and offers means of considering approaches focusing on risk-based control power alongside those tracing protean power practices in the face of uncertainty.[61]

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[59] McDermott 1998: 3–5, 30. We would like to thank Professor McDermott for reading and agreeing with the substance of an earlier draft of this paragraph.

[60] Ibid.: 5. See also Gartzke 1999: 567.

[61] Some readers of this section have insisted that point estimates can be given with different confidence intervals. But it is difficult to see how confidence intervals could be specified in the realm of unknown unknowns. Furthermore, as a matter of research practice scholars of international relations treat confidence intervals strictly as a methodological

Security Studies

The invention and the destructiveness of nuclear weapons epitomizes the quest for control. The core idea of nuclear deterrence is "the threat that leaves something to chance." Based on the previously noted mistranslation of Weber, "chance" here is understood to describe risk rather than risk and uncertainty. Possible protean power effects are thus rendered invisible. Articulated and developed by Thomas Schelling in the 1950s and 1960s, a risk-based understanding of chance has had a pervasive influence on the theory and practice of nuclear deterrence for the last half century.[62] The idea is based on Schelling's highly creative conceptual move that reduces uncontrollable uncertainty to manageable risk and thus from a problem to a solution for the issuing of credible nuclear threats. For Schelling, uncontrollable, accidental factors feed seamlessly into an escalation of controlled, competitive risk-taking. Accidents, in this theory, are drawn from a known probability distribution that is said to increase as each party draws closer to the brink. In Schelling's theory nuclear accidents do not exist. For accidents do not cause nuclear war; decisions do. Accidents are reduced to decisions to manage risk in a particular manner. They are no more than appendices of rational decisions. And decisions are constrained by the logic that deterrence theory articulates. Schelling does not allow the theoretical possibility of accidental nuclear use or nuclear accidents to impose any limits on risk-based deterrence models. In this reading, "the threat that leaves something to chance" is so only in terms of probabilities transforming nuclear weapons into means of control, wielded by actors with select attributes, rather than creating room for unanticipated challenges to existing rules of interaction. It squeezes out of the model unacknowledged, unfathomable unknowns, contingencies and indeterminacies. Establishing the power of full control over "the ultimate weapon" upholds the claim that the theory explains the uncontrollable. Probabilistic and possibilistic thinking are not interactive and co-evolving but fuse into a double mask. By transforming, in one theoretical move, uncontrollable uncertainty into manageable risk Schelling offers a compelling theory of control power.[63] With the

issue. If there are instances in which the political content of confidence intervals has been probed, they must be very few in numbers. We do not know of any.

[62] This discussion of Schelling draws on the important papers by Pelopidas 2015, 2016.

[63] The term "luck" appears once in Schelling's *Strategy of Conflict* (1963); "uncertain" or "uncertainty" ten times; "risk" 102 times. "Chance" is mentioned seventy-five times, but for Schelling is coterminous with risk rather than uncertainty. Pelopidas personal communication, March 9, 2016. Pelopidas 2015: 14, fn. 28. Also see our discussion of the meaning of the German term *Chance* for Weber, Seybert, and Katzenstein in Chapter 1, pp. 11–12, fn. 41, above, and for Clausewitz in Katzenstein and Seybert, Chapter 13, p. 287, fn. 57, below. Schelling 1963.

elaboration of the concept of an organizational doomsday machine sub-sequent scholarship on nuclear deterrence has taken this approach to its (il)logical extreme.[64]

Schelling's work has had large consequences not only for the study of nuclear deterrence but for the study of war. In the last two decades, students of security studies have developed and tested extensively what is now known as the bargaining model of war. It offers a risk-based view of war that highlights control power and mostly disregards uncertainty and protean power dynamics.[65] This is made possible by the bargaining model's first core assumption: the parties to a conflict subscribe to the same understanding of how the world works.[66] This is vital for the model to work. Yet it is often wildly implausible to believe that parties locked in possibly deadly conflict share the same understanding.[67] Imagination and potentiality of how the world might work, central to protean power analysis, thus escape the attention of the bargaining model. Uncertainty is key in allowing competing models of the world to be sustained. It leads to irreducible and consequential deviations away from expectations created or implied by risk-based models. Convergence of views around one model thus does not occur. Based on the implausible assumption of convergence, rationalist models proceed to think about actors with different preferences. If they decide to fight, each side will pay a cost while fighting. These costs open up a range of bargained solutions that both sides should prefer to war. For the bargaining model, the puzzle of war is why the two parties fail to settle within the range of bargained solutions before war breaks out, knowing that war is always inefficient after its outbreak. The answer to the puzzle lies in the existence of imperfections in information and the incentive to misrepresent, on the one hand, and the inability to credibly commit to an agreement that prevents war, on the other.

The model introduces a second core assumption: updating of information will select out inferior models of the world. But in security affairs, misperceptions, the fog of war, and a host of other factors

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[64] Rhodes 1989: 156.

[65] A number of colleagues have contested this point and suggested that we talk to game theorists who are developing sophisticated models. This misses the point. For the most part game theorists are not interested in offering political insights. Scholars of international relations are and should be; by adopting a risk-only bargaining model of the world, they have imposed serious limits on their analysis of power in world politics.

[66] We thank Jonathan Kirshner for clarifying conversations on this point.

[67] The issue is not whether game theory can account for actors playing different games, holding different preferences, or having different tastes for risk; it is about their causal models of the world. Models of the world can be explanatory, constitutive, or a mixture of both. The bargaining model's core assumption is restrictive in focusing only on explanatory models. See also Kirshner 2015.

prevent the emergence of a succession of probability-based, improved models. There exists no urn from which to pull red or white balls; players are color-blind; and there is no way of updating expectations based on the number of balls left in the urn. Instead, there is a lot of bluffing and interpretation. Crises are generators of uncertainty rather than risks with associated probabilities that are known or knowable.[68] In short, on issues of war and peace world politics simply does not offer, as the bargaining model assumes, a sufficiently large number of trials to select out inferior causal models. Even if all actors shared the same model of the world, which they do not, these models would fail. By making strong but implausible assumptions, the bargaining model of war focuses on the calculable directionality of control power and overlooks the creative imagination, or even improvised coping that generates protean power and transforms the surrounding uncertainty further still.

The bargaining model holds that different conclusions about future outcomes are possible, but only because of differences in information not because of differences in worldviews about the salience of risk and uncertainty. The probability of victory in any conflict and the cost of fighting are assumed to be calculable and subject to known or knowable probabilities by all parties to the conflict. However, disagreements are unavoidable when actors put the same information to work in different worldviews. As is true elsewhere, in world politics rationality takes the form of many situationally specific kinds of reasonableness. And standards of reasonableness differ in worldviews populated by different cosmologies, different historical memories, different conspiracy theories, different emotions, and different moral prescriptions.

For example, during the Cold War many American analysts and decision-makers believed that they had reached an understanding with the Soviet Union about the stability-inducing effects of a robust arms control regime. Russian archives opened after the end of the Cold War revealed a starkly different picture. In the mid-1980s, the Soviet Union had deployed a near-automatic nuclear strike force, which had been decades in the making. Because it was kept totally secret, this doomsday machine lacked the rationality of nuclear deterrence that makes contingent irrationality look rational.[69] "The Soviet Union," writes David Hoffman, "was looking through an entirely different prism than the United States."[70] It is a stroke of luck that today we are in

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[68] We thank James Davis who helped to clarify our thinking on this point.
[69] Rhodes 1989: 155–202.
[70] Hoffman 2009: 18. Note that this is not an issue of asymmetric information, of the United States not knowing about the doomsday machine, as the bargaining model holds.

a position to study this near-calamity. Conversely, the period of détente in the 1970s rested on a bedrock of illusions that US and Soviet decision-makers shared about each other. "The superpowers," writes Eric Grynaviski, "were simply wrong; they did not understand each other as well as they thought."[71] Misunderstanding in this instance secured cooperation that accurate information would have stymied. Filtered through different worldviews, shared information can be destructive or constructive. It is not the information but the worldview that drives actors toward war or peace. Worldviews that incorporate constitutive elements of risk/uncertainty and actor experiences can capture protean power dynamics; information models that exclude those elements cannot.

Furthermore, many bargaining models typically suffer from the problem of multiple equilibria – solutions a rational player would not depart from voluntarily. The folk theorem establishes that the existence of multiple equilibria is unavoidable in repeated games with incomplete information and an appropriate discount for future payoffs. More complicated models that include uncertainty do exist. But the practical challenge of building models that can handle non-Gaussian distributions is formidable. In Lance Taylor's words, "reliably estimating parameters that specify the form of distributions with fat tails is difficult if not impossible – one reason why this approach has not been widely pursued."[72] Put simply, because models that incorporate uncertainty are messy and technically intractable most scholars of international relations who have adopted the bargaining model do not work with them and thus make us overlook the relevance of uncertainty in shaping actor responses in world politics.

Because of these shortcomings, scholars relying on the bargaining model of war systematically bias political analysis toward the management of risk through control power. One of the original proponents of the bargaining model of war, James Fearon, conflates risk and uncertainty when he writes "given identical information, truly rational agents should reason to the same conclusion about the probability of one uncertain outcome or another."[73] This conflation of the two concepts has become

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In building and concealing the machine, as Hoffman argues correctly, the Soviet Union showed that it was holding to a radically different worldview.

[71] Grynaviski 2014: 13.

[72] Taylor 2010: 120. In the future, rigorous modeling efforts may help to broaden the restricted risk-only-no-uncertainty setting in which information-based models have operated so confidently during the last two decades. To date, however, judging by the publications in leading journals of international relations, existing research has not ventured into that territory.

[73] Fearon 1995: 392; Kirshner 2000. Assuming that it is not serving as an escape hatch, the concept of "true rationality" begs the question of the meaning of "rationality."

deeply engrained in many theoretical extensions and empirical applications of the bargaining model. Andrew Kydd and Barbara Walter, for example, build their analysis of different strategies of terrorist violence on the bargaining model of war.[74] In doing so, they implausibly assume that terrorists are impelled by the same signaling and commitment logic as are states. Trafficking in uncertainty, they are not. Matthew Kroenig's analysis of nuclear bargaining implicitly equates risk with uncertainty.[75] He argues that coercive nuclear bargaining and nuclear brinkmanship rest on the manipulation of risk through "anguished" calculations of probabilities in situations of uncertainty and incomplete information. Page Fortna's analysis of ceasefire agreements is similarly inattentive to the difference between risk and uncertainty.[76] Fortna argues that war is risky since there is always a chance of losing rather than winning; uncertainty can undermine cooperation even when perfect information should yield cooperation automatically. Her empirical analysis relies on statistical models and significance tests that operate entirely in the world of risk.[77] Finally, relying on the language of the bargaining model of war, Debs and Monteiro argue that power shifts can be explained by information problems. Their model "provides specific probabilities for each event. The fact that the deterrer and target are uncertain about each other's actions is realistic."[78] In sum, important analyses of nuclear deterrence, terrorist violence, nuclear brinkmanship, ceasefires in civil conflicts, and power shifts are either reducing uncertainty to risk or treating the terms as synonyms.[79] This is odd in light of the models' focus on bargaining which is conducted by specific actors with specific experiences and balancing unique, locally anchored but broadly influential understandings of reality. Hunches and intuitions may be hard to measure and cannot, by definition, be systematized into a single model; nevertheless, they can play important roles in shaping bargaining outcomes. In their inattentiveness to such dynamics the authors of existing models differ from Napoleon who, acknowledging risk *and* uncertainty, had strong feelings about his generals. Although many of them were smart, he was partial to the lucky ones.

The problem lies in the realm of theory rather than its application to questions of security. Hedley Bull noticed long ago that the central ideas in Thomas Schelling's work were not derived solely from formal game theory operating in the world of risk; they also represented "an

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[74] Kydd and Walter 2006: 56–59.   [75] Kroenig 2013: 144–45, 150.
[76] Fortna 2003: 340–41.   [77] Ziliak and McCloskey 2008.
[78] Debs and Monteiro 2014: 8 fn. 23.
[79] The difficulty of distinguishing risk from uncertainty can also be found in the European security literature. See Hammerstad and Boas 2015; Petersen 2011.

imaginative conceptual exercise" dealing with the problem of uncertainty.[80] In contrast to Schelling himself, scholars applying the bargaining model of war have overlooked the centrality of imagination. "In the final analysis," Schelling writes, "we are dealing with imagination as much as with logic ... poets may do better than logicians at this game ... Logic helps ... but usually not until imagination has selected some clue to work on."[81] Bypassing the technical virtuosity of formal models of war, Jonathan Mercer similarly stresses the importance of creativity. Neglecting the importance of creativity political scientists risk "turning sophisticated political actors into lab rats ... They have done so because predicting creativity is difficult and perhaps impossible – if one can predict creativity it cannot be very creative."[82] In short, imagination and creativity are integral to and constitutive of a world that mixes risk with uncertainty and control with protean power.

Political Economy[83]

The analysis of power dynamics is similarly imbalanced in the field of political economy and for the same reason: uncertainty no longer exists as a category worthy of analysis. In the 1920s, Heisenberg developed the uncertainty principle in physics at the very moment when Knight and Keynes drew a conceptual distinction between risk and uncertainty in economics. Knight argued that successful entrepreneurs are willing to make investments with uncertain payoffs in the future, for which they can charge a premium. For Keynes, probability is confidence in a conclusion given the evidence in support of that conclusion. Although he did not deny the existence of measurable probabilities in choice situations, for the most part Keynes argued that our tools or evidence are "too limited to make probability calculations: there may be no way of calculating, and/or there is no common unit to measure magnitudes ... the degree of our rational belief in one conclusion is either equal to, greater than, or less than the degree of our belief in another."[84] Practical men and women, in Keynes' view, have no choice but to rely on conventions and similar mechanisms in deciding how to act.[85] Keynes did not see rational agents maximizing their utility; "rather, he emphasized the role of 'animal spirits' – of daring and ambitious entrepreneurs taking risks and placing bets in an environment characterized by uncertainty: that is, by de facto unknowns and epistemic unknowables."[86] For better and for

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[80] Linklater 2000: 66.   [81] Schelling 1963: 58.   [82] Mercer 2013: 225.
[83] Some of the material in this section draws on Katzenstein and Nelson 2013a; Katzenstein and Nelson 2013b; Nelson and Katzenstein 2014.
[84] Keynes [1921] 1948: 31, 34.   [85] Keynes 1937: 214.   [86] Kirshner 2009: 532.

worse, entrepreneurial creativity and exuberance or panics showed protean power at work. Uncertainty means that the past is not prologue. Under conditions of uncertainty there is no basis for agents to settle on what the probability distribution looks like. Often experienced as "turning points," new narratives signal the obsolescence of the status quo and undermine the conventional wisdom, with profound consequences for how we think about power.

Despite the widespread acceptance of the behavioral turn in economics that challenges the standard rationalist approach, economists for the most part ignore or dismiss the distinction between risk and uncertainty. The conceptualization of uncertainty and risk that Knight and Keynes advanced in the 1920s has been relegated to the margins of the discipline.[87] Many fields of knowledge developed techniques "to isolate and domesticate" those aspects of the world subject to risk-based analysis, sidelining the rest. Economics, in particular, writes James Scott, has "incorporated calculable risk while exiling those topics where genuine uncertainty prevails."[88] Mainstream economists closed ranks around the assumption that uncertainty was analytically indistinguishable from risk. In an important textbook, Jack Hirshleifer and John Riley, for example, wrote in the early 1990s that Knight's distinction is "sterile."[89] As a result, in the words of George Akerlof and Robert Shiller, "theoretical economists have been struggling . . . to make sense of how people handle such true uncertainty."[90]

Because power is at the center of its concerns, failing to distinguish between risk and uncertainty is a serious problem in the field of international political economy. As in economics and security studies, uncertainty has either been neglected or conflated with risk, thus making protean power dynamics invisible. Not well known in other parts of the world, the paradigmatic American approach to the study of International Political Economy – "Open Economy Politics" (OEP) – moves entirely in the world of risk. In a paper addressing the effects of uncertainty, Lake and Frieden concede that uncertainty increases in crises, and then proceed to argue that risk and uncertainty "are similar enough to be conflated for our purposes."[91] In this way they and many scholars of international political economy follow the long line of economists who treat the difference between risk and uncertainty as semantic rather than substantive.[92]

[87] Best 2008.　[88] Scott 1998: 322.　[89] Hirshleifer and Riley 1992: 10.
[90] Akerlof and Shiller 2009: 144.　[91] Lake and Frieden 1989: 6–7.
[92] Ahlquist 2006; Bernhard and Leblang 2006; Bernhard, Broz, and Clark 2002; Koremenos 2005; Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal 2001; Mosley 2006; Rosendorff and Milner 2001; Sobel 1999. For dissents without repercussions in OPE, see Blyth 2002; Oatley 2011; and Nelson and Katzenstein 2014.

In OEP economic actors have clear preference orderings. Interests are deduced from an actor's position in markets. Policies and outcomes are ranked according to how they affect an actor's expected future income stream. Interests are aggregated by institutions, which in turn structure the bargaining that occurs. The main advantage of OEP is its deductive argument about preferences. OEP scholars start with sets of actors who "can be reasonably assumed to share (nearly) identical interests . . . Deducing interests from economic theory was the essential innovation of OEP."[93] But it stunts political analysis. Capacity, potential and creativity, and the processes by which they circulate are made invisible in a static framework that overlooks protean power dynamics by assuming that the preferences of actors are determined by their structural position.

OEP derives parsimonious theories of politics from sparse economic theory. The flow is from micro to macro in an orderly, linear progression. To simplify analysis, work in the OEP tradition adopts a partial equilibrium analysis by focusing at most on one or two steps in this causal chain and treating the others in reduced form, an analytic simplification that reduces complexity to complication by holding constant many elements that otherwise would make analysis intractable. In principle, however, all partial analyses can be assembled into one integrated whole. Informed by rational expectations theory, OEP thus moves exclusively in the world of risk.[94]

The assumption that interests can be read off the agents' situation in the international division of labor constitutes the "hard core" of the OEP paradigm.[95] In OEP strategic decision-making is modeled as unproblematic because analysts do not know how to model uncertainty. OEP relies on a "reductive translation" of uncertainty into risk, especially when the rules of the game are unclear and their future trajectory is pure guesswork.[96] This is an important reason why the collective performance of the field of political economy in the years before the financial crisis of 2008 was, in the words of one leading scholar, "embarrassing" and "dismal."[97] To be sure, OEP specialists were not alone in missing the signs of the gathering storm. It is nonetheless surprising how little scholars of OEP have had to say about the financial crisis in the post-crisis years. With the exception of one review essay on financial market regulation, the subfield's

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[93] Lake 2009b: 50; 2009a: 226–27, 230–31. OEP rests on two core assumptions: (1) economic policies produce income effects that are driven by an agent's position in the domestic and international division of labor; and (2) economic agents, once they know what they want, make rational decisions as if they knew the relevant probability distributions.
[94] Kirshner 2015.   [95] Lake 2009a: 231.   [96] Holzer and Millo 2005: 228.
[97] Cohen 2009: 437.

premier journal did not publish a single article on the financial crisis in the five years after the crisis broke out in 2007.[98] This collective silence makes apposite Lawrence Summers' biting criticism of macro-economics: OEP scholars are unlikely to learn much as long as they wear "the armor of a stochastic pseudo-world before doing battle with evidence from the real one."[99] And the real world mixes elements of uncertainty and protean power with risk and control power.

Sympathetic to OEP, yet insisting on the autonomy of politics, Gourevitch and Shinn make an important modification to address the limitations of an exclusively risk-based analysis. In their view, the assumption of OEP about the origins of preferences are too arbitrary in ruling out the importance of political autonomy and its corollaries: creativity and potentiality. Structurally induced economic incentives are not determinative on their own. Often they must yield to the complexities of processes of coalition formations that are driven by an unconstrained politics. "We stress incentives and interests … the rules of production do influence behavior … Where we disagree on emphasis is in explaining the origins of those rules (politics for us not … the 'autonomous' economy pure and simple)."[100] The complex politics that Gourevitch and Shinn evoke center on the dynamics of both control and protean power that escapes the reach of OEP.

Alternatives

Needless to say, the bargaining model of war and open economy politics do not exhaust the field of international relations scholarship.[101] Some empirical studies of world politics have developed arguments that incorporate power dynamics operating under uncertainty. Studies of global value chains, international knowledge creation, and social movements, for example, have pointed to conceptions of power that are not restricted exclusively to the concept of control. In his analysis of global value chains, Mark Dallas, for example, argues that "the strategic-agentic actions of firms can create non-agentic economic structures … which are both unintended and unpredictable ex ante … power is simultaneously conceived of as agentic-strategic and non-agentic."[102] In a similar vein, Anna

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[98] Helleiner and Pagliari 2011. In personal correspondence (February 10, 2016) with the authors, *International Organization*'s then editor, Jon Pevehouse, also expressed his astonishment about the total submission of only nine papers during that period: "it is rather surprising that we received so few in that initial period."
[99] Summers 1991: 146.   [100] Gourevitch and Shinn 2005: 93.
[101] McCourt 2016; Fioretos 2011.   [102] Dallas 2014: 317, 338–39.

Lee Saxenian has observed changes in the creation of international knowledge that have shifted from diffusion or "brain drain" to "brain circulation."[103] Improvisation and creativity in social movements are also highly germane for organizationally or crowd-enabled connective actions that rely on social media to personalize political causes.[104] In today's movement societies, the problem for the organizers of social movements is to create models strong enough to withstand the pressure of their opponents and to create space for spontaneous action by an energized base – control and protean power in action.[105]

Besides empirical studies that resonate with the concept of the circulation of protean power, this book's focus on the relation between uncertainty and power dynamics has an affinity with theoretical and methodological approaches that are open to the improvisational aspects of protean power. Karl Deutsch's cybernetic theory of politics, for example, focuses on steering and control – and their limitations.[106] For Deutsch, control power is about the priority of output over intake, the ability to talk over the ability to listen, to act out rather than modify internalized routines and acquired traits. In short, Deutsch has a dual vision of power. Control power is one side of the coin – the other side is the politics of potentialities, growth through learning.

Such learning can consist of observable, prospective individual or group practices recognized as such at the time. When describing the spread of revolutions, and foreshadowing what Kurt Weyland would subsequently observe in the context of the Arab Spring,[107] Adam Przeworski noted that "the entire event was one single snowball. I mean it in a technical sense: A development took place in one country, people elsewhere were updating their probabilities of success, and as the next country went over the brink, the calculation was becoming increasingly reassuring."[108] Besides Baysian updating, learning can take many other forms. For example, it encompasses also the creation of agency through moral commitment, emotional engagement, and practical improvisation, recognized often only after the fact. In El Salvador's civil war, for example, Elisabeth Wood writes that "pleasure in agency" was grounded in emotional processes, moral perceptions, and values of being an active part in the making of one's own history.[109] Similarly, Silvana Toska's fieldwork during the Arab Spring reports the mobilizational effect of the "euphoria of the moment." James Scott calls these "rare moments of political electricity" that can push millions of people into the streets "in

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[103] Saxenian 2006.   [104] Bennett 2014; Bennett and Segerberg 2013.
[105] Tarrow 1994: 136.   [106] Deutsch 1966.   [107] Weyland 2012.
[108] Przeworski 1991: 3–4.   [109] Wood 2003: 18, 20.

the teeth of power."[110] Although Wood, Toska, and Scott capture important aspects of power we have called protean, this term does not have only positive connotations. In its many nefarious practices ISIS, too, illustrates protean power dynamics (Chapter 9).

Uncertainty plays a big role in international conflicts. In her book on war, Ann Hironaka writes that "in a startling number of cases, the seemingly more powerful state suffered unexpected catastrophic losses, while the ostensibly weaker state ended up victorious."[111] Erik Gartzke offers an explanation that undercuts a risk-based view of the world. He argues that rationalist models of war must put war in the error term of their equations. "Our ability to predict which crises will become wars will probably prove little better than the naïve predictions of random chance … Important theoretical and empirical components of war are not knowable."[112] Stacie Goddard develops a theory of legitimation for political conflicts over indivisible territories.[113] It integrates disparate factors such as the material interests and strategies of elites, bargaining, and coalition-building, on the one hand, and cultural resonance, rhetorical action, and legitimation processes, on the other. Not reducible only to calculable probabilities, the interaction between the two sets of factors Goddard identifies leaves space for the play of both control and protean power dynamics. Similarly, on questions of political economy, John Hobson and Leonard Seabrooke have underlined the constitutive effects of everyday political economy practices on states and markets.[114] Elites do not simply provide a script that other economic actors follow. Everyday political economy is also about the protean power dynamics that create unexpected change and novelty. In short, these studies insist that individuals do not constitute the bedrock of social and political life; relationships do. Stored and accessed in a dispersed manner, relationships coalesce to a whole that is not controlled by any one site. As is true of jazz, power dynamics contain elements of creative interaction and improvisation. Jazz bands thus differ from marching bands which are moving to a very different beat and give no space to the circulation of improvisational and innovative practices that protean power thrives on and reinforces.

Conclusion

The theoretical development of our argument in the first two chapters and the empirical case studies that follow alert us to six costly short-cuts and mistakes.

[110] Toska 2017: 2–14, fn. 38, 3–23; Scott 1990: xiii.   [111] Hironaka 2017: 34.
[112] Gartzke 1999: 567, 573.   [113] Goddard 2010.   [114] Hobson and Seabrooke 2007.

First, the behavioral short-cut to the analysis of power leads to a tautological dead-end. Observing a set of practices and inferring power effects leads to the trite conclusion that winners have power and losers do not. In our argument, practices are distinct from power. They affect how power reinforces or undermines risk and uncertainty. Second, a truncated view of power focusing only on control power assumes the world to be a closed system amenable to controlled experiments and calculable risk. Yet world politics is not a closed system. Once we recognize it as an open system blending risk and uncertainty, our account of power needs to broaden and take explicit recognition of protean power effects operating in the realm of the unexpected – the central point of this book. Third, it is a mistake to think about power dynamics in terms of binary distinctions – such as top-down/bottom-up or macro/micro. A lot of shifting and changing occurs in the relationship between protean and control power and risk and uncertainty. Fourth, it is a mistake to think that one kind of power is normatively superior to the other; no group of actors inherently occupies the moral high ground. We should be careful not to imbue either type of power with positive or negative connotations. Whether control or protean power produce morally good or nefarious outcomes can be addressed only within the context of specific, empirical investigations. Fifth, we should not think that one kind of power is for the strong, the other for the weak. In fact, such labeling of actors is unhelpful. Which weaknesses or strengths are central? Control power is shaped by various capabilities. Similarly, protean power resides in the agility of actors, the actualization of potentialities, and an openness to accept and promote novel solutions that others might not have thought of or tried out. Discursive frames strategically deployed or spontaneously created can constitute both efficient sources of control and promising actualizations of power potentials. Sixth, and finally, it is a mistake to disregard the potential for processes of power reversals. Control power can be vulnerable even when it appears to be stable. Protean power can be promising even when it seems out-of-reach.

How does our argument connect to two commonly accepted power analyses in international relations? Approaches that seek their inspiration in Hobbes and Foucault focus on power capabilities and the diffusion of mechanisms of control. They offer important and enduring insights. But their different styles of analysis are incomplete as long as they neglect the multidimensionality of power, the heterogeneity of power situations, and the omnipresence of power dynamics. Liberal institutional approaches, focusing on information imperfections, are also partial in their insights. Institutional

complexes matter for all the reasons the followers of this approach have explored so energetically. But institutional complexes and meaning indeterminacies also create sites that agile actors can exploit to their eventual advantage. Institutional scholarship falls short when it overlooks how these actors move in and around the nooks and crannies of deliberately designed institutions and take advantage of indeterminate meanings of rules and norms, feeding off and reinforcing uncertainties. In focusing on the relations between control and protean power we hope to add to the insights of two approaches that enjoy broad acceptance among international relations scholars.

Some readers may think that this book is doing both too much and too little. It does too much in stretching the concept of power beyond the notion of control. As we will argue in the concluding chapter, this critique overlooks many compelling arguments for a more capacious concept of power advanced by political and social theorists such as Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Arendt, Foucault, and a host of contemporary writers. Furthermore, insisting on the existence of only one kind of control power entails assuming the entire burden of accounting for unexplained, dramatic changes in world politics, a burden that existing scholarship has failed conspicuously to take on board. Keeping such changes exogenous, as is the going practice in the analysis of world politics, is a poor second compared with endogenizing change by recognizing protean power in its own right.

Other readers may find that this book does too little. They may be looking for a full-blown research program that specifies scope conditions, articulates causal mechanisms, and operationalizes variables. This criticism expresses an unrealistic expectation of what one piece of research can reasonably hope to accomplish. Furthermore, this criticism comes with a large amount of unexamined and confining meta-theoretical baggage that, for reasons articulated here and in Chapter 13, we do not wish to take on board in this venture. Our main aim is to shift a way of thinking about power as a core concept in scholarly research and eventually perhaps in public discourse.

More importantly, this criticism betrays a probability-inflected worldview that overlooks the importance of uncertainty and protean power dynamics. Focusing on the dynamics of human interactions, Richard Bookstaber usefully points to four phenomena that underline the limitations of such a view of the world.[115] First, slowdowns on accident-free interstate highways and stampeding crowds point
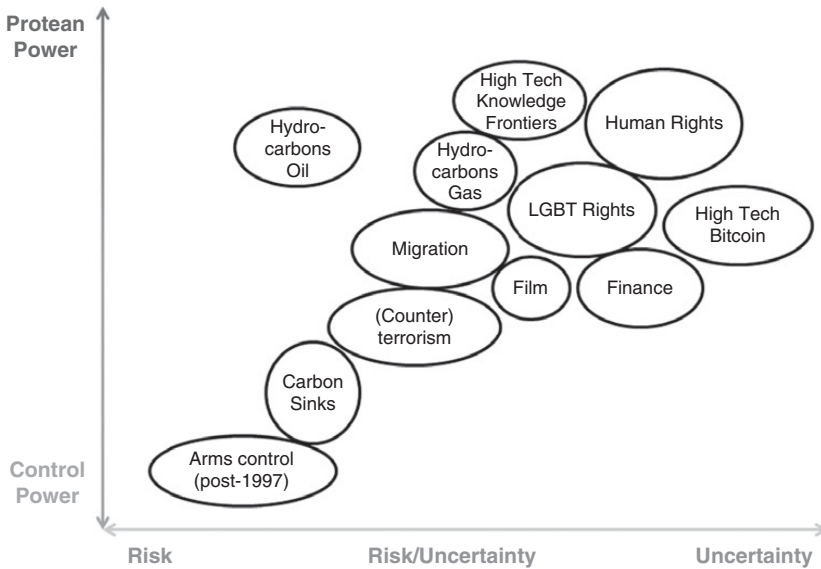
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[115] Bookstaber 2017.

Figure 2.2 Examples of Control and Protean Power in a Risky and Uncertain World

to unexpected results that are not related to human intentions; human interactions can produce "emergent" phenomena. Second, in the social world of constant human interaction probabilities are forever changing; social processes are often not "ergodic." Third, human interactions are so complex that they elude all attempts to anticipate unknown outcomes correctly; the world is filled with "computational irreducibility." Finally, the belief that we live in a world of manageable risk is sheer fantasy; instead, we live in a world often marked by "radical uncertainty" for which the probability of outcomes is simply unknowable. Protean power is rooted in all of these uncertainties as an integral part of political and social life.

We note here that conceptual analysis is the first step in articulating a research program. A second step takes the form of plausibility probes that this book also provides with a dozen case studies presented in ten chapters covering a broad range of security, economic, social, and cultural issues in world politics. Beyond these initial two steps we hope for the intellectual engagement and future work of other scholars who undoubtedly will improve, modify, or reject the line of argument that we have developed here. In an effort to

enhance our understanding of the unexpected in world politics, this book offers no less, and no more, than the initial two steps in analyzing the dynamics of control and protean power.

Unfolding under conditions of risk and uncertainty, the empirical case studies in this book cover a broad array of issues: security (terrorism and counterterrorism, arms control); economy (finance, hydrocarbons, environment); society (migration, LGBT and human rights); high-tech (knowledge frontier and bitcoin); and culture (film). Figure 2.2 maps them along two dimensions: risk and uncertainty and control and protean power. Although overly schematic and simplified, this visual presentation conveys variations among the various case studies along both dimensions.

In our study of control and protean power under conditions of risk and uncertainty, this book aims for depth of understanding rather than unobtainable, predictive accuracy. If to the question "how was this possible?" protean power offers plausible, new answers, then this book will have been successful.