MINDS AT WAR

Dual Mindset Theory and the Psychology of Europe's Descent into the First World War

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For my mother

'A day may come when we shall be able to deduce the laws of social science from the principles of psychology.'

VILFREDO PARETO (1906)

'The people, events and forces … carried in them the seeds of other, perhaps less terrible, futures.'

CHRISTOPHER CLARK, *The Sleepwalkers* (2012)

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Mara Tchalakov

Oxford, October 2017

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Austria-Hungary

Heads of State:

Kaiser Franz Joseph	Emperor of Austria-Hungary (1848–1916)
Archduke Franz Ferdinand	Heir-apparent to the Habsburg throne (1863–1914)

Heads of Government:

Count Karl von Stürgkh	Minister-President of Austria (1911–1916)
Count István Tisza	Minister-President of Hungary (1913–1917)

Foreign Office Officials:

Count Alois Lexa Aehrenthal	Common Foreign Minister (1906–1912)
Count Leopold von Berchtold	Common Foreign Minister (1912–1915)
Count János Forgách	Section Chief, Foreign Ministry (1912–1917)
Count Alexander von Hoyos	*Chef de Cabinet* to Common Foreign Minister (1912–1917)

Ambassadors and Attachés:

Count Albert von Mensdorff	Ambassador in London (1904–1914)
Count Frigyes Szapáry de Szapár	Ambassador in St. Petersburg (1913–1914)
Count Nikolaus Szécsen von Temerin	Ambassador in Paris (1911–1914)
Count László Szögyény-Marich	Ambassador in Berlin (1892-1914)
Prince Gottfried von Hohenlohe	Ambassador in Berlin (1914–1918)
Count Heinrich Graf von Lützow	Ambassador in Rome (1904–1910)
Count Kajetan Mérey von Kapos-Mére	Ambassador in Rome (1910–1915)
Marquis Johann von Pallavicini	Ambassador in Constantinople (1906–1918)
Major Otto Gellinek	Military attaché in Belgrade (1910–1914)

Finance Ministers:

Leon von Biliński	Austro-Hungarian Common Finance Minister (1912–1917)
István Burián	Austro-Hungarian Common Finance Minister (1903–1912); Hungarian emissary to the Austro-Hungarian government (1913–1915)

Army and Navy:

Alexander von Krobatin	Imperial War Minister (1912–1917)
Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf	Chief of the General Staff (1906–1911, 1912–1917)
Blasius Schemua	Chief of the General Staff (1911–1912)
Oskar Potiorek	Governor-General of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1911–1914)

Bulgaria

Head of State:

Ferdinand I	Prince, and later King, of Bulgaria (1887–1918)

France

Head of State:

Raymond Poincaré	President (1913–1920)

Heads of Government:

René Viviani	Prime Minister (1914–1915)
Raymond Poincaré	President (1912–1913)
Joseph Caillaux	Prime Minister (1911–1912)

Foreign Office Officials:

René Viviani	Minister of Foreign Affairs (1914)
Philippe Berthelot	Political Director, Foreign Ministry (1904–1922)

Ambassadors:

Camille Barrère	Ambassador in Rome (1897–1924)
Jules Cambon	Ambassador in Berlin (1907–1914)
Paul Cambon	Ambassador in London (1898–1920)
Alfred Dumaine	Ambassador in Vienna (1912–1914)
Maurice Paléologue	Ambassador in St. Petersburg (1914–1917)

Army and Navy:

Marshal Joseph Joffre	Commander-in-Chief of the Army (1911–1916)
Adolphe Messimy	War Minister (1911–1912, 1914)
Alexandre Millerand	War Minister (1912–1913, 1914–1915)

Germany

Head of State:

Kaiser Wilhelm II	Emperor of Imperial Germany (1888–1918)

Heads of Government:

Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg	Chancellor (1909–1917)
Clemens Ernst Gottlieb von Delbrück	State Secretary of the Interior and Vice-Chancellor (1908–1916)
Kurt Riezler	Aide to the Chancellor (1909–1917)

Foreign Office Officials:

Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter	State Secretary, Foreign Ministry (1910–1912)
Gottlieb von Jagow	State Secretary, Foreign Ministry (1913–1916)
Wilhelm von Stumm	Director, Political Department (1911–1916)
Arthur Zimmermann	Undersecretary of State (1911–1916)

Ambassadors:

Hans von Flotow	Ambassador in Rome (1913–1915)
Karl Max, Furst von Lichnowsky	Ambassador in London (1912–1914)
Friedrich, Graf Pourtalès	Ambassador in St. Petersburg (1907–1914)
Wilhelm Eduard	Ambassador in Paris (1910–1914)
Heinrich von Tschirschky	Ambassador in Vienna (1907–1916)
Hans Wilhelm	Ambassador in Constantinople (1912–1915)
Julius Adolf	Ambassador in Belgrade (1911–1914)

Army and Navy:

Erich von Falkenhayn	Prussian War Minister (1913–1914)
Helmuth von Moltke, the Younger	Chief of the General Staff (1906–1914)
Grand Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz	State Secretary, Imperial Navy (1897–1916)
General Moriz, Freiherr von Lyncker	Chief of the Kaiser's Military Cabinet (1908–1918)

Great Britain

Head of State:

George V	King of Great Britain and Ireland, Emperor of India (1910–1936)

Head of Government:

Herbert Henry Asquith	Prime Minister (1908–1916)

Foreign Office Officials:

Sir Eyre Alexander Crowe	Assistant Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1912–1920)
Sir Edward Grey	Foreign Secretary (1905–1916)
Sir Arthur Nicolson	Permanent Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1910–1916)
Sir William George Tyrrell	Private Secretary to Sir Edward Grey (1907–1915)

Finance Minister:

David Lloyd George	Chancellor of the Exchequer (1908–1915)

Ambassadors and Counsellors:

Sir Francis Leveson Bertie	Ambassador in Paris (1905–1918)
Sir George William Buchanan	Ambassador in St. Petersburg (1910–1918)
Sir Maurice de Bunsen	Ambassador in Vienna (1913–1914)
Sir Fairfax Leighton Cartwright	Ambassador in Vienna (1908–1913)
Sir William Edward Goschen	Ambassador in Berlin (1908–1914)
Hugh O'Beirne	Embassy Counsellor in St. Petersburg (1906–1915)

Army and Navy:

Hon. Winston Spencer Churchill	First Lord of the Admiralty (1911–1915)
Viscount Richard Burdon Haldane	Secretary of State for War (1905–1912), Lord Chancellor (1912–1915)
Sir Henry Wilson	Director of Military Operations (1910–1914)

Italy

Head of Government:

Antonio Salandra	Prime Minister (1914–1916)

Foreign Office Officials:

Antonio Paternò-Castelli	Minister of Foreign Affairs (1905–1906, 1910–1914)

Ambassadors and Ministers:

Giuseppe, Duca di Avarna di Gulatiere	Ambassador in Vienna (1904–1915)
Ricardo Bollati	Ambassador in Berlin (1912–1916)
Andrea, Marchese Carlotti di Riparbello	Ambassador in St. Petersburg (1913–1917)
Guglielmo, Marchese Imperiali di Francavilla	Ambassador in London (1910–1920)
Nicola, Barone Squitti de Palermiti	Minister in Belgrade (1913–1916)

Montenegro

Heads of State:

Nikola I	King (1910–1918)
Danilo	Crown Prince (1871–1921)

Russia

Head of State:

Nicholas II	Tsar (1894–1917)

Heads of Government:

Vladimir Kokovtsov	Chairman, Council of Ministers and Prime Minister (1911–1914)
Ivan Goremykin	Chairman, Council of Ministers and Prime Minister (1914–1916)
Peter Stolypin	Chairman, Council of Ministers and Prime Minister (1906–1911)

Foreign Office Officials:

Sergei Dmitrievich Sazonov	Foreign Minister (1910–1917)
Baron Moritz Schilling	Head of Chancery for the Foreign Ministry (1912–1914)

Ambassadors and Attachés:

Alexander Benckendorff	Ambassador in London (1903–1917)
Alexander Giers	Minister in Cetinje (1912–1916)
Nikolai Hartwig	Ambassador in Belgrade (1909–1914)
Alexander Izvolsky	Ambassador in Paris (1910–1917)
Nikolai Nikolaevich Shebeko	Ambassador in Vienna (1913–1914)
Colonel Viktor Artamonov	Military attaché in Belgrade (1912–1914)

Agriculture Minister:

Alexander Krivoshein	Minister of Agriculture (1908–1915)

Army and Navy:

Yuri Danilov	Deputy Chief of the General Staff (1909–1914)
Ivan Grigorevich	Naval Minister (1911–1916)
Vladimir Sukhomlinov	War Minister (1909–1915)
Nikolai Yanushkevich	Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters (1914–1915)

Serbia

Heads of State:

Petar I	King (1903–1918)
Aleksandar I	Crown Prince and Regent (1914–1921)

Heads of Government:

Nikola Pašić	Prime Minister (1912–1918)
Stojan Protić	Minister of the Interior (1903–1914)

Assassins:

Gavrilo Princip	Bosnian Serb student and terrorist trained by the Black Hand (1894–1918)
Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević ('Apis')	Chief of Serbian military intelligence and leader of the Black Hand (1876–1917)

ABSTRACT

Discrepancies in how leaders and political elites react to the escalation of international crises and to the possibility of war, even when confronted with the same or similar international constraints and decision-making dilemmas, is a puzzling phenomenon not comfortably accounted for by either traditional rational actor or earlier 'cognitive miser' psycho-dynamic models. A new psychological theory — the dual mindset theory — suggests that the mindsets of individual leaders act as an intervening variable that can help to account for these puzzling discrepancies and, thereby, to explain certain historical paradoxes as they concern variation in war and peace outcomes in international affairs.

According to the dual mindset theory, individual mindsets can be broadly categorised into two basic types: reflexive and reflective. The dominance of a reflexive mindset implies the rapid operation of intuitive, and often emotional, thought processes that are automatically performed as a reflex, or without much conscious thought. By contrast, the dominance of a reflective mindset implies the application of conscious, effortful deliberations that attempt to restrain the impulsive and rapid thought processes of the former without getting rid of them altogether. As they relate to decision-making in international relations, reflexive mindsets are hypothesised to increase the probability of aggression and conflict breaking out, while reflective mindsets are hypothesised to reduce this probability.

Our dual mindsets are hypothesised to originate from two very different but interconnected systems of the human brain that provide the foundation for all human reasoning. These systems have been variously labelled as 'Systems 1 and 2', 'automatic and effortful reasoning' and, more popularly, 'blinking and thinking'. These mindsets, and the dual systems of the brain from which they originate, are proposed to contribute to the observed variation in war and peace outcomes in international relations through the influence of three causal mechanisms: sensitivity to threats, propensity for risk and temporal discounting. The dual mindset theory is applied to the historical puzzle of why the First World War broke out when it did in the summer of 1914, during a relatively calm period of European politics, and not in response to earlier pre-war crises, in particular the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, when the European continent appeared to be on the brink of conflict.

Keywords: reflexive; reflective; mindsets; dual systems; stress; political psychology; cognitive psychology; heuristics; crisis decision-making; international relations theory; First World War

INTRODUCTION

'Many consequential foreign policy decisions – including ones that shape the world … are deeply contested, and knowing only the external situation does not tell us why different individuals came to different conclusions, let alone who prevailed.'

ROBERT JERVIS, *How Statesmen Think* (2017)

'This way, that way
I do not know what to do:
I am of two minds.'

SAPPHO, (630–580 B.C.), Poem 69

One of the primary puzzles that international relations scholarship seeks to resolve is the variable nature of war and peace in human affairs: 'Why does war occur between some states rather than other states, at some times rather than other times, under some conditions rather than other conditions, by some political leaders rather than other leaders?'[1] This last question is of particular relevance to war and peace decisions, when the choices made by individual national leaders are considered to be of paramount importance and both international and domestic constraints insufficient to fully explain discrepancies between political actors in this regard. Nevertheless, the task of resolving this puzzle remains a challenging one for political scientists, operating within a field that has traditionally privileged attempts to understand the recurrence of war over that of peace throughout human history.[2] This tendency of international relations scholarship to focus on the outbreak of conflict rather than on the maintenance of the peace has made it susceptible to a methodological defect known as 'selecting on the dependent variable': studying the causes of war by focusing on war.[3] For example, many psychological accounts of

[1] Stuart A. Bremer, 'Who Fights Whom, When, Where and Why?', in *What Do We Know About War?*, ed. John A. Vasquez (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, *Causes of War* (Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 20–21.

[2] Scholars D. Scott Bennett and Allan Stam estimate that the base-line frequency of inter-state war between pairs of states in the international system (known as 'dyads') per year is about 1 in 14,000 interactions. D. Scott Bennett and Allan C. Stam, *The Behavioral Origins of War* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, 21.

[3] Dominic Johnson, 'Survival of the Disciplines: Is International Relations Fit for the New Millennium?', *Millennium* 43, no. 2 (2015): 751. 'Selecting on the dependent variable' refers to the faulty methodological practice of restricting one's set of observations to cases in which some phenomenon of interest has been observed and excluding from the set of cases instances in which the phenomenon was not observed. Any inferences that may be drawn about the causes of such a phenomenon risk being invalidated because, in ignoring cases in which the phenomenon did not occur, one risks omitting

political leaders have 'identified patterns of [human] perception that deviate from rationality in the context of [international] crises and war'.[5] Regrettably, their authors have not paid commensurate attention to international crises or to foreign policy decisions that do not culminate in violence, or to contexts that are considered stable or routine.[6] Moreover, because patterns of psychological bias are considered 'built-in' features of human behaviour, political scientists have been quick to classify them as 'constants' of human nature. However, psychological variables that are considered constants will always struggle to explain a dependent variable – the outbreak of war – that varies across time and space.[7]

The study of psychological mindsets offers an appealing solution in this regard because mindsets can vary not only from person to person, but also for individuals across situations and contexts. This thesis examines the variable nature of war and peace decisions through the framework of the intervening variable of individual political leader mindsets. Its principal task is to propose a psychological theory for understanding the variable nature of human decision-making behaviour in international relations – one whose explanatory value is particularly applicable to crisis situations, when the impact of individual decisions is maximised as an international dispute moves closer to final resolution.[8]

Research Questions and Argument

How can political scientists account for the puzzling variation in foreign policy decisions by political leaders concerning war and peace in international relations? On an individual level, how do we account for unexplained discrepancies in how leaders and political elites react to the escalation of international crises and to the advance of war? To quote Thomas Schelling, how do leaders decide if the foreign policy crises they face represent 'mainly bilateral competition in which each side should be motivated mainly toward winning over the other' or a shared danger, in which 'statesmanlike

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from one's sample instances in which the putative cause might have been present but nonetheless did not generate the phenomenon of interest – in this case, war.

[5] Johnson, 'Survival of the Disciplines', 751.

[6] Janice Gross Stein, 'Threat Perception in International Relations', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, eds. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 370. It is almost three decades since Robert Jervis called for the systematic study of psychological variables across a range of international outcomes, but little research of this kind exists. Robert Jervis, 'War and Misperception', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (1988).

[7] This logic is what led Kenneth Waltz, in his discussion of 'first image' or individual-level explanations of war, to reject human nature as a cause: 'If human nature is conceived as a set of traits or predispositions common to all people at all times, it is a constant and it cannot explain variations in war and peace.' Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, 21. Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

[8] Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, 211.

forbearance, collaborative withdrawal, and prudent negotiation should dominate'?[16]

This thesis introduces a novel theoretical approach to these questions called the dual mindset theory and makes three principal arguments. The first is that the mindsets of individual political leaders can act as an important intervening variable between the onset of crises and their respective outcomes. Individual political leaders may adopt different mindsets under conditions of international uncertainty that can affect how they make war and peace decisions – the constraints presented by the strategic and domestic environment, in other words, are not always sufficient to explain leaders' choices. These mindsets can be broadly categorised into two basic types: reflexive and reflective. The dominance of a reflexive mindset implies the rapid operation of intuitive, and often emotional, thought processes that are automatically performed as a reflex, or at least without much conscious thought, and that, as a result, are characterised by a number of common psychological biases. By contrast, the dominance of a reflective mindset implies the application of conscious, effortful deliberations that attempt to restrain the impulses and 'fast thinking' of the former. This does not mean, however, that actors who adopt a reflective mindset replicate, nor even closely approximate, rationality as prescribed by rational choice theory – it simply means that they are less susceptible to the most common biases produced by a reflexive mindset (and, in some cases, may exhibit opposite biases, such as under-confidence instead of overconfidence).

The second argument is that these mindsets originate from two very different but interconnected systems of the human brain that provide the foundation for all human reasoning. These systems have been variously labelled as 'Systems 1 and 2', 'automatic and effortful reasoning' and, more popularly, 'blinking and thinking'. Broadly speaking, they reflect the differences between rapid human intuition and deliberative analysis.[17] Each system possesses distinct adaptive value, even though they differ considerably with respect to their operation, costs and effects, and this can help to explain the enduring influence of both systems – and mindsets – on human behaviour. While research shows that all individuals rely on intuitive 'System 1' judgments as a baseline tendency, they can vary considerably in the extent to which they are able to override their immediate impulses in favour of more analytical 'System 2' reasoning. Which system – and mindset – is activated is largely dependent upon the external stress load (both its intensity and duration) and the internal level of reflective resources – that is, the reflective System 2 processes operating in parallel that can override those of reflexive System 1 – known as 'mindware'. As a result, we can expect either the activation

[16] Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 120–121.

[17] Philip Tetlock and Dan Gardner, *Superforecasting: The Art and Science of Prediction* (London: Random House Books, 2015), 33–45.

of what is often labelled a 'challenge' or 'stimulatory' state of motivation (the activation of System 2), or alternatively a 'threat' or 'over-stimulatory' state of stress, consisting of defensive coping mechanisms and a reversion to simple heuristics (the activation of System 1).[18]

The third argument is that, in situations where escalation of conflict against an identified adversary is a possibility, such as during international crises when war and peace decisions are paramount, these contrasting mindsets, and the systems of the brain from which they originate, contribute to the observed variation in war and peace outcomes in international relations. Specifically, reflexive mindsets tend to increase the probability of aggression and conflict breaking out, while reflective mindsets reduce this probability. It is proposed that, once activated, the influence of mindsets on foreign policy decision-making in international crisis situations occurs through three causal mechanisms: sensitivity to threats, propensity for risk, and temporal discounting. Although these are independent variables, it is hypothesised that they act in tandem – such that heightened detection of perceived threats encourages both a greater propensity to seek to overcome such threats, even at the cost of assuming greater risk, and higher rates of temporal discounting, in the interest of confronting them sooner rather than later.

Table 0.1 Causal Path Linking Independent, Intervening and Dependent Variables

Independent Variable	**Intervening Variables**				**Dependent Variable**
International Crisis/Strategic Context	**Type of Stress Induced**	**Brain System Activated**	**Individual Mindset Activated**	**Threat Sensitivity, Risk Propensity, Temporal Discounting**	**Probability of Conflict**
Moderate stress load/duration and/or high level of mindware among political leaders	'Challenge state' of motivation	System 2	Reflective	Lower	Lower
Severe stress load/duration and/or low level of mindware among political leaders	'Threat state' of stress	System 1	Reflexive	Higher	Higher

[18] Margaret Kemeny, 'The Psychobiology of Stress', *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 12, no. 4 (2003); Robert Sapolsky, *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* (London: The Bodley Head, 2017), 126–136.

As such, the dual mindset theory does not strictly support either of the two basic models of the individual decision-maker in international relations: the 'rational optimiser' of rational choice theory or the 'cognitive miser' of traditional political psychology models. These binary models have arguably promulgated a schizophrenic image of individual political leaders as either wholly rational and unaffected by bias, engaging in 'effective' decision-making processes that generally strive to avoid conflict, or as hopelessly biased, such biases representing 'defects' in the decision-making process that tend to promote conflict.[19] This reflects a tendency in political science literature to make normative judgments about whether war or peace outcomes are 'bad' or 'good', and whether the decision-making that brings them about is indicative of 'defective' or 'effective' processes. However, 'the goal of the psychologist is to focus on the processes that lead to particular, predictable outcomes – and not to assign normative values to those outcomes'.[20]

Rather, the dual mindset theory aims to supply a much more nuanced and, arguably, much more realistic portrait of individual decision-makers than either that provided by rationalist or by traditional psychological models – one that recognises that most individuals make decisions in a manner somewhere between the unrealistic extremes of supreme cognitive optimisation and economisation, that they can vary in the way that they do so, and that these decision-making processes do not automatically produce either 'good' or 'bad' outcomes. Above all, because their respectively fixed assumptions about human behaviour do not comfortably allow for variation in decision outcomes, this thesis argues that the rationalist optimiser and traditional cognitive miser models struggle to explain one of the principal puzzles of international relations: the variation in war and peace between and among states in the international system. Although the 'reflexive' and 'reflective' mindset framework presented in this thesis does not claim to be a comprehensive theory of decision-making, it does aim to provide a more comprehensive explanation than either the 'rational actor' or psychological 'cognitive miser' models of the contribution(s) of individual actors to the variable nature of war and peace decisions.

Decision-Makers in International Relations Theory

The existing literature in international relations supplies us with two very different models of how individual political leaders make decisions: the 'optimiser' of rational choice theory and the

[19] Stanley A. Renshon and Deborah Larson, *Good Judgment in Foreign Policy: Theory and Application* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

[20] Lucian Gideon Conway III, Peter Suedfeld and Philip Tetlock, 'Integrative Complexity and Political Decisions that Lead to War or Peace', in *Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Century*, eds. D.J. Christie, R.V. Wagner, and D.A. Winter (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2001).

'cognitive miser' of most psychological approaches. Each paradigm claims analytical superiority over the other and, with few exceptions, their adherents have rarely engaged in a meaningful dialogue.[21] As the name suggests, rationalist approaches assume that international actors are 'rational' – that is, they maintain internally coherent preferences, process incoming information according to Bayesian principles and, after probabilistic consideration of the expected outcomes of all relevant options, choose whatever strategy or course of action maximises their welfare.[22] Individuals are assumed to systematically reason how one 'should reason' in order to maximise utility, by pursuing the best means available to achieve a given end.[23] Rational actor, or rational choice theory, thus establishes a logic that both prescribes how decisions should be made and describes how rational agents actually make choices.[24] In the realm of international relations, most rationalist, and especially game-theoretic, models are premised on the unitary actor assumption: the notion that states are each unitary rational actors with coherent preferences.[25]

By contrast, psychological 'cognitive miser' models assume that individuals (and, by extension, states) at best exhibit 'bounded' (i.e. limited) rationality and, at worst, downright irrationality. They do so by consistently violating the conditions for rationality set out by the rational actor model. This is attributable to the fact that human beings possess limited computational capacities and must resort to simplifying mechanisms, or 'biases', to cope with the volume of information they encounter in daily life.[26] Indeed, the central axiom of this body of scholarship is that decision-makers possess a limited capacity to process information, exacerbated by an international environment that imposes heavy information-processing demands upon them. Such bounded rationality makes individuals especially susceptible to common psychological biases that evolved to cope with these demands. Consequently, the traditional research objectives of those scholars studying the psychological dimensions of foreign policy have been the identification and exploration of the 'cognitive strategies

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[21] For an exception to the rule, see Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Rose McDermott, 'Crossing No Man's Land: Cooperation From the Trenches', *Political Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2004).

[22] Thomas Bayes' renowned essay 'Toward Solving a Problem in the Doctrine of Chances' examined how individuals formulate probabilistic beliefs about the world when encountering new data. Bayes believed that humans learn about the universe 'through approximation, getting closer and closer to the truth as we gather more evidence'. Moreover, according to Bayes, 'good judges should be good hypothesis testers: they should update their beliefs in response to new evidence and do so in proportion to the extremity of the odds they placed on possible outcomes before they learned which one occurred.' Nate Silver, *The Signal and the Noise: The Art and Science of Prediction* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 240–248.

[23] Jonathan Mercer, 'Rationality and Psychology in International Politics', *International Organization* 59, no. 1 (2005).

[24] Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 270.

[25] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001), 17–18.

[26] Behavioural economist Richard Thaler similarly distinguishes between what he calls 'Econs' and 'Humans' – the 'fictional creature' *Homo economicus* who populates rational actor models and the *Homo sapiens* known as human beings upon whose deviations from this model much of psychology is based. Richard Thaler, *Misbehaving: The Making of Behavioural Economics* (Great Britain: Allen Lane, 2015), 4–5.

that policymakers rely upon to construct and maintain their simplified images of the environment'.[27]

Despite their fundamental differences, proponents of both the rational actor and psychological models rely on fixed assumptions about how individual actors make decisions. The inability of rationalists and psychologists to reconcile their competing assumptions has led to polarised images of the decision-maker: the rational individual who consistently makes accurate judgments by relying on the logic of statistical probability versus the irrational individual who regularly runs afoul of a variety of debilitating psychological biases. As applied to international relations, this duality has translated into competing conceptions of human nature: one invariably biased towards peace (rational actor) and the other towards war (most psychological approaches). As result, both models of the individual struggle to explain the variation in war and peace outcomes within the international system.

Rational Optimisers

Most scholars are familiar with the War Puzzle of international relations theory, so called because war is an extremely costly endeavour and rational states would be better off reaching pre-war bargains that avoid the inherent risks of fighting.[28] That they do not always do so is puzzling if, as rationalists assume, war represents the worst pay-off outcome to a conflict for all states involved. Rationalist explanations for this puzzle fall into two basic categories: deliberate and impaired cost–benefit calculations. In the first instance, states may deliberately initiate war or knowingly engage in deceptive acts that run the risk of war because states believe such conflicts can be fought and won at acceptable cost. However, historical data suggest that this is rare. On the brink of war, rivals' collective estimates of their chances of winning commonly sum to more than 100 per cent – indicating that states regularly miscalculate their expected cost of engagement.[29] According to one study, over the past half millennium states have lost 40 per cent of the wars they have initiated, while Great Powers that initiated conflicts with other Great Powers over the last two centuries lost 75 per cent of the time.[30] That is deleterious enough in itself, yet it is to say nothing of the unanticipated costs of success.[31]

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[27] Philip Tetlock and Charles B. McGuire, Jr., 'Cognitive Perspectives on Foreign Policy', in *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays* ed. G. John Ikenberry (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005).

[28] James Fearon, 'Rationalist Explanations for War', *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995).

[29] Dominic Johnson, *Overconfidence and War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 4.

[30] Kevin Wang and James Lee Ray, 'Beginners and Winners: The Fate of Initiators of Interstate Wars Involving Great Powers Since 1495', *International Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1994).

[31] Even for the victors, the two World Wars were the costliest in human history – resulting in around 11 and 50 million dead, respectively. And even if we consider the toppling of Saddam Hussein during the US-led invasion of Iraq a 'success',

Moreover, it is questionable whether individuals or states engage in instrumentally rational decision-making about war at all—that is, on the basis of an expected cost–benefit utility calculus to advance the national interest (or, as in most realist paradigms, national security). Bruce Bueno de Mesquita asserts that nations initiate war 'only if there is the expectation of a net increase in utility from war as compared to the utility derived from maintaining the status quo relationship with an adversary'.[32] However, as the historian and archaeologist Ian Morris observes:

> Few animals (including humans) calculate quite so coldly when a confrontation gets going; instead, we are taken over by hormones that have evolved precisely to help us make quick decisions. Chemicals flood our brains. We panic and run away, wag tails and approach, or see red – "the mad blood stirring," said Shakespeare – and lash out in anger.[33]

In an extensive survey of the causes of war over the past four centuries, Richard Ned Lebow found that 'throughout the twentieth century and into the current one, honour, resentment, vengeance and sheer malice were – and remain – powerful motives in international affairs'.[34] Another study by Scott Atran and Jeremy Ginges demonstrated that people making judgments about whether to support or oppose war relied on the logic of their moral or sacred values instead of the logic of instrumental rationality to inform their decisions. This made participants relatively insensitive to the material consequences and to the instrumental risks of group violence.[35]

In response to these criticisms, some rationalist scholars have asserted that impaired cost-benefit calculations (i.e. poor access to information and the misperceptions that arise as a result) provide compelling explanations for war. In other words, states are fundamentally rational, but their cost–benefit calculations can be impaired by a lack of reliable or sufficient data. For example, Stephen Van Evera notes that 'the structure of power per se is benign and causes rather few wars, but the

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current estimates place the financial cost of the war for the United States (to include future medical and disability benefits for veterans of that war) at an estimated US $2–6 trillion. See Joseph E. Stiglitz and Linda J. Bilmes, *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

[32] Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, 'The Costs of War: A Rational Expectations Approach', *The American Political Science Review* 77, no. 2 (1983): 348.

[33] Ian Morris, *War! What Is It Good For? Conflict and the Progress of Civilisation from Primates to Robots* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014). iBooks, 641.

[34] Richard Ned Lebow, *Why Nations Fight: Past and Future Motives for War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010). iBooks, 40.

[35] Jeremy Ginges and Scott Atran, 'War As A Moral Imperative (Not Just Practical Politics By Other Means)', *Proceedings: Biological Sciences* 278, no. 1720 (2011).

structure of power *as perceived* is often malignant and explains a good deal of war'.[36] However, James Fearon rightly points out there is nothing to prevent states from seeking the additional information required to avoid such costly miscalculations.[37] Fearon's alternative explanation is that private information must instead be the source of conflict (things that one state, but not both states, know about their own military capability and resolve that they have incentives not to share). After all, 'given identical information, truly rational agents should reason to the same conclusions about the probability of one uncertain outcome or another.'[38] Unfortunately this assumption is particularly problematic in the realm of international relations, where decision-makers 'will have more opportunities to disagree and less data on which to base their judgments, even if all data is shared'.[39] Moreover, rationalism does not supply a sufficient explanation for the many historical cases where conclusions about expected outcomes diverge despite the absence of private information.

Cognitive Misers

In contrast to the rationalists, political psychologists have assumed the task of identifying and explaining the mental phenomena that lead to systematic deviations from this rational baseline. Political psychologists generally agree that psychological explanations address those pervasive 'irrational' thought processes that result in mistaken judgments or other cognitive errors. Robert Jervis' characterisation of such deviations among political decision-makers in international relations is indicative of this general view: 'Like people in their everyday lives, statesmen tend to see a minimum of causal factors at work, minimize uncertainty, use simple benchmarks and analogies, and make comparisons that are manageable but inappropriate.'[42] Psycho-dynamic and evolutionary theorists supply a ready answer to the War Puzzle by relying on the assumption of humans' bounded rationality and the evolutionary mechanisms that perpetuate it. Psychologists such as Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky have asserted that 'man is not even a conservative Bayesian; rather, he is not a Bayesian at all'.[43] Humans' imperfect information-processing skills are the result of evolutionary biases that evolved and endured because they represent adaptive strategies from our ancestral past. As Dominic Johnson explains:

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[36] Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 6.

[37] Fearon, 'Rationalist Explanations for War', 381.

[38] Jonathan Kirshner, 'Rationalist Explanations for War?', *Security Studies* 10, no. 1 (2000): 147.

[39] Ibid. 149.

[42] Robert Jervis, 'The Drunkard's Search', in *Explorations in Political Psychology*, eds. Shanto Iyengar and William J. McGuire (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 358.

[43] Dominic Johnson et al., 'The Evolution of Error: Error Management, Cognitive Constraints, and Adaptive Decision-making Biases', *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 28, no. 8 (2013).

> Our judgment and decision-making are not immune from the influence of evolved, often subconscious, heuristics and biases… In short, we might expect a large degree of "mismatch" between evolved tendencies and the (evolutionarily novel) causes and consequences of those tendencies in modern contexts.[44]

In contraposition to the rationalists, psychological theorists struggle to explain what may be called the Peace Puzzle. A second axiom around which there is general agreement in the psycho-dynamic literature as it relates to international relations is that the existence of these different types of human bias often encourages, rather than discourages, conflict.[46] Political psychologists have spent decades documenting the association of specific cognitive biases – from overconfidence and positive illusions to threat inflation and premature cognitive closure – with the outbreak of war and a propensity for suspicion and hostility towards others. Robert Jervis observes: 'Decision-makers do and must employ short-cuts to rationality… But these short-cuts often produce important kinds of systematic errors, many of which increase conflict'.[47] History is replete with examples. For example, Barbara Tuchman has traced the over-confident march of human folly across the body-strewn battlefields of world history, from the ill-fated English incursions into France during the Hundred Year's War to Hitler's heedless invasion of the Soviet Union.[48] Alistair Horne has similarly reflected that the first half of the twentieth century could justifiably be called 'the century of hubris – during which humans were slaughtered in numbers to exceed those of any other century'.[49]

Moreover, the psychologist Roy Baumeister has found that 'bad is stronger than good, as a general principle across a broad range of psychological phenomena'.[50] Some psychologists and international relations scholars have labelled this the negativity bias, which is 'pervasive, pronounced and powerful', and which can explain why states often fear one another and fail to cooperate.[51] Daniel

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[44] Dominic Johnson et al., 'Dead Certain: Confidence and Conservatism Predict Aggression in Simulated International Crisis Decision-Making', *Human Nature* 23, no. 1 (2012): 99.

[46] Given the number of documented biases, the literature in this genre is too voluminous to recount here. However, a sampling of prominent publications that track the influence of cognitive biases in favour of conflict include: Johnson, *Overconfidence and War*; Jonathan Renshon, *Why Leaders Choose War: The Psychology of Prevention* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006); Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision, June 24–30, 1950* (New York: Free Press, 1968); Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Daniel Kahneman and Jonathan Renshon, 'Why Hawks Win', *Foreign Policy*, no. 158 (2007).

[47] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 113.

[48] Barbara W. Tuchman, *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984). iBooks.

[49] Alistair Horne, *Hubris: The Tragedy of War in the Twentieth Century* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2015), xxv.

[50] Roy F. Baumeister et al., 'Bad Is Stronger Than Good', *Review of General Psychology* 5, no. 4 (2001).

[51] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'Bad World: Negativity Bias and the Cycle of War', paper presented at the Annual International Studies Association Convention, Toronto, Canada (2013).

Kahneman and Jonathan Renshon have gone even further, asserting that where conflict escalation is a feasible option against an adversary, the collective set of common cognitive biases psychological research has identified will consistently skew the response in a hawkish direction.[52] 'Modern psychology', they write, 'suggests that policymakers come to the debate predisposed to believe their hawkish advisors more than the doves.'[53] In other words, 'bad things' [i.e. war] recur in international relations because leaders and their advisers are impaired by biases they cannot recognise and for which they cannot compensate.[54] The implicit assumption is that mitigation of these biases would lead to more rational decision-making and, presumably, to less conflict.

However, even if the aforementioned cognitive biases do predominate in the hard-wiring of the human brain due to evolutionary adaptation, the history of international relations tells us that bad cannot *always* be stronger than good: wars are, more often than not, avoided, crises are peaceably resolved and policymakers frequently step back from the abyss rather than, in the immortal words of David Lloyd George, slither 'over the brink into the boiling cauldron of war without any trace of apprehension or dismay'.[55] Jack Levy and William Thompson correctly observe that 'despite the frequent recurrence of war in human history, and the fact that somebody is at war with somebody somewhere most of the time, in fact peace is more common than war'.[56]

Research on the systematic biases that cognitive and social psychology have determined facilitate war also tends to significantly over-determine its outcome.[57] Evolutionary explanations for the perpetuation of war-inducing biases, for example, must contend with counter-arguments that point

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[52] cf. Daniel Kahneman's description of hawks and doves: 'On the one side are the hawks: They tend to favour coercive action, are more willing to use military force, and are more likely to doubt the value of offering concessions. When they look at adversaries overseas, they often see unremittingly hostile regimes who only understand the language of force. On the other side are the doves, sceptical about the usefulness of force and more inclined to contemplate political solutions. Where hawks see little in their adversaries but hostility, doves often point to subtle openings for dialogue.' Kahneman and Renshon, 'Why Hawks Win', 34.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Andrew H. Kydd, 'Methodological Individualism and Rational Choice', in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 436.

[55] Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War* (London: Profile Books, 2013), xxx. Before the British Prime Minister articulated what is now considered the classic post-mortem on the causes of the First World War, Europe had pulled itself back from the brink of war on at least four separate occasions, including the First Moroccan Crisis (1905–1906), the Bosnian Crisis (1908–1909), the Second Moroccan Crisis (1911) and during the Bosnian Wars (1912–1913).

[56] Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, 21.

[57] See Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: A History of Violence and Humanity* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2011); Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2000); Human Security Research Group, 'Human Security Report 2013: The Decline in Global Violence: Evidence, Explanation, and Contestation', in Human Security Report Project (Vancouver, Canada: Simon Fraser University, 2014); Joshua Goldstein, *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide* (New York: Plume, 2012).

to the simultaneous evolutionary tendencies working against aggression – such as altruism and restraint in competition. For example, the biologist Richard Dawkins helped popularise the notion of an evolutionarily stable strategy in which neither unremitting conflict nor unconditional cooperation is necessarily the biologically favoured (i.e. most stable) long-term approach.[58] In the preface to the 30th anniversary edition of *The Selfish Gene*, Dawkins laboured to correct longstanding misapprehensions of the word 'selfish' in the title by noting that, 'if anything … [the book] devotes more attention to altruism'.[59] Robert Axelrod applied this biological finding to game theory to explain the evolution of cooperation in international relations: the winning strategy of a computer tournament for the Prisoner's Dilemma that involved multiple iterations over time was called Tit for Tat – in which cooperation based on reciprocity not only evolved but thrived.[60]

It can be seen, then, that traditional 'cognitive miser' explanations therefore offer many intuitively appealing and evolutionarily compelling reasons why decision-makers systematically deviate from rational actor theory. However, they possess very little in the way of predictive power outside of their operating assumptions, other than to suggest that these conflict-inducing biases were not in operation when more pacific conditions prevailed. In this way, cognitive biases in much of the psychological literature act rather like simple on/off switches, precluding the possibility that decisions in favour of cooperation or restraint may implicate certain psychological phenomena of their own. For this reason, 'attempts at explaining the variability of interstate warfare by means of a reputed constant – our aggressive nature – are logically doomed to failure'.[61] As a result, both the rational actor and traditional psychological models as applied to international relations theory confront opposing ends of the same basic puzzle, which is the variation in foreign policy decisions of states concerning war and peace.

Application of the Dual Mindset Theory to International Relations

As applied to international relations, the dual mindset theory aims to help fill this gap in our psychological understanding of the variation in foreign policy decisions concerning war and peace. However, it is *not* suggested that dual mindsets are the only important variable as concerns the

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[58] Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 30th Anniversary ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). iBooks.

[59] Ibid. 13.

[60] Robert Axelrod and William D. Hamilton, 'The Evolution of Cooperation', *Science* 211, no. 4489 (1981).

[61] Greg Cashman, *What Causes War? An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 48. Incidentally, this is the main reason why Kenneth Waltz rejected human nature as a cause of war in his discussion of 'first image' or individual-level explanations. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*.

variation in war and peace outcomes in international or international crisis management writ large.[62] Nor does this author presume that the dual mindset theory has causal relevance to every foreign policy decision for or against war, or to every international crisis that may precipitate such decision-making. Moreover, several of the individual component psychological traits and cognitive biases identified within the dual mindset framework are already well known and have been incorporated into other international relations theories that rely on psychological approaches.

Rather, the contribution provided by the dual mindset theory presented here is that it represents a meta-study, which aims to draw the literature on different psychological traits and biases together into a coherent whole, and show that actors' decision-making behaviour stems from two fundamentally different mental systems embedded within the fabric of the human brain. In this way, the dual mindset theory integrates many of the findings of the nascent 'neurobiological revolution', supplying both an individual-level explanation for the observed variation in war and peace decisions among states and a well-developed theory for the adaptive value of such mindsets.[63] The dual mindset theory thus advances a more nuanced image of the individual decision-maker than either that permitted by the rational actor or the cognitive miser tradition. Above all, it suggests that an appreciation of the dual mental systems embedded within the human brain can enhance our understanding of why leaders choose to risk war, or negotiate for peace, at the specific times that they did.

To test the dual mindset theory's value in this regard, this thesis applies it to the puzzle associated with the timing of the outbreak of the First World War in the summer of 1914: the so-called timing paradox of 1914. As Levy and Vasquez note: 'A good explanation for the First World War should explain not only why war occurred in 1914, but why it did not occur before. Such explanations need to be tested historically through comparative case studies'.[64] Despite the staggering multiplicity of factors that have been put forward by political scientists and historians to explain the events of 1914, many such explanations often fall short of explaining why the war did not, conversely, break out in response to previous European crises – in particular, those that occurred during the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, with the most fraught being the Balkan Winter Crisis of 1912–1913. Not only did the structural conditions and the sequence of diplomatic and military measures across the two opposing alliance blocs during this period most closely prefigure those that prevailed in 1914, but

[62] Conway III, Suedfeld and Tetlock, 'Integrative Complexity and Political Decisions that Lead to War or Peace', 10–11.

[63] James Stavridis, 'The Dawning of the Age of Biology', *Financial Times*, 19 January 2014.

[64] Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez, *The Outbreak of the First World War: Structure, Politics, and Decision-Making* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 8.

many political contemporaries also believed the general European situation to be more dangerous in 1912–1913 than in 1914.[65] The transition from a predominantly reflective to a predominantly reflexive mindset on the part of Europe's principal decision-makers, it will be argued, can help to explain this puzzling variation in war and peace outcomes in such a relatively short span of time.

As such, this empirical application of the dual mindset theory does not aim to present original historical research on the First World War. Nor does it necessarily dispute the numerous 'permissive' or contributing factors for the First World War already identified in abundance by other scholars, or attempt to wade into the perennial debate about which category of factors – structural or contingent – deserves the greatest causal weight by formally testing existing explanations against one another. Rather, the main objective is to offer a novel theoretical re-interpretation of its outbreak using the vast array of existing primary and secondary sources that are already widely available, and to develop a set of causal arguments about the impact of different mindsets on war and peace decisions during the Balkan crises of 1912–1913 and the July Crisis of 1914. As such, this thesis is not incompatible with, and indeed can shed light on the rationale for, other popular psychological theories for the outbreak of the First World War, such as the logic of preventive war and the cult of the offensive.[66]

Finally, contemporary historians have already remarked that dual systems theory (from which our dual mindsets are believed to originate) represents a promising topic for future researchers studying the First World War. Samuel Williamson, Jr., for example, has singled out the need for more work on the role played by intuitive thinking in the decisions of 1914:

> Was this a case of "fast thinking" by the decision-makers, in the words of Daniel Kahneman, when slower thinking, a more careful analysis, might have brought a different result? Or put still another way, did the experiences of the key leaders, all of whom had lived through war-peace crises in the last forty-eight months, shape their psychological responses to this crisis? ... Or to use another Kahneman argument, was this an instance when the strong, strident voices put the more cautious voices, the

[65] David Stevenson argues that, from a mobilisation perspective, 'the most highly militarised of all the pre-war crises resulted from the first Balkan war in the winter of 1912–1913'. David Stevenson, 'Militarization and Diplomacy in Europe before 1914', *International Security* 22, no. 1 (1997): 140.

[66] Jack Snyder and Keir A. Lieber, 'Defensive Realism and the "New" History of World War I', ibid. 33 (2008); Jack S. Levy, 'Preventive War and Democratic Politics', *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2008); Stephen Van Evera, 'The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War', in *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War*, eds. Steven E. Miller, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Stephen Van Evera (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Stephen Van Evera, 'Offense, Defense, and the Causes of War', *International Security* 22, no. 4 (1998).

> more prudent ones, on the defensive? … Decision analysis and the work of political scientists offers ... useful approaches that far too few historians have utilized.[67]

Several other historians have concurred that 'the key considerations in July and August 1914 were the outlooks or mindsets (*mentalités*) present among the decision-making coteries in each of the five nations'.[68] Explaining why those mindsets shifted in the span of mere months is, however, just as important to our understanding of events, and it is on this point that the dual mindset theory aims to make a particular contribution.

Testing the Dual Mindset Theory: Methodology and Case Selection

This study is designed as a plausibility probe into the impact of dual mindsets on decision-making in international relations and is comparable to a pilot study in experimental or survey research.[69] The purpose of any plausibility probe is to link hypothesis generation with hypothesis testing – the twin pillars of the empirical research tradition – to determine if the hypotheses presented warrant additional scholarly attention and more rigorous empirical testing.[70] Although scholars have occasionally used the concept quite loosely, and often as a legitimising device, Jack Levy observes that, 'if applied in a methodologically self-conscious way, plausibility probes can serve an important function in theory development'.[71] Such a plausibility probe will be an early test of the predictions of the dual mindset theory, and of its reliance upon recent scientific advancements, primarily in the fields of behavioural psychology and neurobiology, to illuminate the causal-process mechanisms that led European leaders to make very different decisions in 1912–1913 compared to 1914.

As such, it is not a test of an already well-established theory for the outbreak of the First World War, nor is the principal objective to systematically test the dual mindset framework against multiple competing explanations for the First World War (although a comparison with the predictions of the null hypothesis of rational choice theory will be included in the examination of each empirical case study). Instead, the main aim of this research is to determine the initial plausibility of the dual mindset theory in helping to explain decision-making behaviour in international relations – that is,

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[67] Samuel R. Williamson Jr., 'July 1914 Revisited and Revised: The Erosion of the German Paradigm', in *The Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 60–61.

[68] Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig, *Decisions for War, 1914–1917* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 231.

[69] Jack Levy, 'Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference', *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 25, no. 1 (2008).

[70] Christopher Lamont, *Research Methods in International Relations* (London: Sage, 2015), 128.

[71] Levy, 'Case Studies:' 7.

whether or not individual mindsets can plausibly function as an intervening variable affecting war or peace outcomes of international crises – through the investigation of a small set of individual cases as a first step in the initial theory-testing and theory-building process. This kind of plausibility 'probe' admittedly limits the strength of any causal claims that can be made; even compelling evidence linking mindsets to outcomes in international relations in the cases selected proves only that more rigorous testing of additional cases is warranted. Nevertheless, the objective of this particular research design goes beyond the simple identification of correlations between independent, intervening and dependent variables to examine the proposed causal mechanisms linking these variables together.[72]

This study relies on the tenets of rational choice theory to serve as the null hypothesis for the purposes of theory falsification. The null hypothesis of rational choice theory assumes there is no connection between the mindsets of decision-makers and decision-making outcomes in international relations. Individuals, acting alone or in groups, are assumed to make decisions in an unbiased, 'rational' manner (meaning that they act only in accordance with incoming information regarding the costs and benefits prevailing in their environment and re-calibrate the statistical probabilities and utilities of all possible alternative options in order to maximise their utility) that is uniform across actors. Rational models should either be consistent with no variation in assessments across actors (because decision-makers are perfect Bayesians or 'belief updaters') or random variation (because access to information is not uniform across actors), but not with the same patterns of variation predicted by the reflexive and reflective mindset framework.

Methodology

Henry Brady and David Collier usefully distinguish between dataset observations, which are 'an array of scores on specific variables for a designated sample of cases', and causal-process observations, which are 'observations on context, process, or mechanism' and typically used in within-case analyses or in some combination of cross-case and within-case analyses.[82] As this study is most concerned with the latter category, it makes full use of the principal causal-process approaches available to international relations scholars, i.e. controlled-case comparison, congruence testing and process tracing. Controlled-case comparisons facilitate analysis of two or more instances

[72] Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen, *Causal Case Study Methods: Foundations and Guidelines for Comparing, Matching and Tracing* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016).

[82] Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 12.

of a well-specified phenomenon to establish the causal powers of a specific variable by comparing how it performs in different cases. It is a particularly useful tool for strengthening causal inference.[83]

The fact that the most-similar case comparison chosen for this study – a comparison of the Balkan crisis of 1912–1913 and the July Crisis of 1914 – possesses different values on the outcome, or dependent variable, avoids the common methodological pitfall of selecting cases based on the dependent variable (for example, studying the causes of war by only focusing on cases that end in conflict). Jack Levy and William Thompson concur that variation in the dependent variable is particularly important for scholars studying the causes of war and peace decisions:

> The fact that many important wars are preceded by lengthy periods of peace … raises a methodological issue about how we should study war. For those who analyse individual historical cases or who compare several historical cases, it is important to examine the wars that do not occur as well as those that do occur. For one thing, as Sherlock Holmes suggested, the dogs that don't bark may reveal as much information as those that do. In addition, looking at cases with different values on the key variables is critical for any comparative methodology.[84]

True controlled-case comparison requires at least two phenomena that resemble each other in every respect but one. As discussed in the following section on case selection, the cases selected for a controlled comparison, occurring only months apart, come as close as possible to replicating a most-similar case comparison in the unruly laboratory of international politics.[85] Moreover, Alexander George and Andrew Bennett suggest that 'the results of individual case studies, each of which employs within-case analysis, can be compared by drawing them together within a common theoretical framework without having to find two or more cases that are similar in every respect but one'.[86]

Nonetheless, because it is widely accepted that perfectly controlled comparisons are impossible to achieve in the study of international relations, the congruence and process-tracing methods will be used to supplement the weaknesses of this approach. Both methods focus on the causal path in a single case but may be used in conjunction with controlled-case comparisons to facilitate theory

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[83] Lamont, *Research Methods in International Relations*, 131.

[84] Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, 22.

[85] This type of case comparison is also known as the 'method of difference', which compares cases with similar general characteristics but different variable values to look for correlations between mindsets and decision outcomes. Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, ed. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, BCSIA Studies in International Security (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 50.

[86] Ibid. 179.

development and to compensate for the inherent limitations of the comparative-case approach. Collectively, such approaches represent the best methodological fit for assessing the causal mechanisms (to include antecedent, intervening and prime hypothesised causal mechanisms) according to which this study proposes dual mindsets influence decision-making outcomes in international relations. The congruence method will be used to ascertain whether the independent variable (type of mindset) co-varies with the dependent variable (probability of war). This study will make full use of both types of congruence analysis: Type I and Type II.

The 'Type I' method of congruence compares the study variables to a base rate and will be used to compare the predictions of the null hypothesis of rational actor theory (in which no relationship exists between mindsets and decisions favouring war or peace) and the dual mindset theory across groups. The 'Type II' congruence analysis tests whether the independent and dependent variables co-vary across different circumstances within the same case – that is, multiple within-case comparisons. The greater the amplitude of the dependent variable's co-variance with the independent variable(s), the greater the proposed theory's importance in the explanation of events. The number of different observations that are possible in both cases, involving multiple actors across multiple countries and even across multiple regime types (from republics to absolutist monarchies), make this study particularly conducive to this type of analysis.[87]

Process tracing will additionally be used to supplement the congruence method by examining the intermediate steps in the mental processes by which actors in the case studies arrived at decisions, without disregarding the confluence of contextual factors that affect each step of this process.[88] Although the term has occasionally become conflated with glorified historiography, process tracing has a long and distinguished scholarly history in the field of political science. As Alexander George has explained, 'process tracing seeks to establish ways in which the actor's beliefs influenced his receptivity to and assessment of incoming information about the situation, his definition of the situation, his identification and evaluation of options, as well as, finally, his choice of a course of action.'[89] Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel have updated George's definition of process tracing by encapsulating it as 'a key technique for capturing causal mechanisms in action'.[90] According to

[87] Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 61–62.

[88] Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds., *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, *Strategies for Social Inquiry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 5.

[89] Alexander L. George, 'The Causal Nexus Between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behavior: The "Operational Code" Belief System', in *Psychological Models in International Politics*, ed. Lawrence Falkowski (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979), 113.

[90] Bennett and Checkel, eds., *Process Tracing*, 9.

the dual mindset theory, how one processes information should have an impact on a number of intervening variables – namely, threat sensitivity, risk propensity and temporal discounting – before a decision concerning war or peace is reached.

Finally, extra care will be taken to differentiate dual mindset explanations from the null hypothesis of rational choice theory. One useful test suggested by Chaim Kaufmann provides a straightforward method of testing the dual mindset theory against the null hypothesis: predicting patterns within groups in a 'controlled' information environment (i.e. one where information is more or less equally shared among the key decision-makers). Kaufmann's methodology is to focus on groups of elite decision-makers who have identical or very similar access to the same information. Controlled environments are important because if some decision-makers have access to more or better information than others prior to a decision being made, then rationalists could claim that any differences that arose in the decision-making process were the logical result of variations in Bayesian updating and not of mindset.[91]

However, if the political actors involved face the same decision at the same time, and if each possesses either all, or nearly all, of the relevant information available to anyone involved in the decision, then a rational choice approach predicts that they should adopt the same beliefs or future estimates. Moreover, in such a controlled environment, any changes in response to new information should occur in unison across all members of the decision-making group.[92] If decision-makers adopt different beliefs or future estimates in response to the same information, this casts doubt on the rational choice paradigm as a sufficient explanation for decision-making and suggests that psychological explanations may instead be foregrounded.[93] This type of test provides an additional means of cross-checking the general hypotheses presented against the base rate of rational choice theory.[94] In addition, this study has made every attempt to examine policy options that were actually considered as opposed to the universe of potentially available options, to examine decisions made and not just what decision-makers said they thought or expected they would do, and to avoid hindsight bias in only highlighting examples of either 'effective' or 'defective' decisions.

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[91] See Chaim Kaufmann, 'Out of the Lab and Into the Archives: A Method for Testing Psychological Explanations of Political Decision Making', *International Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1994).

[92] Ibid. 561.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid.

Case Selection

As this is a study of the impact of psychological mindsets on decisions for and against war, international crises provide particularly useful case studies via which to examine the effect of such individual-level variables on foreign policy decision-making. Janice Gross Stein identifies the parameters within which an exploration of psychological mechanisms can be considered most useful:

> When representations of problems are contested, when these problems are not routine, the stakes are high to the choosers, and when the environment offers sufficient degrees of freedom to permit a range of choice. Under these conditions, institutional routines are often not considered adequate and the role of leaders, acting alone or collectively, is critical.[95]

Very often, such conditions are elicited by the onset of crisis.[96] For example, Alexander George has observed that during crises the size of the key decision-making group around leaders tends to shrink. As the group shrinks, the leverage of those players remaining within the group correspondingly increases, such that the advice proffered by a close circle of advisers becomes increasingly influential on the outcome of any decision.[97] The impact of individuals therefore typically increases as a dispute or crisis moves closer to some sort of resolution – i.e. final decisions for or against war.[98]

Moreover, international crises are frequently international politics 'in microcosm', with a heuristic value that lies in forcing out into the open 'a host of factors and processes that shape international relations'.[99] Part of the reason for this is that crises tend to concentrate the minds of decision-makers on alternative courses of action – contestations that can prove revealing of the individual and collective mentalities involved. According to Dominic Johnson, 'crises provide particularly good tests because they are situations in which war could easily break out – so that avoidance of war in a crisis is more telling than avoidance of war in calmer times'.[100] Ned Lebow concurs that 'crises are the most salient points of conflict between states short of war. They are likely to bring such conflicts

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[95] Janice Gross Stein, 'Psychological Explanations of International Conflict', in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 292.

[96] Charles Hermann has suggested three elements that define a crisis: a threat to central national values, time pressure and surprise. Charles F. Hermann, *International Crises: Insights from Behavioral Research* (New York: Free Press, 1972).

[97] Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1980), 120.

[98] Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, 211.

[99] Hermann, *International Crises*, 127; T. G. Otte, 'Entente Diplomacy v. Détente, 1911–1914', in *The Wars Before the Great War: Conflict and International Politics Before the Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan, and Andreas Rose (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 264.

[100] Johnson, *Overconfidence and War*, 49–50.

into sharper focus by providing policy-makers with insights into the state of mind and objectives of both adversaries and allies'.[101]

In an environment where national values are perceived to be at stake and where war is considered a realistic prospect to safeguard them, the reactions of decision-makers will almost certainly be deemed historically important.[102] This is because crises most often imply no pre-determined or path-dependent outcome; they are the hinges of history – moments when individuals are presumed to have mattered in some way and when psychological explanations are expected to be at their most potent. We know this from the voluminous counterfactual literature that surrounds such decisions (e.g. If President Kennedy had lived, would America have militarily intervened in Vietnam? If Lord Halifax, Chamberlain's preferred successor, had become Prime Minister in 1940, would Britain have fought on?).[103]

The succession of pre-war Balkan crises that occurred in response to the outbreak of the two Balkan Wars – with a specific focus on the Balkan Winter Crisis of 1912–1913 – and the July Crisis of 1914, which culminated in the First World War, have been selected as the case comparison for this study. 'The events of 1914', writes David Stevenson, 'remain a crucial test for any theory of the origins of modern wars'.[104] This is partly due to the enormous historical significance of the First World War, the outbreak of which formed, in the words of Fritz Fischer, 'the deepest caesura' in the historical consciousness of the Western world.[105] It is also because most contemporary international relations theories of war and peace have emerged from its seemingly inexhaustible inheritance. 'No international relations scholar,' writes Francis Gavin, 'can avoid wrestling with the causes of what was once called the Great War'.[106] Among what Harry Eckstein has labelled 'crucial' case studies – in the parlance of political science methodology, a crucial case is one that must closely fit a theory if it is to have any validity, and is therefore viewed as essential to theory building – the First World

[101] Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 5.

[102] Richard Ned Lebow has suggested that crises by definition imply a significant prospect of war. Ibid. 11.

[103] Robert Cowley, ed., *What If?: Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been* (London: Pan Books, 2001); Richard Ned Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit: Counterfactuals and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Richard J. Evans, *Altered Pasts: Counterfactuals in History* (London: Little, Brown, 2014). iBooks.

[104] Stevenson, 'Militarization and Diplomacy in Europe before 1914', 125.

[105] Paul M. Kennedy, ed., *The War Plans of the Great Powers, 1880–1914* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1979), ix.

[106] Francis J. Gavin, 'History, Security Studies, and the July Crisis', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014): 319.

War is considered *primus inter pares*.[107] As Ned Lebow avers:

> Not all cases are created equal. Some have greater visibility and impact because of their real world or theoretical consequences. World War I is *nonpareil* in both respects. Many historians contend that it was the crucible in which the twentieth century was formed. Its origins and consequences are also the basis for many of our major theories in domains as diverse as political psychology, war and peace, democratisation and state structure.[108]

Any theory that is found to play an influential role in a crucial case such as the outbreak of the First World War would constitute strong evidence against the view that the theory matters little, if at all, to the conduct of international relations. This is one reason that the outbreak of the First World War has remained so attractive as a case study to scholars. Another reason is that it is among the most extensively researched case studies in modern history – involving multiple observations across at least six different states – and therefore the most likely to yield the richest veins of reliable, accessible empirical data for scholarly sifting. And at the remove of a century, there is perhaps no better time to be studying the outbreak of the First World War, when there is arguably far less political baggage associated with its investigation.[109] Moreover, the centenary has sparked interest in some new primary documents and, above all, fresh historiographical rethinking of the war's origins. With the focus being shifted away from responsibility for the war to the mechanisms by which the catastrophe unfolded, historiography is accordingly drawing closer to questions of primary interest to international relations scholars.[110]

Nevertheless, compared with the intensive academic focus on the outbreak of the war, the peaceful resolution of Europe's pre-war crises has received comparatively short scholarly shrift. Few historians and political scientists have directly addressed the question of why the war broke out in 1914 and not in response to previous crises, preferring instead to focus their efforts on understanding the war that happened rather than on the countless wars that did not happen. Nevertheless, to reiterate the inimitable words of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, the

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[107] Harry Eckstein, 'Case Study and Theory in Political Science', in *Strategies of Inquiry: Handbook of Political Science*, eds. Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (London: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 119; John Gerring, 'Is There a (Viable) Crucial-Case Method?', *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 3 (2007).

[108] Richard Ned Lebow, 'Contingency, Catalysts and Nonlinear Change: The Origins of World War One', in *Explaining War and Peace: Case Studies and Necessary Condition Counterfactuals*, eds. Gary Goertz and Jack S. Levy (New York: Routledge, 2007), 88.

[109] Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus* (London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2002), 208–209.

[110] Ned Lebow makes this point in Richard Ned Lebow, 'What Can International Relations Theory Learn from the Origins of World War I?', *International Relations* 28, no. 4 (2014): 388.

historical 'dogs that don't bark' can tell us just as much, if not more than, those that do. This insight appears particularly relevant to the historical episodes under investigation for, as historian William Mulligan, observes: 'The history of international relations in this period is not simply an account of the origins of the war, but also of the maintenance of peace. It is a history of achievements, as well as of ultimate failure. Both require explanation and the explanation of one enhances our understanding of the other.'[111] Despite the staggering range of both long-term causes and short-term catalysts that have been adduced to explain the outbreak of the war, few theories provide a satisfying response to the question of 'why 1914 and not previous years?' Arthur Stein elaborates that:

> On the one hand are the many studies of war, in general, and World War I, in particular, that examine nations' specific decisions to go to war. In the case of World War I, such studies lead to a focus on July 1914, because two earlier Balkan wars and a long series of quarrels between Austria and Serbia had not resulted in war. The argument becomes one that claims, whether implicitly or explicitly, that because only the specific features of 1914 resulted in belligerencies, only they deserve attention. Such an approach is inadequate, however, because it decontextualizes a sequence of interactions. On the other hand are structural approaches to the origins of war that focus on long-range dynamics such as the distribution of power and technological change. These are indeed important, but they need to be complemented by an analysis of the repeated crises that lead to war. Further, both approaches need to address why war was avoided in earlier crises, but was not in the one that eventually resulted in war. They need to be able to say what changed.[112]

The crises precipitated by the Balkan Wars were certainly not the only ones to precede the First World War. The legacies of the two Moroccan crises in 1905 and 1911 and Austria-Hungary's controversial annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908–1909 would find their echoes in 1914. Any of these could, in theory, have been chosen instead of the crises associated with the Balkan Wars for the purposes of this case comparison. Nevertheless, the crises precipitated by the two Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913 merit special examination because of their close geographical, structural and temporal proximity to the conditions surrounding the actual outbreak of war (see Table 0.2). They were among the last of the major pre-war crises peacefully resolved by the Concert of Europe in a region that was widely regarded as the most likely crucible for a general conflict. It was in the Balkans

[111] William Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War*, eds. William Beik, T. C. W. Blanning, and Brendan Simms, New Approaches to European History (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 227–228.

[112] Arthur A. Stein, 'Respites or Resolutions? Recurring Crises and the Origins of War', in *The Next Great War? The Roots of World War I and the Risk of U.S.–China Conflict*, eds. Richard N. Rosencrance and Stephen E. Miller (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015), 20–21.

that the greatest dangers to the European peace were anticipated by the Great Powers to arise and two wars among its nations – one in 1912 and one in 1913 – nearly pulled them in.[113]

Table 0.2 Selection Criteria of European Crises in Comparative Case Study, 1905–1914

	Relevant Characteristics of Europe's Pre-War Crises				
	Alliance Structure[114]	**Principal Belligerents**	**Balkans Inception**	**Major Mobilisation Measures**	**Mediation Accepted/Rejected**
First Moroccan Crisis (1905)	Triple Alliance/Entente Cordiale/Franco-Russian Alliance	Germany, France	No	No	Accepted: Algeciras Conference
Bosnian Annexation Crisis (1908-1909)	Triple Alliance/Triple Entente	Austria, Russia	Yes	Yes (Austria only)	Accepted: German pressure on Russia forces de-escalation
Second Moroccan Crisis (1911)	Triple Alliance/Triple Entente	Germany, France	No	No	Accepted: Treaty of Fez between France and Germany
Balkan War Crises (1912–1913)	Triple Alliance/Triple Entente	Austria, Russia	Yes	Yes (Austria, Russia)	Accepted: London Conference - though conference mediation increasingly rejected by Austria after Balkan Winter Crisis
Liman von Sanders Crisis (1913)	Triple Alliance/Triple Entente	Germany, Russia	No	No	Accepted: Trilateral British mediation with Russia and Germany
July Crisis (1914)	Triple Alliance/Triple Entente	Austria, Russia, Germany, France	Yes	Yes (Austria, Russia, Germany, France, Britain)	Rejected: War

[113] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 467.

[114] The Austro-German alliance dated from 1879 and the Franco-Russian from 1891 to 1894. Britain had no contractual (i.e. mutual defence) obligation to either France or Russia, but cooperated with them diplomatically (and, to some extent, militarily) after reaching separate 'ententes' with France in 1904 and Russia in 1907 (the latter leading to the so-called Triple Entente). Italy had concluded the Triple Alliance treaty with both Austria-Hungary and Germany in 1882, but as it rarely aligned itself with them in the crises of 1905 to 1914, this author hereafter refers to the Central Powers of Austria-

However, this should not be taken to mean that either case study presents an easy test case for the dual mindset framework. In political science research, it is generally accepted that 'the most powerful way to test a theory is to determine if the propositions derived from it hold in circumstances in which they are highly unlikely to do so'.[115] As one of the most intensively studied conflicts in modern history, we know that the outbreak of the First World War already presents an extremely difficult test case due to the vast range of existing explanations. Furnishing a novel perspective when so many other plausible theories have already been put forward thus demands a much higher burden of proof. By contrast, the Balkan crises have not been the object of much scholarly attention, although this does not mean that they present an easy test case either. In fact, each of these cases could be considered 'least likely' or 'most difficult' test cases because they should, in theory, be easily falsifiable using the null hypothesis of rational choice theory. This is because there is little outward reason to believe that psychological variables, such as dual mindsets, should have played an important role at all in the decision-making during either the Balkan crises of 1912 and 1913 or the July Crisis of 1914.

In fact, the scholarly consensus is that the conditions in which European leaders were making decisions in the years leading up to the war were entirely conducive to a rational actor explanation – that is, actors had plenty of time for deliberation to assess the capabilities and intentions of their potential foes, intelligence gathering was deemed reasonable enough on all sides to make fairly realistic assessments, important information was reasonably controlled (meaning that it was more or less evenly shared amongst the principal decision-makers in each country), and going to war was never the only option available, nor the only one to be considered.[116]

For example, there is sufficient historical evidence to claim that the principal powers understood the basic risks involved in precipitating a general war. In fact, multiple previous crises had given the Great Powers ample time and opportunity to think through the numerous possibilities of how a continental war might unfold and what precisely would happen if it did. 'Every preparation by forethought was made and every detail was worked out on paper', recalled Winston Churchill of his days at the helm of the British Admiralty in the years before the war.[117] 'The railway time-tables, or graphics as they were called, of the movement of every battalion – even where they were to drink their coffee – were prepared and settled.'[118] According to historian David Fromkin:

Hungary and Germany rather than the Triple Alliance. See Stevenson, 'Militarization and Diplomacy in Europe before 1914', 125.

[115] Eckstein, 'Case Study and Theory in Political Science', 118–120.

[116] Johnson, *Overconfidence and War*, 58–59.

[117] Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911–1918* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 41.

[118] Ibid.

> An innovation dating from the nineteenth century was that the armed forces of the respective countries now routinely prepared contingency plans for making war on their rivals should hostilities break out. These, of course, were secret, although governments usually had at least an idea of what each other's overall strategy would be. There was no great mystery as to who potential enemies were likely to be.[119]

If, therefore, we assume the null hypothesis that actors in both periods made decisions based on the calculus of rational choice theory, then the arguments presented in this study actually face a double test: to demonstrate not only that psychological variables contributed to the cause of the war, but also to the maintenance of the peace. If, for example, the external constraints on decision-making had been so high, the time available for decision-making so short, or decision-makers' access to information so impaired that it would have militated a single, unambiguous course of action, then any one of these conditions would obviate the need for an investigation of individual-level variables (see Table 0.3 for a refutation of these conditions).

Table 0.3 The Balkan Crises of 1912–1913 and July Crisis of 1914 as 'Least Likely' Test Cases

	Balkan Crises 1912–1913		**July Crisis of 1914**	
	Central Powers	**Triple Entente**	**Central Powers**	**Triple Entente**
Assessment Opportunity	Long (though a perceived window of opportunity	Long	Long (though a perceived window of opportunity	Long
Alternative Options	Yes (some perceived constraints)	Yes (some perceived constraints)	Yes (some perceived constraints)	Yes (some perceived constraints)
Information Availability	Reasonable	Excellent	Reasonable	Reasonable
'Controlled' Decision-making Environment	Yes (within certain limits)	Yes (within certain limits)	Yes (within certain limits)	Yes (within certain limits)

Nevertheless, despite the high barriers to entry for any new theory, the fact that the causes of the outbreak of war in 1914 remain deeply contested implies there is still room for additional

[119] David Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer: Why the World Went to War in 1914* (London: Vintage, 2005), 30.

interpretations to reinvigorate traditional explanations and potentially tie a diverse range of heretofore separate factors together. Moreover, historians are generally in agreement that the peaceful resolution of each pre-war crisis was not foreordained, and that structural conditions were not prohibitive constraints on decision-makers' freedom to choose war or peace. According to Annika Mombauer, 'every major pre-war crisis threatened to escalate into armed conflict'.[128]

During the Winter Crisis of 1912–1913, when Russia and Austria-Hungary mobilised troops along their respective borders, Dominic Lieven observes that 'the peace of Europe seemed to hang by a thread'.[129] As will be discussed in Chapter 4, had all of the Russian mobilisation measures envisioned by Russian Minister of War Vladimir Sukhomlinov been carried out by Tsar Nicholas II during the crisis, 'a pan-European escalation would have been certain, given that Paris was at this time urging the Russians to step up their measures against Austria and had promised its support in the event of a military conflict involving Germany'.[130] Historian Leonard Turner agrees that 'the remorseless process of mobilisation and counter-mobilisation might well have followed the same fatal course as in 1914'.[131] Similarly, had Austrian Foreign Minister Leopold von Berchtold listened to Vienna's foreign policy hawks, such as the Chief of the Austrian General Staff, Conrad von Hötzendorf, and convinced Emperor Franz Joseph to pursue an expansionary, rather than a compensatory, policy vis-à-vis the Balkan states after their initial attack on the Ottoman Empire, Russia may well have been forced to risk a general conflagration rather than leave the country's Balkan allies, particularly Serbia, to their fate.[132]

As this plausibility probe aims to show, there is compelling initial evidence indicating that mindsets may have played an important role in both sets of cases. If so, this theory would potentially help to shed light on certain longstanding historical puzzles associated with the outbreak of the war – such as the paradoxical combination of a cult of the offensive and a defensive sense of weakness that seemed to drive many of the major powers to war in 1914 (but not, necessarily, in previous years) and the seemingly outsized risks many countries took to prevent future territorial losses as opposed to those related to the pursuit of territorial gains.

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[128] Annika Mombauer, *Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 106.

[129] Dominic Lieven, *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), 261.

[130] Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 268.

[131] L. C. F. Turner, 'The Russian Mobilisation in 1914', in *The War Plans of the Great Powers, 1880–1914*, ed. Paul M. Kennedy, Routledge Library Editions: The First World War (New York: Routledge, 2014), 255.

[132] David Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War: Europe, 1904–1914* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 233–234.

Implications for International Relations Theory

Recognition of the influence and origin of our dual mindsets, and their predicted systematic effects on foreign policy decision-making, has several important implications for the development of international relations theory. The first is that it advances the debate about rationality in international politics and, more specifically, whether individual decision-makers are 'rational actors' as described by rational choice theory. By the same token, it reveals the limitations of the 'cognitive miser' model of the individual decision-maker promoted by traditional psychological approaches to the discipline, which have been principally consumed with identifying and explaining deviations from the baseline of rationality established by rational choice theory. Such approaches, while useful correctives to the assumptions of rational choice theory, supply overly simplistic models of reality: individuals do not possess on/off rationality switches, in the sense that they do not deviate from the dictates of rational choice theory only to revert to this idealised form of rationality when, for any number of reasons, their most common deviations (i.e. biases explained by psychological approaches) are not in operation.

The dual mindset theory offers an alternative, entirely independent possibility, which that decision-makers are neither the supremely rational cognitive optimisers of rational choice theory nor the supremely irrational cognitive misers of earlier psychological models. Individuals are, in the words of the polymath Herbert Simon, permanently 'bounded' in their rationality but dual mindset theory suggests they can vary with respect to the form that their bounded rationality might take. The opposing mental systems – and mindsets – of the human brain make individuals more or less susceptible to some of the most common biases identified by cognitive and social psychology. However, even when individuals are less susceptible to these biases, dual mindset theory suggests that they do not operate exactly, or even approximately, as rational choice theory would expect. If our reflexive, subconscious mind is responsible for some of the most commonly documented heuristics and biases, then the principal task of our reflective, conscious mind is to temper, modulate or to otherwise override the associations, intuitions and other mental phenomena produced by the former – not to get rid of them altogether, as implied by the rational actor model.[135]

Accordingly, the dual mindset theory casts serious doubt on whether the rationality depicted by rational choice theory should remain the ideal baseline for decision-making in international relations theory, against which all deviations (i.e. errors in judgment) should be measured. In fact,

[135] Shankar Vedantam, *The Hidden Brain: How Our Unconscious Minds Elect Presidents, Control Markets, Wage Wars, and Save Our Lives* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2010), 82.

the weight of psychological evidence suggests that people often routinely make good decisions even though their brains 'are not loaded with statistical software'.[136] Furthermore, it is not at all clear that the conditions of unbounded rationality can *ever* be met in the realm of international relations, which require knowledge of all the relevant alternatives, including their consequences and statistical probabilities, in a predictable world without surprises. And if the conditions of unbounded rationality can never be met by decision-makers, or if, as in many real-world situations, optimal situations are simply unknown or unknowable, then this calls into question the fundamental value of continuing to adhere to this benchmark as the standard in decision-making.[137] This is reinforced by the dual mindset theory's assertion that one mindset is not necessarily superior to the other: rather, each mindset represents a particular type of rationality, and possesses distinct advantages and disadvantages that are the mirror image of those of the other. Quite simply, different situational environments may be better served by one mindset over the other, and vice versa, suggesting that it may be time to consider revising – or at least clarifying – the discipline's attachment to the rational actor model. Happily, for political psychologists it also suggests that they need not exclusively relegate themselves to explaining cognitive 'mistakes' or otherwise 'defective' outcomes in international relations.

The second principal contribution of the dual mindset theory to the development of international relations theories is to advancing the longstanding debate between the adherents of realism (including neorealism) and liberalism (including neoliberal institutionalism) regarding whether individuals – and states – are fundamentally competitive, or whether they are capable of overcoming their competitive instincts in order to cooperate. If we accept that psychological insights into the behaviour of political elites on an individual level can tell us something about the behaviour of states on a system level (even if such insights can never provide the complete picture), then the dual mindset theory's insights into human behaviour suggest that neither paradigm has an automatic monopoly on the truth as it concerns the nature of international relations.

Classical realists such Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau attributed the international conflicts between and among states to humankind's incorrigible 'will-to-power' in the pursuit of the national interest.[138] Neo-realists, such as Kenneth Waltz, have instead argued that the desire for security and

[136] Mercer, 'Rationality and Psychology in International Politics', 81.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), 72.

power imposed by the anarchical international system is the underlying cause of wars.[139] By contrast, liberal internationalists have generally stressed that 'peoples and governments have deep common interests in the establishment of a cooperative world order organised around principles of restraint, reciprocity, and sovereign equality'.[140] Dual mindset theory suggests that the truth may be far more complicated and context-dependent, and that the physiological and psychological composition of the human mind allows plenty of room for both war and peace outcomes. This accords with an emerging view among evolutionary biologists, such as the pre-eminent primatologist Frans de Waal, who maintains that:

> We have the fortune of having not one but two inner apes, which together allow us to construct an image of ourselves that is considerably more complex than what we have heard coming out of biology for the past twenty-five years. The view of us as purely selfish and mean, with an illusory morality, is up for revision. If we are essentially apes, as I would argue, or at least descended from apes, as every biologist would argue, we are born with a gamut of tendencies from the basest to the noblest. Far from being a figment of the imagination, our morality is a product of the same selection process that shaped our competitive and aggressive side.[141]

Moreover, while iconic paradigms such as neorealism or liberal institutionalism can suggest the permissive structural or domestic conditions in which war is more or less likely to break out (such as the type of polarity in the international system in the case of the former, or the existence of a democratic peace in the case of the latter), neither theory accounts for the proximate causes – i.e. the foreign policy decisions – that incite or avert conflict. In this regard, dual mindset theory can help fill gaps in both realist and liberal paradigms regarding when wars will or will not occur.

Finally, the dual mindset theory presented here contributes to the so-called neurobiological revolution in behavioural psychology. More than ever before, international relations scholars can rely upon new discoveries and techniques in the fields of neuroscientific imaging, neurobiology and physiology to help unlock the psychosomatic foundations of human social and political behaviour. As Iver Neumann heralded in his inaugural lecture at the London School of Economics:

> The overall point regarding biologically and psychologically determined thinking as a challenge to IR [international relations] is straightforward: A number of developments in these disciplines,

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[139] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2010).

[140] G. John Ikenberry, 'Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order', *Perspectives on Politics* 7, no. 1 (2009): 72.

[141] Frans de Waal, *Our Inner Ape: The Best and Worst of Human Nature* (London: Granta Books, 2005).

> particularly in the areas of neuroscience, evolutionary psychology and epigenetics, are important and potentially enriching for social sciences such as IR… The issue is not *if* we should engage biological and psychological thinking about our subject matter, but how we should do it.[142]

To date, however, neurobiological approaches have been under-utilised and not fully leveraged within international relations scholarship.[143] To the limited extent that they have been applied to the discipline, they have often been relied upon to make sweeping generalisations about human nature rather than to explore individual differences.[144] Nevertheless, Rose McDermott and Peter Hatemi concur that 'neurobiological advances have emerged as critical for explicating individual differences in attitudes, values, behaviours, cognition and evaluation, but only recently has the neurobiological tool kit been applied to questions of interest in international relations'.[145] However, such approaches – including the dual mindset theory – hold potentially important implications for many different and interrelated domains of international relations research – other mindset theories, such as the Rubicon theory of war, the origins of human biases and the source(s) of their variation, the effects of stress on decision-makers, crisis management, foreign policy analysis, and the growing literature on the connection between overconfidence and war, to name just a few.

Limitations of the Theory: Anticipating Objections

Several limitations of both the theory and research design are anticipated and acknowledged. In general, the deployment of psychological approaches to enhance our understanding of foreign policy decision-making, and, by extension, of international relations, carries with it certain risks and rewards. There are at least two common critiques associated with the use of psychological theories in international relations: the validity of extrapolating insights gleaned at the individual, or 'first image', level to explain the conduct of states in the international system, and the reliability of translating psychological biases, processes and patterns discovered in a controlled, clinical laboratory setting to the 'real world' of international politics.

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[142] Iver Neumann, 'International Relations as a Social Science', *Millennium* 43, no. 1 (2014): 350.

[143] Rose McDermott and Peter Hatemi, 'Broadening Political Psychology', *Political Psychology* 33, no. 1 (2012).

[144] Richard Ned Lebow, 'Greeks, Neuroscience, and International Relations', in *Human Beings in International Relations*, eds. Daniel Jacobi and Annette Freyberg-Inan (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Richard Ned Lebow, *Avoiding War, Making Peace* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[145] Rose McDermott and Peter K. Hatemi, 'The Study of International Politics in the Neurobiological Revolution: A Review of Leadership and Political Violence', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 1 (2014): 92.

The first criticism is well met – not all puzzles in international relations, nor even all foreign policy decisions, will be conducive to a psychological approach. This chapter has already mentioned Janice Stein's parameters within which an exploration of psychological mechanisms can be considered most useful. According to Stein, important discretionary decisions – the lifeblood of most foreign policy scholarship – clearly reside within the domain of individual choices and action. Even if psychological variables alone are not always sufficient to provide a complete explanation of decision-making in such settings, they are much more likely to be causally significant than in situations that are considered ordinary or routine. From this chapter's discussion of research design and case selection, we know that crisis situations are most likely to elicit the onset of such conditions, in which individuals in executive positions are considered constitutive of the state. The case comparison of this study was, therefore, chosen with these broad parameters in mind.

As to the second critique, much evidence exists to support the notion that the observed psychological phenomena of individuals in laboratory experiments are equally applicable to decision-makers in the 'real world'.[146] Although each individual human brain is unique with respect to its size, shape and even chemical receptors, all healthy, functioning human beings possess the same basic brain structures and processing mechanisms. Many of the traits and biases described as component characteristics of the dual mindsets presented in this study have been repeatedly identified over multiple decades of psychological research and replicated across a wide variety of domains. This thesis is not, therefore, a scientific test of whether these biases and traits exist, as they are already well-established psychological phenomena. Instead, the aim has been to draw together aspects of heretofore separate psychological theories into a coherent whole, to show that many extant explanations of individual actors' decision-making behaviour are fundamentally related to two broad types of reasoning that human beings use to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty.

Moreover, neuroscientific research increasingly suggests that simulated and 'real' behaviour utilise the same pathways in the brain, and that the same body chemistry is produced in both real-life and imaginary situations.[147] Even in cases where simulated experiments might distort the magnitude of their actual effects in the real world, there is no *a priori* reason to think that the direction of their

[146] See, for example, Alex Mintz, Steven B. Redd and Arnold Vedlitz, 'Can We Generalize from Student Experiments to the Real World in Political Science, Military Affairs, and International Relations?', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution (1986–1998)* 50, no. 5 (2006).

[147] For example, the brain elicits the same stress response – the production of cortisol and adrenalin and the enhanced circulation of blood throughout the body – to both real and imagined danger. For a series of fascinating experiments demonstrating that the brain does not necessarily distinguish between 'real' and 'imaginary' scenarios, see Carey K. Morewedge, Young Eun Huh and Joachim Vosgerau, 'Thought for Food: Imagined Consumption Reduces Actual Consumption', *Science* 330, no. 6010 (2010).

effects is not the same.[148] If anything, many scholars have reason to believe that the effect of psychological variables is likely to be intensified in international crisis situations, which typically leave limited time for decision-making, involve non-negligible levels of stress, implicate very high stakes and in which individual reactions to those conditions are likely to be determinative of the outcome.

Another anticipated criticism is that, too often, psychological approaches look for common patterns and universal generalisations at the expense of understanding individual and group differences.[149] Gender, culture and individual idiosyncrasies can affect whether and how someone reacts to specific situations: any generalisations adduced through psychological observation are, by default, based on average tendencies, and these averages can admittedly be skewed by the dominant demographic characteristics of the sample of experimental subjects.[150] This author does not dispute the validity of this point, nor wish to imply that the crop of primarily Western-educated undergraduates that form the majority of the experimental subjects of most psychological studies are equivalent to foreign policy leaders. However, because the two broad categories of information processing in the human brain investigated in this study are widely believed to be instantiated in our physiological makeup as human beings, they should theoretically operate across all individuals and contexts – even if their respective activations can vary enormously across both domains.[151] In other words, the consensus view is that the principles according to which these two types of reasoning categories function are, to a large extent, universal to all humans and, because of this, are not easily altered or dismissed.[152]

Similarly, the hypotheses presented in this study regarding the proposed impact of reflexive and reflective mindsets on crisis decision-making are based on the combined average estimation of their effects. For example, an individual (or individuals) might still decide to go to war after a period of considerable reflection, individuals in a reflexive mindset may successfully deter their adversaries through confrontation and thereby avoid conflict (lest we forget that international crises are, after

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[148] Dominic Johnson et al., 'Overconfidence in Wargames: Experimental Evidence on Expectations, Aggression, Gender and Testosterone', *Proceedings: Biological Sciences* 273, no. 1600 (2006): 2518.

[149] Robert Jervis, *How Statesmen Think: The Psychology of International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 3.

[150] For example, scientists have found increasingly important differences in the way individuals think in Western societies as opposed to those in other societies. Joseph Henrich, Steven J. Heine and Ara Norenzayan, 'The Weirdest People in the World?', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 33, no. 2–3 (2010).

[151] Indeed, the principal decision-makers in the case comparison of this study were exclusively white, male and products of an elite, upper-class European aristocracy, many of whom were related by blood or marriage, and who, it will be shown, nevertheless exhibited important variations in their reaction to key events.

[152] Peter Carruthers, 'The Distinctively Human Mind: The Many Pillars of Cumulative Culture', in *Evolution of Mind, Brain and Culture*, eds. Gary Hatfield and Holly Pittman (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 339.

all, the product of strategic interactions between states), and there may be situations in which the decision-maker is left with no other realistic option but to initiate a war regardless of his or her mindset. Nevertheless, the dual mindset theory suggests that the combined characteristics associated with each mindset trend in opposite decision-making directions: the adoption of a reflexive mindset makes it more likely that confrontation and conflict will occur for the reasons explored in the following theoretical chapters, while the adoption of a reflective mindset makes it less likely. Even in crisis situations where war or peace are not the only two feasible options, we would expect the mindset(s) adopted by decision-makers to bound and de-limit the universe of available responses in predictable ways.

Finally, the limitations of the chosen research design are acknowledged. Most causal theories suffer from the phenomenon of equifinality, meaning that there are multiple plausible mechanisms that could link proposed causes and outcomes together. An initial plausibility probe cannot make any definitive claims that rule out such other, competing explanations; instead, its main task is to establish that a given theory is worth considering as potentially valid because apparent empirical instances of it can be found. Therefore, the findings of any plausibility probe linking causes and effects, including those of this study, will be tentative and conditional, at best.[153] Moreover, scholars should generally be wary of extrapolating unwarranted data or making too many erroneous assumptions from a limited number of cases.

Nevertheless, the main purpose of any plausibility probe is to link hypothesis generation with hypothesis testing to determine if such hypotheses warrant additional scholarly attention. By default, this presumes that only a small number of cases will be examined. However, limiting the number of cases examined does not lower the standards of evidence required for each case to meet the threshold of plausibility. For example, it is generally accepted that the case selection method employed in this study – that of selecting so-called 'crucial cases' in which one's hypotheses are least likely to hold – is one of the more rigorous means of testing small-n case studies.[154] There should, therefore, be no reason to automatically assume that the bigger the universe of cases, the better – particularly with respect to studies, such as this one, that privilege an understanding of detailed causal mechanisms above and beyond causal effects.

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[153] For more on the purpose and limitations of plausibility probes as a causal case study method, see Beach and Pedersen, *Causal Case Study Methods*.

[154] Eckstein, 'Case Study and Theory in Political Science'; Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 48–49.

Even the authors of many quantitative psychological studies of international relations behaviour have acknowledged their significant limitations. Philip Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, for example, admit that 'there appear to be large classes of questions in the study of global conflict and cooperation for which experimental control is out of the question and statistical control is of limited usefulness.'[155] Ned Lebow has gone even further, underscoring the fundamental insuperability of statistical shortcomings in the study of international relations:

> Statistical studies of international conflict, war, peace, and conflict resolution confront several perhaps insurmountable obstacles. The universe of cases, no matter how we define it, is limited. Most cases cannot be considered independent because the policymakers in question acted on the basis of the lessons they drew from what they considered relevant previous cases. The conditions under which they acted (for example, nature of the regime, domestic constraints, alliance patterns, military balance, and technology) differ from case to case, and do so dramatically over time. To construct a sample large enough to warrant statistical analysis it is necessary to include cases that violate the conditions of independence and comparability.[156]

Large-n statistical studies aim to explain the occurrence or non-occurrence of an identified dependent variable or event; detailed case studies, by comparison, can additionally explain specific features and trace identified causal mechanisms of that event, such as why it occurred when it did and in the way that it did.[157] This is the essence of the specific historical puzzle this study seeks to explain: the timing paradox of 1914.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis comprises an additional six chapters. Chapter 1 situates the role of mindsets within psychological theories of international relations and introduces the 'reflexive' and 'reflective', or 'dual mindset', theory of decision-making. It then applies this theory to international relations in the realm of crisis decision-making. The principal argument presented is that reflexive mindsets tend to increase the probability of conflict breaking out in response to an international crisis, while reflective mindsets reduce this probability. Chapter 2 examines what scientists call the 'dual systems' theory of the mind – a two-system model of human judgment that distinguishes between two broad families

[155] Philip Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, eds., *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 38.

[156] Richard Ned Lebow, 'Counterfactuals and Security Studies', *Security Studies* 24, no. 3 (2015): 408–409.

[157] John Gerring, 'The Case Study: What It Is and What It Does', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, ed. Robert E. Goodin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1149.

of mental operations. Dual systems theory, it is argued, independently corroborates – and supplies a plausible rationale for the origins of – the intervening variable of dual mindsets introduced in Chapter 1. Relying on a wealth of interdisciplinary scientific insights into the complex neural machinery of the brain, this chapter extends and completes the discussion of the psychology of dual mindsets. It does so by presenting a case for their adaptive value and their opposing effects on decision-making in international relations that align with the observations and predictions of the dual mindset framework.

Chapter 3 marks the start of the empirical portion of the thesis. It introduces a historical puzzle that continues to animate international relations scholarship: the timing of the outbreak of the First World War in the summer of 1914, commonly known as the timing paradox of 1914.[158] Despite the staggering multiplicity of causal factors that have been put forward by scholars to explain the events of 1914, many such explanations fall short of explaining why the war did not, conversely, break out in response to previous European crises – particularly those that occurred during the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, when environmental conditions and the sequence of diplomatic and military measures across the two opposing alliance blocs most closely prefigured those that prevailed in 1914.[159] Chapters 4 and 5 apply the dual mindset framework to this historical puzzle in the form of a comparative case study of decision-making during the succession of Europe's Balkan crises in 1912–1913 and the July Crisis of 1914.

The central empirical argument advanced in this thesis is that the dominance of a reflective frame of mind, brought on by a 'challenge state' of motivation among the principal decision-makers on both sides of the conflict, can help to explain why European leaders proved capable of pulling themselves and their allies back from the brink of a general conflagration in 1912–1913. Conversely, the transition to a 'reflexive' frame of mind, brought on by a 'threat state' of stress, helps to explain why many of these same leaders proved incapable of preventing the outbreak of war in the summer of 1914. It will be argued that this switch in mindset affected the decision-making of three central figures in particular – Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Leopold von Berchtold, German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov – who collectively represented the belligerent states most implicated in the run-up to war.

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[158] Jack S. Levy and Jack Snyder, 'Everyone's Favored Year for War—or Not?', *International Security* 39, no. 4 (2015).

[159] David Stevenson argues that, from a mobilisation perspective, 'the most highly militarised of all the pre-war crises resulted from the first Balkan war in the winter of 1912–1913'. David Stevenson, 'Militarization and Diplomacy in Europe before 1914', ibid. 22, no. 1 (1997): 140.

The dual mindset theory thus represents a novel theoretical re-interpretation of a well-known historical event – one that, unlike many previous international relations theories that attempt to explain the outbreak of the First World War, can help to shed light both on the dissolution of the European peace in 1914 and its continuity in the years immediately preceding the conflict. The sixth and final chapter summarises the findings and conclusions of this plausibility probe into the impact of dual mindsets on decision-making in international relations, and briefly considers various agendas for future research.

CHAPTER 1

REFLEXIVE AND REFLECTIVE MINDSETS

Dual Mindset Theory and Decision-Making in International Relations

'Psychology plays an important role in foreign policy decision-making, but analysing the psychological sources of foreign policy is too important to leave to the psychologists.'

JACK LEVY, *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (2013)

'War, it has rightly been said, starts in the minds of men, but so does peace.'

SIR MICHAEL HOWARD, *The Invention of Peace* (2000)

This chapter introduces the reflexive and reflective, or 'dual mindset', framework and then applies it to the study of international crisis decision-making by posing several novel hypotheses. It is proposed that the mindsets of individual political leaders in response to international crisis events are an important intervening variable affecting the outcome of war and peace decisions in international relations. Their influence on decision-making occurs through three principal effects or causal mechanisms: sensitivity to threats, propensity for risk and rates of temporal discounting. Although these are technically separate causal mechanisms, it is hypothesised that they act in tandem – such that heightened detection of perceived threats encourages both a greater propensity to seek to overcome such threats, even at the cost of assuming greater risk, and higher rates of temporal discounting, in the interest of confronting them sooner rather than later. The principal argument presented is that, *ceteris paribus*, the adoption of a reflexive mindset by political leaders tends to increase the probability of conflict breaking out, while the adoption of a reflective mindset reduces this probability.

The first part of the chapter will review the current literature on mindsets, focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of one of the only other mindset theories to be applied to international relations – the Rubicon theory of war. The proposed framework will build upon many of the Rubicon theory's insights, while at the same time challenging certain fundamental assumptions of, and addressing

specific theoretical gaps left by, the Rubicon model.[8] The second part of the chapter will introduce the concept of reflexive and reflective mindsets and will consider their application to international relations, with a specific focus on their respective influence on crisis decision-making. The third and final part of the chapter will examine the comparative advantages and disadvantages of these opposing mindsets in the context of decision-making in international relations, with a view to helping overturn the long-held academic presumption that the principal value of psychology in regard to international relations scholarship remains limited to the identification of 'cognitive errors' that invariably promote war.[9] The implications of this argument for international relations theory and practice are then considered.

The picture of the individual decision-maker that emerges from this chapter does not strictly support either the rational actor or traditional 'cognitive miser' psychology models. Over the decades, political science has unhelpfully promulgated a schizophrenic image of individual leaders: as either wholly rational and unaffected by bias, engaging in 'effective' decision-making processes that generally strive to avoid conflict, or as hopelessly biased, such biases representing 'defects' in the decision-making process that tend to promote conflict.[10] However, as is argued in this chapter and in the next, decision-makers are neither the supremely rational cognitive optimisers of rational choice theory nor the supremely irrational cognitive misers of earlier psychological models. Recent, congruent advancements in the fields of behavioural psychology, evolutionary biology and neuroscience suggest that the time has come to readjust this superannuated image of political leaders in favour of a more nuanced model.

The polymath Herbert Simon took an important initial step towards this readjustment with his concept of 'bounded rationality'.[11] In noting that people exhibit limited or 'bounded' rationality, Simon implied that humans lack the cognitive ability to solve the kind of complex problems

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[8] Jack S. Levy, 'Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision-Making', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, eds. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 313. For example, the Rubicon theory of war claims to resolve a major paradox of international relations – the puzzling combination of threat insecurity and overconfidence – by attributing it to a qualitative switch from one type of mindset to another. This study, however, attempts to demonstrate that threat insecurity and overconfidence are actually co-varying products of the same mindset, and that in this mindset both psychological phenomena tend to become more acute as the possibility of conflict nears. Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'The Rubicon Theory of War: How the Path to Conflict Reaches the Point of No Return', *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 7–8.

[9] Dominic Johnson aptly observes that 'psychology and biology have tended to be used as bolt-on explanations to account for why things go *wrong* – groupthink, cognitive bias, emotions, the failings of human nature and so on' and that this has led to a decidedly 'lopsided view' of both disciplines. Dominic Johnson, 'Survival of the Disciplines: Is International Relations Fit for the New Millennium?', *Millennium* 43, no. 2 (2015): 752.

[10] Stanley A. Renshon and Deborah Larson, *Good Judgment in Foreign Policy: Theory and Application* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

[11] Richard Thaler, *Misbehaving: The Making of Behavioural Economics* (Great Britain: Allen Lane, 2015), 23, 29.

proposed by rational choice theory. However, Simon never fleshed out what he meant by this concept in practice, nor did he consider the possibility that human beings might vary in the form that their bounded rationality might take. Mindsets, as we shall see, provide a useful framework for extending Simon's early insights about human behaviour and for refining how international relations theory conceives of the individual decision-maker.

Cognitive Mindsets and the Rubicon Theory of War

The concept of mindsets dates to the earliest experiments in human psychology. The human psyche is believed to be equipped with the capacity to solve problems using different 'mindsets' or mental states. Psychologists generally define mindsets as 'sets of mental processes that produce a disposition or readiness to respond in a particular manner'.[12] Mindsets are not necessarily limited to a specific task but instead represent a 'global readiness to respond' in a certain way, acting as a kind of 'master lever that suppresses or amplifies a range of associated psychological biases'.[13] For this reason, different mindsets (in which different cognitive operations dominate) are believed to lead to different decision-making behaviours. Because different mindsets are believed to either ameliorate or to exacerbate specific decision-making biases, psychologists consider them important for explaining human judgment.[14]

Mindset theories rest on the assumption that individuals are not constrained to a single type of mindset but are capable of switching mindsets depending upon their unique motives, levels of self-control or situational demands.[15] Unlike a strong preference for left- or right-handedness, for example, 'people are not locked into a single *modus operandi* or mindset'.[16] However, once activated, mindsets tend to be 'sticky', meaning that they often remain active beyond the initial problem sets

[12] Ryan Hamilton et al., 'Being of Two Minds: Switching Mindsets Exhausts Self-Regulatory Resources', *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 115, no. 1 (2011): 13.

[13] Ibid. 14; Johnson and Tierney, 'The Rubicon Theory of War', 8.

[14] For example, probabilistic mindsets that prompt individuals to make probability or ratio estimates have been shown to reduce intuitive thinking and the confirmation bias (the tendency to interpret new information as a confirmation of prior beliefs), while optimistic mindsets can exacerbate overconfidence and its associated optimism bias. Yuval Rottenstreich and Ran Kivetz, 'On Decision Making Without Likelihood Judgment', *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 101, no. 1 (2006); Laura Kray and Adam D. Galinsky, 'The Debiasing Effect of Counterfactual Mind-sets: Increasing the Search for Disconfirmatory Information in Group Decisions', ibid. 91 (2003).

[15] Heinz Heckhausen and Peter M. Gollwitzer, 'Thought Contents and Cognitive Functioning in Motivational versus Volitional States of Mind', *Motivation and Emotion* 11, no. 2 (1987); Angela Y. Lee, Jennifer L. Aaker and Wendy L. Gardner, 'The Pleasures and Pains of Distinct Self-Construals: The Role of Interdependence in Regulatory Focus', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 78, no. 6 (2000).

[16] Hamilton et al., 'Being of Two Minds: Switching Mindsets Exhausts Self-Regulatory Resources', 13.

that prompted their activation, going on to affect other, even if unrelated, tasks.[17] This is because the act of mindset switching is neither 'automatic nor costless', but is instead believed to be both physiologically and psychologically taxing for the human brain.[18] Contemporary research on mindsets has focused on goal orientation, and more specifically on the mental switch from what psychologists call pre-decisional, or 'deliberative', to post-decisional, or 'implemental', mindsets.[19]

According to psychologists Heinz Heckhausen and Peter Gollwitzer's 'Rubicon model of action phases', once people switch from the goal of deliberating on a course of action to the goal of implementing that course of action they cross a certain psychological threshold or 'mental Rubicon'. As a result, individuals switch from a methodical 'deliberative' mindset to an action-oriented 'implemental' mindset.[20] Heckhausen and Gollwitzer found that 'the transition from contemplating to enacting options appears to represent a psychological Rubicon, a boundary line between different states of mind'.[21] This mental transition is important because the act of committing to a decision and adopting an implemental mindset appears to leave individuals more vulnerable to a number of identified psychological biases, such as the optimism bias and illusions of control, all of which are believed to lead to overconfidence.[22]

Heckhausen and Gollwitzer's model of action phases has been applied to international relations in the form of a 'Rubicon theory of war'. The Rubicon theory of war asserts that once individuals cross the psychological Rubicon of perceiving war to be imminent, they switch from a deliberative mindset, which approximates the rationality of rational choice theory, to an implemental mindset, which triggers overconfidence, increased aggressiveness and risky military planning. A large and growing literature suggests that each of these factors, and particularly overconfidence, contributes to the likelihood of war breaking out. Proponents of this theory go on to suggest that 'if actors believe

[17] Ibid. 14.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Robert E. Knox and James A. Inkster, 'Postdecision Dissonance at Post Time', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 8, no. 4 (1968).

[20] In 49 B.C., Julius Caesar halted his army on the banks of the Rubicon river in northern Italy. According to the accounts of Roman historian Suetonius, Caesar momentarily hesitated before fording the river *en masse* with his troops and uttering the immortal phrase *Alae iacta est* ('the die is cast'). By violating an ancient Roman law forbidding any general to cross the Rubicon with his army, Caesar's decision represented a virtual declaration of war against his enemies in the Roman Senate, one which precipitated a five-year civil war and Caesar's eventual vanquishing of the Roman Republic. The phrase 'crossing the Rubicon' has since come to symbolise passing a point of no return, when the time for deliberation has passed and a decision must be taken.

[21] Heckhausen and Gollwitzer, 'Thought Contents and Cognitive Functioning in Motivational versus Volitional States of Mind', 120.

[22] Peter M. Gollwitzer and Ute Bayer, 'Deliberative versus Implemental Mindsets in the Control of Action', in *Dual-Process Theories in Social Psychology*, eds. Shelly Chaiken and Yaacov Trope (New York: Guildford, 1999).

that war is imminent when it is not in fact certain to occur, the switch to implemental mindsets can be a causal factor in the outbreak of war, by raising the perceived probability of military victory and encouraging hawkish and provocative policies'.[23]

The Rubicon theory of war makes an important contribution to the literature on decision-making in international relations by demonstrating that individual processes of judgment may vary across contexts and over different stages of a decision-making crisis. It particularly helps to explain why people may experience a significant switch in mindset, manifested by a rise in confidence levels, on the eve of war, once a decision to initiate conflict has been made (or is perceived to have been made) and the task of its implementation formally begins. 'The simple act of committing to a decision', they observe, 'alters assessments of the probability of success'.[24] The Rubicon theory therefore supplies a convincing explanation of why political leaders are reluctant to change their minds on the eve of war and why, once states are engaged in conflict, wars between them often drag on longer than any of the belligerent parties anticipated. However, whether political leaders actually decide to go to war (which then prompts such implemental thinking) is a separate issue, and it is with regard to this point that the Rubicon model leaves certain important phenomena unexplained.

The first of these concerns the psychological cause of mindset switching: the theory identifies this cause as the perception of imminent conflict. Leaders, the theory claims, are more confident of victory when they think that war is imminent, and less confident when they think that war is not.[25] The proponents of the Rubicon theory of war point to numerous hypothetical factors that give rise to a perception of imminent conflict, such as the deliberate choice to go to war, feelings of entrapment into a war by other states and the sensation of losing control of the international situation. Nevertheless, they do not account for the psychological source of these supposed factors, nor do they explain why individuals responding to the same international situation or crisis may vary in their perceptions of the imminence of war and, by extension, in their levels of overconfidence.

The disputes within the former Austro-Hungarian empire prior to the outbreak of the First World War provide an illustrative example of this puzzling disparity. By some calculations, Austria-Hungary's former Chief of the General Staff, Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, petitioned for a preventive war against Serbia no fewer than 25 times in 1913 (to say nothing of his calls for war

[23] Johnson and Tierney, 'The Rubicon Theory of War', 7.

[24] Ibid. 13.

[25] Ibid. 10.

against Serbia in other years, and those wars he advocated against other countries). According to historian Christopher Clark:

> Conrad approached the geopolitical predicaments of the Habsburg monarchy with the same monomaniacal fixity he brought to his love life. Even in the context of the pre-1914 European military commanders he stands out as unusually aggressive. His answer to virtually every diplomatic challenge was "war"; in this there was virtually no change between 1906 and 1914. Conrad repeatedly counselled preventive wars against Serbia, Montenegro, Russia, Romania and even Italy, Austria's disloyal ally and Balkan rival.[26]

By contrast, the most consistent and influential opponent of Conrad's war policies, Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, blocked almost every one of his petitions during the Balkan crises that preceded the outbreak of the First World War.[27] Adamantly opposed to Conrad's aggressive adventurism, Ferdinand declared to his sympathetic colleague, the Austrian Foreign Minister Count Leopold von Berchtold, 'I am as a matter of principle against all such power-plays'.[28] If Franz Ferdinand supposedly did not perceive war to be imminent, and thus never crossed the psychological Rubicon during Europe's multiple early twentieth-century crises, Conrad, it seems, remained in a permanent state of implemental alert. The general's 'abrasive, carping and self-righteous' interventions in his government's policy process were, if anything, the result of extreme frustration that a war against Austria-Hungary's numerous enemies, with Serbia principal among them, was *not* forthcoming. 'It is a crime that nothing is being done', Conrad lamented to his lover, Gina von Reininghaus, in the spring of 1909. 'War against Serbia could have saved the monarchy.'[29]

A second phenomenon that is not explained by the Rubicon theory concerns the predicted effects of crossing the Rubicon – namely, increased levels of overconfidence. The authors of the theory do not explain why some individuals do not become overconfident as war approaches – that is, those individuals who *do* perceive war to be imminent but who do not become more optimistic or who even grow increasingly pessimistic as war seems more likely.[30] During the height of the Munich crisis in 1938, for example, David Reynolds affirms that both British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and his political nemesis Winston Churchill were 'equally deluded about the Luftwaffe's ability to

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[26] Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 104.

[27] Ibid. 104–106. Major Balkan crises before the outbreak of the Great War included Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908, the First Balkan War in 1912 and the Second Balkan War in 1913.

[28] Ibid. 109.

[29] Ibid. 104.

[30] Levy, 'Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision-Making', 314.

mount devastating attacks on London'.[31] However, Chamberlain, who became increasingly convinced of Britain's certain defeat in a war against Germany, believed that he must 'work for peace until the last moment'.[32] Churchill, by comparison, was extremely confident that Britain could avoid war by bluffing her way off the Czechoslovak precipice 'rather than flying off to woo the dictator with a Czech dowry'.[33]

According to the Rubicon model, Chamberlain's perception that war was not imminent explains his lack of overconfidence.[34] However, the historical record contradicts this claim: Chamberlain confessed that he felt compelled to pursue 'Plan Z', his codenamed initiative to intercede directly with Adolf Hitler, just at the moment when 'things looked blackest'.[35] The fundamental disagreement between Chamberlain and Churchill was not over their perception of the heightened likelihood of a European war as a result of agitation in the Sudetenland, but, rather, was over the best means of avoiding it. In resolving some puzzles in international relations, the Rubicon model has simultaneously raised others.

The Dual Mindset Theory

In light of these unexplained discrepancies in how leaders react to the escalation of international crises and to the advance of war, Jack Levy points to the need for 'more empirical work to ascertain the extent to which political and military leaders become more overconfident as war approaches': 'We need to know which pattern is more likely, for what kinds of individuals in which contexts, for decision-making in general and for war in particular.'[36] Following Levy, this thesis ask the question: how can the numerous, and at times seemingly contradictory, cognitive traits and biases identified

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[31] David Reynolds, *Summits: Six Meetings that Shaped the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2007). iBooks, 212. British intelligence greatly exaggerated the strength of the Luftwaffe and the estimated casualties from aerial bombardment. Ibid. 103–104. Furthermore, we know that the differences of opinion between Chamberlain and Churchill did not derive from differences in their access to relevant information, as the rational actor model might predict. Although at the time of the Czechoslovak crisis Churchill was a 'down-and-out' parliamentary backbencher, he received leaked accounts of Cabinet meetings from Duff Cooper, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and was remarkably well-informed about Hitler's policies through contacts with German dissidents in the Third Reich. Ibid. 100, 106.

[32] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, '"We Shall Be Smashed": The Munich Crisis, Underconfidence and War', paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, 28 August–2 September (2007): 9.

[33] Reynolds, *Summits*, 215.

[34] Johnson and Tierney, '"We Shall Be Smashed"', 15.

[35] After the Czech government declared martial law on 13 September 1938, 'the situation was considered so desperate that Chamberlain and Halifax, with the subsequent concurrence of [Sir John] Simon and [Sir Samuel] Hoare, decided to activate the plan Chamberlain had … codenamed "Plan Z"'. Andrew Roberts, *The Holy Fox: A Biography of Lord Halifax* (London: Head of Zeus Ltd., 2014), 149; Robert C. Self, ed., *The Neville Chamberlain Diary Letters*, Vol. 4: The Downing Street Years, 1934–1940 (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005), 345.

[36] Levy, 'Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision-Making', 314.

by the fields of cognitive and social psychology be systematised to help explain foreign policy decision-making in general, and individual reactions to the development of international crises in particular? In other words, how can we use the disparate findings of psychology to better understand individual variations in psychological phenomena, such as optimism and pessimism, and, by extension, individual-level decisions regarding war and peace? This study responds to these persisting theoretical and empirical gaps in our knowledge by introducing what this author calls the 'reflexive and reflective', or 'dual mindset', framework.

As they relate to decision-making under conditions of uncertainty, individual mindsets, the framework suggests, may be broadly categorised into two basic types: reflexive and reflective. Although most individuals are relatively capable of switching between them, usually in response to specific situational cues, the two mindsets, it is argued, cannot dominate a person's thought processes at precisely the same time.[37] This is because psychological research has demonstrated that it is exceedingly difficult for human beings to maintain multiple mindsets concurrently:

> Given that different mindsets require approaching the world in qualitatively different ways, it is challenging to simultaneously use more than one mindset at a time, similar to attempting to simultaneously focus the eye on an object far away and another one up close. The implication of this is that when one mindset is active, activating another typically requires switching away from the one currently active.[38]

The dominance of a reflexive mindset implies the rapid operation of intuitive thought processes that are automatically performed as a reflex, or without much conscious thought. By contrast, the dominance of a reflective mindset implies the application of conscious, effortful deliberations that attempt to weigh the value of different options in relation to decision problems. The traits associated with these reflexive and reflective mindsets broadly mirror those associated with the implemental and deliberative models described by the Rubicon theory. However, unlike the Rubicon model, this framework argues that the deliberations of political actors who adopt a reflective mindset do not replicate, nor even closely approximate, rationality as prescribed by rational choice theory. Rational choice involves making optimally beneficial choices by assigning value and probability weights to the entire universe of available options – an idealised form of decision-making that this thesis will

[37] Robin Vallacher and Daniel Wegner, 'Levels of Personal Agency: Individual Variation in Action Identification', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57, no. 4 (1989).

[38] Hamilton et al., 'Being of Two Minds: Switching Mindsets Exhausts Self-Regulatory Resources', 14.

forcefully argue is not representative of any type of human thought processes in international relations, regardless of mindset.[39]

The authors of the Rubicon model limited its application to the puzzle of overconfidence on the eve of war to demonstrate the theory's plausibility in contributing to conflict and risky military planning.[40] The historical test case they chose was the outbreak of the First World War. The authors aim to explain the puzzle of mutual optimism regarding war in 1914 with their prediction of 'a shift to implemental mindsets and overconfidence on all sides when fighting drew near'.[41] However, they fully admit that international crises in which wars are avoided, such as the handful of European crises that were peaceably resolved prior to 1914, are never directly tested under the Rubicon model: the model's authors attribute such outcomes either to actors not perceiving war as imminent or to other, unspecified factors that may trump implemental mindsets.[42] Nevertheless, during the Balkan Winter Crisis of 1912–1913, for example, the looming prospect of a military clash between Austria-Hungary and Russia was viewed as a very real and imminent danger for the decision-makers on both sides. Historian Samuel Williamson Jr. writes that 'the two eastern powers came closer to war than at any point after 1908–1909 and their confrontation not only influenced Balkan diplomacy, but also their own strategic plans'.[43] So why did political leaders in Vienna and St. Petersburg retreat from the abyss of war in 1912–1913 only to march into its maelstrom in 1914, if in both cases conflict appeared to be drawing near?[44]

To resolve this puzzle, the reflexive and reflective mindset framework asserts that mindsets may actively contribute both to the outbreak of war and to its peaceful avoidance in international relations. This causality is predicted to be particularly acute in crisis situations when the influence of political leaders and their choices is at a premium, when neither war nor peace represents the only feasible course of action and when time pressure necessitates some form of decision-making. Furthermore, this framework argues that the perception that war is imminent is neither necessary

[39] The foundation of behavioural psychology is that human beings, instead of being 'conservative Bayesians', are not actually intuitive statisticians at all. Michael Lewis, *The Undoing Project: A Friendship that Changed the World* (London: Allen Lane, 2016), 40.

[40] Johnson and Tierney, 'The Rubicon Theory of War', 25.

[41] Ibid. 24.

[42] Ibid. 25.

[43] Samuel R. Williamson Jr., 'Military Dimensions of Habsburg-Romanov Relations During the Era of the Balkan Wars', in *East Central European Society and the Balkan Wars*, eds. Béla K. Király and Dimitrije Djordjevic (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 317.

[44] We know that decision-makers viewed the danger of war as imminent because many of the orders that the leaders of Austria-Hungary and Russia gave to their respective diplomats and military officials in 1912–1913 were the same ones to which they were referred when war broke out in 1914. Ernst C. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars 1912–1913* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1938), 216.

nor sufficient to explain individual variations in psychological phenomena, such as overconfidence. Instead, mindset adoption is better viewed as the combined interaction of external factors – particularly stress – with internal factors, namely an individual's capacity for reflective thought (known as 'mindware' and described in further detail in the following chapter).[45] The following sections describe each category of mindset in detail and propose the intervening causal mechanisms by which their respective activation increases or decreases the likelihood of international conflict.

Psychological Traits of Dual Mindsets

An important contribution of the Rubicon theory is its integration of a diverse set of identified psychological biases into a coherent framework. The theory of reflexive and reflective mindsets builds upon and extends this effort, beginning with the psychological traits that distinguish each mindset. This study proposes that reflexive and reflective mindsets differ along at least five discrete, but closely related, psychological trait dimensions: cognitive openness, cognitive dissonance, cognitive complexity, tendency towards self-serving evaluations, and loss aversion. This family of trait distinctions bears a strong resemblance to those that characterise Peter Gollwitzer's 'deliberative' and 'implemental' mindsets; however, as these individual traits are considered to be general features of human cognition, they are not exclusively associated with any particular research agenda.[46] Table 1.1 sets out these psychological traits and their respective correspondence with reflexive and reflective mindsets:

[45] The theoretical literature on crisis decision-making has paid relatively little attention to the interactive effect of situational stress and dispositional factors on mindset adoption, although variation across individuals in this regard is widely recognised. Jerrold M. Post, 'The Impact of Crisis-Induced Stress on Policy Makers', in *Avoiding War*, ed. Alexander George (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991).

[46] Jurgen Beckmann and Peter M. Gollwitzer, 'Deliberative Versus Implemental States of Mind: The Issue of Impartiality in Predecisional and Postdecisional Information Processing', *Social Cognition* 5, no. 3 (1987). In addition to cognitive and social psychology, these traits are also broadly popular distinctions in the field of political psychology. Political scientists have relied on variations of these trait dimensions to examine the effect of independent variables, such as the impact of individual leaders, decision-making styles and groupthink, on international relations. See, for example, the research programme developed by Margaret Hermann called Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA). Margaret Hermann, *Assessing Leadership Style: A Trait Analysis* (Social Sciences Automation, Inc., 1999); Juliet Kaarbo and Margaret Hermann, 'Leadership Styles of Prime Ministers: How Individual Differences Affect the Foreign Policymaking Process', *The Leadership Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1998); Mark Schafer and Scott Crichlow, *Groupthink Versus High-Quality Decision Making in International Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

Table 1.1 Psychological Traits of Reflexive and Reflective Mindsets

	Mindsets	
Psychological Traits	**Reflexive**	**Reflective**
Cognitive openness	lower	higher
Cognitive dissonance	higher	lower
Cognitive complexity	lower	higher
Self-serving evaluations	higher	lower
Loss aversion	higher	lower

Cognitive Openness

Actors in a reflexive mindset are hypothesised to display less willingness to consider new information than actors in a reflective mindset. Receptivity to new information, or what some psychologists call 'cognitive openness', can refer both to the degree of an individual's relative need for intellectual closure, as well as to his or her level of desire to engage in 'effortful' cognition. Individuals with a strong need for closure 'rely on prior beliefs in solving unfamiliar problems and in evaluating dissonant arguments, prefer parsimonious interpretations of evidence that invoke as few causal constructs as possible, and prefer deterministic accounts that downplay probabilistic qualifiers'.[47] Effortful cognition implies a proclivity towards actively seeking out and reflecting upon incoming information, instead of relying upon low-effort heuristics and pre-conceived notions to interpret events.[48] In general, low levels of cognitive openness imply a tendency to engage in confident judgments that minimise ambiguity. Although there are exceptions to this paradigm, psychological research has shown that a strong need for closure and a propensity to engage in effortful cognition tend to be negatively correlated.[49] By contrast, flexibility and openness to new information facilitates the simultaneous consideration of multiple points of view. Such thinking further encourages the continued search for novel information and makes it less likely that other actors, courses of action and alternative outcomes will be perceived as either wholly good or wholly

[47] Richard Ned Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit: Counterfactuals and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 139.

[48] Peter Suedfeld and Philip Tetlock, 'Individual Differences in Information Processing', in *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Intraindividual Processes*, eds. Abraham Tesser and Norbert Schwarz (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 4.

[49] Ibid.

bad. Consequently, actors in reflective mindsets tend to prize ambiguity over absolutisms and are less likely to be guided in their thought processes by just a few salient reference points.

Cognitive Dissonance

Although all human beings struggle to achieve the optimal balance between being open to new information and retaining beliefs that have demonstrated utility, it is hypothesised that actors in a reflexive mindset experience greater levels of discomfort with cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance theory postulates that individuals possess coherent, consistent beliefs that tend to be strongly held once adopted, and that are subsequently resistant to change.[50] When faced with discrepant or 'dissonant' incoming information that does not accord with existing beliefs or ideas, individuals' mental harmony becomes disrupted. Individuals experiencing high levels of discomfort with cognitive dissonance will discard or reject the dissonant information to preserve this mental harmony, unless and until such contradictions prove overwhelming enough to alter the original set of beliefs and a new, stable pattern re-emerges.[51] They will, therefore, exhibit greater resistance to discordant information that does not accord with their previously held beliefs, and they will be more likely to rely upon pre-existing frames or abstract mental representations (known in psychology as 'schemas') in navigating problem sets or tasks.[52] For this reason, reflexive mindsets reinforce the tendency for individuals to 'see what they expect to see' and to filter incoming information accordingly.[53] By contrast, actors in a reflective mindset, because of their greater receptivity to new information, are predicted to exhibit less discomfort with discordant information and with cognitive dissonance.

Cognitive Complexity

Cognitive complexity refers to the processing of both new and existing information and comprises two basic components: conceptual and integrative complexity. The former refers to the ability of an

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[50] Deborah Welch Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 29.

[51] Leon Festinger, 'Cognitive Dissonance', *Scientific American* 207 (1962).

[52] Political scientist Deborah Larson defines a schema as a top-down 'meta-construct' that 'fills in previous gaps in conceptualisation'. Schemas 'enable people not only to organise a complex stimulus so that they can better comprehend it, but to make additional inferences using pre-existing knowledge and concepts'. Deborah Welch Larson, 'The Role of Belief Systems and Schemas in Foreign Policy Decision-Making', *Political Psychology* 15, no. 1 (1994): 22.

[53] For an overview of the desire for cognitive consistency and its relevance to decision-making see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 117–202. Jervis is careful to make the caveat that consistency is not an 'all-or-nothing' matter and that individuals can seek differing degrees of consistency in their mental life.

individual to differentiate between things, concepts and people in their environment. The latter is the extent to which a person recognises how different or conflicting dimensions of a problem may interrelate.[54] Individuals who are considered to be 'integratively complex' exhibit both the ability to differentiate between multiple points of view and to resolve (or at least to cope with) the existence of dialectical contradictions.[55] It is hypothesised that actors in a reflective mindset display stronger evidence of cognitive complexity due to higher receptivity to incoming information and correspondingly lower susceptibility to the negative effects of cognitive dissonance.

We should expect the reverse to hold true for actors in a reflexive mindset, whose lower cognitive complexity is directly related to lower cognitive openness and higher levels of discomfort with cognitive dissonance. A number of psychological studies have demonstrated that individuals who operate at lower levels of complexity are 'more certain of their own judgments and less tolerant of ambiguity and inconsistency'.[56] Such certitude derives at least in part from limiting the sample size of incoming data that is processed and filtering out any dissonant information that is included in such data. Actors in a reflexive mindset are hypothesised to be more prone to this tendency and to its accompanying cognitive errors, most prominently 'base-rate' or sample-size neglect, which involves judging the likelihood of a situation or event without taking into account all of the relevant data.[57]

Self-Serving Evaluations

Because actors in a reflexive mindset are more likely to be certain of the correctness of their own judgments, they are also more vulnerable than actors in a reflective mindset to self-serving evaluations or to overly positive evaluations of themselves. Such unrealistically positive views have been documented across many domains, and actors who are prone to self-serving evaluations are more likely to view themselves and their prospects more positively than is warranted by the objective

[54] Suedfeld and Tetlock, 'Individual Differences in Information Processing', 6–7.

[55] Although they are related psychological concepts, it is possible for individuals to exhibit conceptual but not integrative complexity (though not, generally, the reverse). One study of Winston Churchill and his political adversaries during two pivotal foreign policy debates in the United Kingdom – appeasement of Hitler's Germany and self-government for India – found that Churchill consistently expressed less integratively complex but more conceptually sophisticated opinions than either of his political opponents, Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain. Philip Tetlock, 'Churchill's Cognitive and Rhetorical Style: The Debates over Nazi Intentions and Self-Government for India', *Political Psychology* 17, no. 1 (1996). For the purposes of this study, integrative complexity is considered the more important trait distinction of the two in regard to differentiating reflexive from reflective mindsets.

[56] Suedfeld and Tetlock, 'Individual Differences in Information Processing', 7.

[57] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, 'On the Reality of Cognitive Illusions', *Psychological Review* 103, no. 3 (1996).

reality.[58] However, this does not imply that actors in a reflective mindset are free of all forms of self-serving bias: it simply means that such evaluations are less likely to dominate thinking patterns, as compared with actors in a reflexive mindset, because of their higher receptivity to contrary or discrepant data that could deflate unrealistically positive self-perceptions. Actors in a reflexive mindset will therefore be more resistant to information that conflicts with these positive self-assessments. Furthermore, many psychological studies have shown that overly positive self-evaluations are closely related to two forms of cognitive bias involving positive illusions: exaggerated perceptions of one's control over a situation and unrealistic optimism about the future.[59]

Loss Aversion

Actors in a reflexive mindset are presumed to be more loss averse than those in reflective mindsets, who instead exhibit greater neutrality with regard to losses and gains.[60] Being more loss averse means that 'losses loom larger than gains' for actors in a reflexive frame of mind. The notion that individuals can be more sensitive to losses than gains is the most important claim of prospect theory, a school of behavioural thought that suggests that individuals are susceptible to valuing goods at a higher rate depending upon whether or not such goods are already in one's possession.[61] It is hypothesised that actors in a reflexive mindset are more susceptible to this biased valuation than actors in a reflective mindset. Recent psychological studies have concluded that such loss aversion stems from emotional attachment, and that this attachment occurs in proportion to the emotion experienced in the course of contemplating or experiencing the loss of valued goods.[62] Actors in a reflexive mindset will find that the psychological aversion that they feel when they lose something of value is far more emotionally intense than the attraction that they feel when they, conversely, gain something of value.

The implication is that actors in a reflexive mindset will rapidly, even instantaneously, adapt to and assimilate gains, but will struggle to adjust their reference points following losses. Thus, those in a reflexive mindset will be more resistant to changes in the status quo in the realm of losses than gains,

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[58] Ola Svenson, 'Are We All Less Risky and More Skillful Than Our Fellow Drivers?', *Acta Psychologica* 47, no. 2 (1981).

[59] Shelley E. Taylor and Jonathan D. Brown, 'Illusion and Well-Being: A Social Psychological Perspective on Mental Health', *Psychological Bulletin* 103, no. 2 (1988).

[60] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, 'Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk', *Econometrica* 47, no. 2 (1979).

[61] Daniel Kahneman and Jonathan Renshon, 'Hawkish Biases', in *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation since 9/11*, eds. A. Trevor Thrall and Jane K. Cramer (London: Routledge Global Security Studies 2009), 85.

[62] Dan Ariely, Joel Huber and Klaus Wertenbroch, 'When Do Losses Loom Larger than Gains?', *Journal of Marketing Research* 42, no. 2 (2005).

an effect commonly known as the 'status-quo bias'.[63] Additionally, we can hypothesise that because individuals in a reflexive mindset exhibit a stronger preference for unambiguous, confident judgments, possible losses will be more likely to be construed as sure losses, which will predictably enhance even further feelings of loss aversion.[64]

Cognitive Biases of Dual Mindsets

As a consequence of their differing psychological traits, actors will correspondingly exhibit different levels of susceptibility to certain well-known cognitive biases. Psychologists define biases as predictable errors of directionality in the ways that individuals interpret information and make decisions.[65] This study hypothesises that actors in a reflexive mindset will be more susceptible to a greater number of these established cognitive biases than actors in reflective mindsets; importantly, this higher level of susceptibility to well-known biases encompasses biases that assume both positive and negative directionalities – such as positive illusions and risk-seeking in the domain of losses. The table below sets out these documented biases as they relate to mindsets, and divides them into two basic categories: negative biases towards the external environment and positive biases towards one's self. Negative biases include fundamental attribution errors, risk-seeking in the domain of losses and negative impact biases, while positive biases encompass a range of positive illusions, such as unrealistic optimism, the illusion of control, and the illusion of transparency. Reflexive mindsets produce or amplify the six biases (both negative and positive) discussed below, while reflective mindsets reduce or eliminate them.

However, an important caveat to the dual mindset framework presented here is that it does *not* imply that actors in a reflective mindset are rational actors free of every form of bias – only that psychology has devoted less time and resources to studying mirror-image psychological phenomena, such as overly positive biases towards others, under-confidence ('pessimistic illusions') and the illusion of losing control. The framework presented here allows for the possibility that actors in a reflective mindset may exhibit more than just the logical opposites of the biases described in Table 1.2 ('not overconfident'), by including their polar opposites ('under-confident'). In this way, the reflective and reflexive mindset framework represents a radical departure from previous political science

[63] William Samuelson and Richard Zeckhauser, 'Status Quo Bias in Decision Making', *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 1, no. 1 (1988).

[64] Kahneman and Renshon, 'Hawkish Biases', 89.

[65] Ibid. 79.

models that rigidly assume that individuals behave in a bipolar fashion – either like biased 'reflexive' cognitive misers or cold-bloodedly rational, unbiased optimisers.[66]

Based on the framework introduced in this chapter, we would expect actors in a reflective mindset to weigh new and conflicting streams of data in a more deliberate manner, and to make more of an effort to estimate the probable success of potential options than those in a reflexive mindset. However, this decision-making approach does not guarantee the complete absence of bias, nor does it necessarily approximate the locating of an optimal solution among a complex set of options using a series of axioms of rational choice.[67] If, to borrow Herbert Simon's phrase, all human beings are 'bounded' in their rationality all of the time, the reflexive and reflective mindset framework suggests that they may not be bounded in their rationality *in the same way and to the same degree* all of the time.

Table 1.2 Negative and Positive Cognitive Biases of Reflexive and Reflective Mindsets

		Mindsets	
	Cognitive Biases	**Reflexive**	**Reflective**
Negative biases (external)	Fundamental attribution errors ('in-group' bias)	higher	lower
	Risk-seeking in the domain of losses	higher	lower
	Negative impact bias	higher	lower
Positive biases (internal)	Unrealistic optimism	higher	lower
	Illusions of control	higher	lower
	Illusions of transparency	higher	lower

[66] Such a premise rests upon the dubious assumption that all problems, or indeed any problem, in international political life can be optimised. Setting aside the complexity and uncertainty of high-stakes decisions in international relations, behavioural economist Richard Thaler argues that even those kinds of optimisation problems that ordinary people confront in their everyday lives are 'often too hard for them to solve, or even come close to solving' in a rational choice way. For example, Thaler observes that even 'a trip to a decent-sized grocery store offers a shopper millions of combinations of items that are within the family's budget.' Thaler, *Misbehaving*, 6.

[67] Ibid. 29.

Fundamental attribution errors

Biases in explanations of the behaviour of others are known as fundamental attribution errors, and they are among the most studied biases in social cognition.[68] Because the mental states of others cannot be directly observed, individuals must rely on inferences to explain behaviour. These inferences can either be attributed to unchanging, fixed states of mind or 'dispositions', or to temporary situational pressures as others perceive them.[69] Biases of attribution reduce or eliminate consideration of situational (i.e. 'external') variables that might conceivably affect an adversary's behaviour in favour of interpretations that privilege unchanging dispositional (i.e. 'internal') factors. Explanations that take into account situational context raise the possibility that others' behaviour may exhibit several defining, and potentially contradictory, characteristics.

Because of their more limited receptivity to new or discordant information, actors in a reflexive mindset are more prone to exhibit biases of causal attribution that exaggerate the unchanging dispositions and intentions of other actors. Attributing the behaviour of others to stable dispositions satisfies the 'law of Occam's Razor – the preference for the most parsimonious and coherent explanation of the data at hand'.[70] By overestimating the degree to which the behaviour of others is explained by powerful and enduring personality factors, the individual can minimise the number of causes that appear to be operating and read order into discrete or even random bits of data. By endowing actors with stable dispositions or fixed 'personality traits', individuals can cling to a 'happy, if sometimes illusory, feeling of predictability of behaviour and therefore of control over the environment'.[71] We can expect this sense of cognitive ease to be particularly appealing to actors in reflexive mindsets, who prefer cognitive simplicity and have lower thresholds for cognitive dissonance.

Risk-Seeking in Losses

Actors in a reflective mindset are predicted to be at least moderately risk averse, while those in a reflexive mindset are expected to exhibit much higher thresholds for risk in seeking to recoup

[68] George Quattrone, 'Overattribution and Unit Formation: When Behavior Engulfs the Person', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 42, no. 4 (1982); Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, 'Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases', *Science* 185, no. 4157 (1974).

[69] Kahneman and Renshon, 'Hawkish Biases', 82–83.

[70] Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 320.

[71] Edward Jones et al., eds., *Attribution: Perceiving the Causes of Behavior* (Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press, 1972), 92–93.

perceived losses. Such discrepancies in risk-seeking within the domain of losses can be principally attributed to the loss aversion experienced by actors in reflexive frames of mind. Prospect theorists have discovered that risk-seeking preferences are most prevalent when people face difficult choices, and when at least one of those choices involves accepting a sure loss.[72] This is known as the 'certainty effect' in psychology, and it refers to the overweighting of outcomes that are, or are believed to be, certain relative to outcomes that are merely probable.[73] In this way, 'certainty enhances the aversion to a sure loss just as it enhances the attractiveness of a sure gain'.[74] Because actors in a reflexive mindset are characteristically more attracted to certainty and to absolutisms than to uncertainty or ambiguity, they are consequently more likely to respond to the certainty effect. We can therefore expect that actors in reflexive frames of mind will not only be more risk-acceptant in the domain of losses than those in reflective frames of mind, but that they will also be more likely to perceive possible losses as sure losses, amplifying the effects of this particular bias.

Negative Impact Bias

Impact bias, a type of emotional bias, is the tendency to overestimate the length or intensity of future emotional states on the basis of how one feels in the present.[75] Negative impact bias refers to the overestimation of the impact of future negative or 'bad' emotional states for the person experiencing or contemplating them in the present. Loss aversion is a type of negative impact bias because people expect or predict future losses to have a greater psychological impact on well-being than equal gains of the same magnitude.[76] Part of the reason why this overestimation occurs is because individuals suffering from negative impact bias do not consciously integrate into their predictions of future feelings the ways that negative events will be minimised or 'rationalised away' in the future by psychological defence mechanisms, such as self-serving attributions, positive illusions and attempts to reduce cognitive dissonance. Because these psychological defence mechanisms typically operate automatically and subconsciously, individuals suffering from negative impact bias tend to overlook the positive biases that will help them to overcome their present negative emotional states in the

[72] Kahneman and Tversky, 'Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision Under Risk'; Jeffrey J. Rachlinski, 'Gains, Losses, and the Psychology of Litigation', *Southern California Law Review* 70, no. 1 (1996).

[73] Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, 'The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice', *Science* 211, no. 4481 (1981): 455.

[74] Kahneman and Renshon, 'Hawkish Biases', 89.

[75] Timothy Wilson and Daniel T. Gilbert, 'The Impact Bias is Alive and Well', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 105, no. 5 (2013).

[76] Deborah A. Kermer et al., 'Loss Aversion is an Affective Forecasting Error', *Psychological Science* 17, no. 8 (2006).

future.[77] Because of a confluence of factors, including higher levels of loss aversion, lower levels of integrative complexity and higher levels of confidence, we should expect actors in a reflexive mindset to be more susceptible to negative impact biases than those in a reflective mindset.

Unrealistic Optimism

The proposed framework has so far argued that reflexive mindsets are susceptible to a range of well-known *negative* biases concerning their external environment. However, their trait dimensions also leave actors who are in a reflexive mindset more susceptible to a range of well-known *positive* biases concerning themselves. Psychologists generally label such biases 'positive illusions'.[78] We have already discussed how actors in a reflexive mindset are more prone to self-serving evaluations: this leaves them more vulnerable to positive illusions in general, and to the most commonly studied of these illusions in particular – a type of bias known as 'unrealistic optimism' or the 'optimism bias'.[79] In judging the probability of positive future outcomes, individuals exhibiting an optimism bias will be more likely to align their predictions of what will happen to what they would like to see happen, and to be unduly optimistic about their prospects compared with those of others.[80] This can lead to corollary biases, such as the planning fallacy, which is the erroneous underestimation of the time required to complete future tasks.[81]

One important cause of the optimism bias seems to be 'base-rate' or 'reference group' neglect, which refers to the discounting or dismissing of distributional data concerning related cases that would confirm the abilities or skills of the peer group against which individuals are competing, or otherwise deflate overly optimistic predictions of one's own likelihood of success.[82] We can hypothesise that actors in a reflexive mindset, with their lower receptivity to new, as well as to discordant, data, are more at risk of this kind of base-rate discounting. Conversely, actors in a reflective mindset are less

[77] Timothy Wilson and Daniel T. Gilbert, 'Affective Forecasting: Knowing What to Want', *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 14, no. 3 (2005): 133.

[78] Taylor and Brown, 'Illusion and Well-Being', 195–196.

[79] Gary Marks, 'Thinking One's Abilities Are Unique and One's Opinions Are Common', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 10, no. 2 (1984): 203.

[80] Steven Sherman, 'On the Self-Erasing Nature of Errors of Prediction', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 39, no. 2 (1980): 211.

[81] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, 'Intuitive Prediction: Biases and Corrective Procedures', *TIMS Studies in Management Science* 12 (1979).

[82] Colin Camerer and Dan Lovallo, 'Overconfidence and Excess Entry: An Experimental Approach', *The American Economic Review* 89, no. 1 (1999): 307; Roger Buehler, Dale Griffin and Michael Ross, 'Exploring the "Planning Fallacy": Why People Underestimate their Task Completion Times', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67, no. 3 (1994).

at risk of discounting but may alternatively consider *too much* discordant data, such that it precipitates under-confidence.

Illusions of Control

The illusion of control is another type of positive illusion: it refers to the exaggerated perception of the extent to which outcomes depend on one's actions. This illusion stems from the self-serving evaluation that one has substantial control over events. Psychological studies have demonstrated that individuals labouring under this illusion are willing to take greater risks if they are the ones responsible for taking action in response to events. For example, experiments have shown that individuals who believe that they can control the outcome of a rolling die are more willing to take the risk of placing a bet when they do the rolling.[83] In competitive situations, the illusion of control 'causes each side to believe that the outcome of the competition depends mostly on its own actions and abilities, even when it depends equally on the achievements of competitors'.[84] Actors in a reflexive mindset, characterised by a greater tendency towards self-serving evaluations than those in a reflective mindset, are more likely to fall prey to this illusion; in instances where individuals exhibiting this bias are making decisions, we can expect the secondary effect to be even higher levels of risk-taking.

Illusions of Transparency

The illusion of transparency, or 'transparency bias', is the mirror image of attribution error. If, in explaining the behaviour of others, fundamental errors of attribution privilege causal attributions of fixed, dispositional factors, then the transparency illusion relates to how individuals overlook the ways in which their own behaviour appears similarly fixed to others. In other words, the motives behind one's own behaviour are not usually as transparent to others as they are to oneself, and individuals are almost always more aware of how situational constraints affect their own behaviour than they are of how it affects others' behaviour. As a result, individuals suffering from transparency

[83] Ellen Langer, 'The Illusion of Control', ibid. 32, no. 2 (1975): 312, 324.

[84] Kahneman and Renshon, 'Hawkish Biases', 81.

bias overestimate the extent to which their own thoughts, feelings and motivations are apparent to observers.[85]

This lack of awareness or misunderstanding of how one's behaviour is perceived by external agents can increase hostility between actors, even when one's own intentions are not hostile. This arises because of a lack of understanding that one's own motives, even if benign, can be easily misunderstood. 'Because they believe their benign intentions are readily apparent to others, actors underestimate the need to reassure the other side. Their opponents – even if their own intentions are equally benign – are correspondingly more likely to perceive more hostility than exists and to react in kind.'[86] Once again, we can expect that actors in a reflexive mindset will be more prone to exhibiting this type of bias because they are less likely to integrate discrepant points of view (such as how others perceive them) into their own calculations of how their behaviour appears to external observers.

Overarching Effects of Dual Mindsets

Although each individual bias discussed above has unique effects, together, negative and positive biases combine to affect more than just overconfidence levels. This study proposes that mindsets systematically affect decision-making behaviour in at least three domains: sensitivity to threats, propensity for risk-taking and temporal discounting. Broadly speaking, temporal discounting refers to the valuing of rewards that will be gained in the present over those that will be gained in some specified time horizon in the future. Higher levels of temporal discounting tend to be synonymous with impulsivity and lack of self-control, whereas lower levels are linked with delayed gratification.[87] Actors in a reflexive mindset are expected to experience heightened sensitivity to perceived external threats, to have an increased propensity to take risks to overcome those perceived threats, and to engage in greater temporal discounting as regards the immediate versus long-term reward trade-offs of confronting such threats. Actors in a reflective mindset are expected to reverse these trends by conversely reducing the degree to which actors are sensitive to threats, increasing their levels of risk aversion and tempering their inclinations towards high rates of temporal discounting.

[85] Ibid. 84.

[86] Ibid. 85.

[87] Eli Tsukayama and Angela Duckworth, 'Domain-Specific Temporal Discounting and Temptation', *Judgment and Decision Making* 5, no. 2 (2010).

Table 1.3 Overarching Effects of Dual Mindsets

	Mindsets	
Overarching Effects	**Reflexive**	**Reflective**
Threat sensitivity	higher	lower
Risk propensity	higher	lower
Temporal discounting	higher	lower

Hypothesis 1: Reflexive mindsets are more likely to heighten sensitivity to threats.

Many of the six aforementioned biases in judgment to which reflexive mindsets are susceptible contribute to systematically heightening sensitivity to external threats. In particular, three of the biases associated with reflexive mindsets are so-called 'negative' biases that apply to an individual's external environment and that cumulatively contribute to the overarching phenomenon of threat sensitivity: fundamental attribution errors, risk-seeking in losses and negative impact biases. Although the fundamental attribution error does not as a rule predict a negative bias towards others, psychological experiments have nevertheless shown that contemplating the intentions and motivations of others – particularly in contexts where collective trust is not already positively established – can increase presumptive feelings of suspicion or distrust.[88] For example, studies have found that policymakers inclined towards simplistic 'black-and-white' generalisations concerning the motivations of others, as embodied by biases of attribution, are more likely to perceive offensive motivations behind their actions.[89]

This occurs because the principal effect of discounting situational factors in the interpretation of others' behaviour is to simplify the causes and motivations that drive their actions; in the uncertain context of international politics, such simplification can imbue a potential adversary's actions with greater coherence and consistency than may be objectively warranted, can heighten distrust and suspicion of others' motives and can increase the fear of becoming a victim of the 'sucker's payoff' –

[88] Roderick Kramer, 'The Sinister Attribution Error: Paranoid Cognition and Collective Distrust in Organizations', *Motivation and Emotion* 18, no. 2 (1994).

[89] Ralph K. White, 'Empathizing with the Rulers of the USSR', *Political Psychology* 4, no. 1 (1983). Conspiracy theories are representative of a very threat-sensitive way of thinking. Although conspiracy theories can vary wildly in both subject and scope, scholar Cass Sunstein observes that 'in some cases those theories help to fuel violence' because individuals look for targets to blame when bad things or events happen to them. Cass R. Sunstein, *Conspiracy Theories and Other Dangerous Ideas* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), 31–32.

the anticipated regret from trusting someone later deemed to be fundamentally untrustworthy.[90] In other words, simplified interpretations of behaviour that singularly concentrate on motivated intent can, in the absence of dispositive information confirming such intent, create the illusion that one understands another's motives, which distorts and exaggerates the perception of threat.

The other two negative biases identified in this chapter, loss aversion, which takes the form of risk-seeking in the domain of losses, and negative impact bias, contribute to threat sensitivity for similar reasons – by magnifying the anticipated detrimental effects of potentially threatening actions or behaviour and diminishing receptivity to other, more positive, kinds of information concerning future opportunities. For example, political scientist Robert Jervis observes that loss aversion can help to explain the widespread influence of threat-sensitive beliefs, such as the domino theory: 'Earlier in the Cold War the United States was preoccupied with what it saw as losses that might lead to further dominoes falling but paid little attention to the reversal of Soviet fortunes in Egypt, the Central African Republic, Ghana, or even China'.[91] Taken together, these individual negative biases that are characteristic of a reflexive mindset privilege negative over positive information about the external environment, with the ultimate effect of increasing threat sensitivity.[92] According to international relations scholars Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'the negativity bias explains disparate and puzzling phenomena, including threat inflation, gambling in the face of loss, and the tendency to learn from failures rather than successes'.[93]

By the same token, the positive traits and biases that characterise reflexive mindsets have a role to play in exaggerating the perception of threats prompted by errors of attribution. Positive illusions stem from an over-inflated perception of the self and of its capabilities, which encourages self-referential or, quite literally, self-centred thinking. This in turn encourages individuals to construe the motivations for other's behaviour in overly personal terms, which is one of the defining features of what psychologists called 'paranoid cognition':

> Around the central core of persecutory delusions [that preoccupy the paranoid person] there exists a number of attendant properties such as suspiciousness, hypersensitivity, hostility, fearfulness, and self-reference that lead such individuals to interpret events that have nothing to do with them as

[90] Kramer, 'The Sinister Attribution Error'.

[91] Robert Jervis, 'Political Implications of Loss Aversion', *Political Psychology* 13, no. 2 (1992): 189.

[92] Roy F. Baumeister et al., 'Bad Is Stronger Than Good', *Review of General Psychology* 5, no. 4 (2001).

[93] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'Bad World: Negativity Bias and the Cycle of War', paper presented at the Annual International Studies Association Convention, Toronto, Canada (2013).

> bearing on them personally. Thus, paranoid cognitions, via a process of misattribution and over-attribution, engender an exaggerated or 'irrational' distrust and suspicion of others.[94]

In other words, many positive biases concerning 'the self' can contribute just as much as negative biases concerning 'the other' to increases in threat sensitivity.

Hypothesis 2: Reflexive mindsets are more likely to increase risk propensities.

In addition to exhibiting several negative biases concerning the external environment, reflexive mindsets are simultaneously more prone than reflective mindsets to several positive biases concerning the self. Although seemingly contradictory, the predominantly negative biases that encourage threat sensitivity and the positive biases that encourage risk-seeking can be reconciled because they operate in different domains. For actors in a reflexive mindset, negative information about, and events in, the external world 'loom large' ('other-perception'), whereas in the realm of the self, positive information and events are prioritised ('self-perception').[98] These positive biases contribute to the overarching phenomenon of overconfidence, which in turn encourages higher risk propensities among individuals. How do they do so? In theory, they can contribute in at least one of two ways, neither of which is mutually exclusive of the other: either by altering decision-makers' subjective estimates of success and the certainty with which such estimates are calculated, or by raising the threshold of acceptance for risky decisions, despite an individual's knowledge of the odds.[99]

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[94] Kramer, 'The Sinister Attribution Error', 202.

[98] Johnson and Tierney, 'Bad World', 17. The negative and positive biases associated with errors of attribution exemplify this duality: fundamental attribution errors discount situational variables in favour of dispositional ones when examining other people's behaviour, while illusions of transparency reverse this dynamic when examining the motivations for one's own behaviour. Daniel T. Gilbert and Patrick S. Malone, 'The Correspondence Bias', *Psychological Bulletin* 117, no. 1 (1995). The same duality holds true in regard to the operation of the optimism bias: cognitive neuroscientist Tali Sharot finds that 'not only do people hold an optimistic bias about their personal future; in addition, they hold a pessimistic bias about everyone else's'. Tali Sharot, *The Optimism Bias: A Tour of the Irrationally Positive Brain* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2011). iBooks, 157.

[99] Scholars Michael Horowitz and Allan Stam helpfully distinguish between the separate, but nonetheless related, concepts of uncertainty and relative risk in their book on why leaders fight: uncertainty refers to the unknown properties of a gamble, while relative risk refers to the known odds of any particular outcome occurring. Horowitz and Stam clarify that leaders can be risk-acceptant in one of two ways: either by acting in the face of uncertainty (typically because they confidently believe that the unknown odds are nevertheless operating in their favour) or by being willing to tolerate the known risks associated with a particular decision because the alternatives are considered intolerable. Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam and Cali M. Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 27–31.

In the first instance, positive illusions, such as unrealistic optimism, contribute to a rosier picture of individuals' capabilities and of their future probabilities of success than base-rate data can justify.[100] Political scientist Yaacov Vertzberger defines risk as 'the likelihood of the materialisation of validly predictable … consequences with adverse values'.[101] Overconfidence, and the unrealistically positive illusions from which it derives, lowers aversion to risk because positive biases tend to reduce individuals' ability to accurately apprehend adverse probabilities. In an illusory future, people can more easily convince themselves that adverse values can be mitigated or avoided altogether in the pursuit of set goals.

We can expect these risk propensities to be exaggerated in the domain of perceived losses due to the strong loss aversion that is hypothesised to characterise reflexive mindsets. This means that, for actors in a reflexive frame of mind, even small changes to the status quo can significantly increase risk-taking behaviour, regardless of whether the risks of such behaviour far outweigh the potential losses. That is, in a loss-averse frame of mind, 'people will take risks in the hope of avoiding loss, even though the result may be an even greater loss, and even though the expected value of the gamble is worse – and sometimes considerably worse – than the value of the certain loss'.[102] In the second instance, positive illusions can lower the threshold at which individuals find risk – even objectively high levels of risk – acceptable.[103] Moreover, we can expect high levels of threat sensitivity to contribute to risk tolerance in this regard: just as prospect theory predicts, when their own survival is perceived to be at stake, individuals are more risk-acceptant than when their survival is not perceived to be at stake, or when comparable gains could be made.[104]

Hypothesis 3: Reflexive mindsets are more likely to encourage temporal discounting.

Intertemporal choices are decisions that involve trade-offs among costs and benefits that occur at different times. Individuals who experience different rates of temporal discounting will exhibit

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[100] Base rates refer to the prior probabilities of a class of events. Shelley E. Taylor and Jonathan D. Brown, 'Positive Illusions and Well-Being Revisited: Separating Fact from Fiction', *Psychological Bulletin* 116, no. 1 (1994): 22–23.

[101] Yaacov Vertzberger, 'Making and Taking Risky Decisions', *Cooperation and Conflict* 33, no. 1 (1998): 5.

[102] Jack S. Levy, 'Loss Aversion, Framing Effects, and International Conflict', in *Handbook of War Studies II*, ed. Manus I. Midlarsky (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 195.

[103] This kind of risk propensity is evident when people engage in risky lifestyle choices, such as chain smoking or extreme sports, because they undervalue the dangers posed by disease or serious accidents, whose existence and even statistical probabilities of occurring they may accept as valid, but which they refuse to believe will affect them personally. Frank McKenna, 'It Won't Happen to Me: Unrealistic Optimism or Illusion of Control?', *British Journal of Psychology* 84, no. 1 (1993).

[104] Rose McDermott, James H. Fowler and Oleg Smirnov, 'On the Evolutionary Origin of Prospect Theory Preferences', *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 2 (2008); Barbara J. McNeil et al., 'On the Elicitation of Preferences for Alternative Therapies', *The New England Journal of Medicine* 306, no. 21 (1982).

different time preferences with respect to anticipated rewards – that is, individuals will weigh the anticipated value of future rewards differently.[105] More specifically, temporal discounting 'refers to the tendency to discount the subjective value of future goods as a function of the delay in receiving them'.[106] Impulsive intertemporal choice refers to the selection of immediate (or sooner), but lesser, rewards, whereas self-controlled choice implies foregoing immediate satisfaction while waiting for more distant, but theoretically greater, rewards – also known as delayed gratification. When individuals prefer immediate gratification over delayed gratification, they tend to devalue or 'discount' rewards for which one must wait.[107] This violates the assumptions of the rational actor model, which assumes that individuals discount the future at a constant rate and are not sensitive to the length of delay of future pay-offs.[108]

Actors in a reflexive mindset are expected to exhibit steeper or more 'hyperbolic' rates of time discounting with respect to future rewards than those in reflective mindsets – meaning that actors in such a mindset are less likely to choose delayed gratification and more likely to prefer immediately available awards.[109] As psychologist Walter Mischel and colleagues explain: 'those who have higher discount rates – and thus have steeper hyperbolic functions – reach the point of preference reversal [for immediate gains] much sooner than those who have flatter discount functions with lower discount rates'.[110] This implies that actors in a reflexive mindset display a greater lack of impulse control and are more likely to reverse their preferences as decision time nears – violating the principle of transitivity, one of the core tenets of rationality as defined by rational choice theory.

Temporal discounting can be summed up by another type of bias, which psychologists label the 'present' bias. The present bias implies that actors in a reflexive mindset are more likely to allow

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[105] For a good overview of the development of the study of intertemporal choice and its broad application to economic and psychological problems see George Loewenstein, Daniel Read and Roy Baumeister, eds., *Time and Decision: Economic and Psychological Perspectives on Intertemporal Choice* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003).

[106] Tsukayama and Duckworth, 'Domain-Specific Temporal Discounting and Temptation', 72.

[107] Stephen B. Manuck et al., 'A Neurobiology of Intertemporal Choice', in *Time and Decision: Economic and Psychological Perspectives on Intertemporal Choice*, eds. George Loewenstein, Daniel Read, and Roy Baumeister (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003), 139.

[108] The standard rational-actor model of time preferences is represented by economist Paul Samuelson's 'discounted utility' model. However, the model's assumption of constant-rate discounting problematically assumes that people exhibit consistent behaviour over time. Philip Streich and Jack S. Levy, 'Time Horizons, Discounting, and Intertemporal Choice', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 2 (2007).

[109] The discount rate r is inversely related to the discount factor ∂, such that $\partial=1/(1+r)$. The higher the discount rate, the more one discounts the future, the lower the discount factor, and the smaller the 'discounted present value' of future payoffs.

[110] Walter Mischel, Ozlem Ayduk and Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton, 'Sustaining Delay of Gratification over Time: A Hot-Cool Systems Perspective', in *Time and Decision: Economic and Psychological Perspectives on Intertemporal Choice*, eds. George Loewenstein, Daniel Read, and Roy Baumeister (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003).

their immediate thoughts and feelings about the present to drive their predictions and decisions concerning the future. Both the negative and positive biases of directionality associated with reflexive mindsets facilitate such temporal discounting. For example, negative impact bias (overestimating the emotional impact of future negative events), including loss aversion, can lead people to emphasise immediate gains over larger delayed gains as well as to dread future losses more keenly than they anticipate valuing comparable future gains. Similarly, unrealistic optimism about oneself and the future can lead to temporal myopia if people overconfidently discount the time-delayed risks of their present actions in favour of imagining a rosy future. In general, actors who are less likely to appreciate the possible future contingencies of present behaviour are more likely to be present-biased and to exhibit a 'better now than later' mentality.[111]

Application of the Dual Mindset Theory to International Relations

What are the implications of reflexive and reflective mindsets for international relations? This author concedes that each of the cognitive biases identified in this chapter has been documented in various experimental and laboratory situations that did not involve real-world conflict. However, in tracing the collective implications of these 'reflexive' biases for international relations, psychologists have observed a predictably bellicose or 'hawkish' directionality of effect. Psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Jonathan Renshon, for example, have observed that 'we find, almost without exception, that the biases recently uncovered by psychological research favour hawkish decisions in conflict situations.'[112] Although Kahneman and Renshon have conceded that 'neither psychology nor decision science' can provide a complete theory of inter-state conflict, they assert that it can provide 'templates for patterns that can be recognized in complex situations'.[113] To date, any identified correlation between the biases uncovered by decades of social and cognitive research and

[111] Suicide can be said to embody the 'furthest extremity of intertemporal choice', the outcome of a mental place so suffused with present bias that 'the future collapses onto the present in shared hopelessness'. Stephen B. Manuck et al., 'A Neurobiology of Intertemporal Choice', ibid. 152.

[112] Kahneman and Renshon, 'Hawkish Biases', 79. Kahneman defines the adjective 'hawkish' to mean a 'propensity for suspicion, hostility and aggression in the conduct of conflict, and for less cooperation and trust when the resolution of a conflict is on the agenda'.

[113] Ibid. 92–93. The effects of hawkish biases are not limited to individuals alone, and can be exacerbated in the context of group decision-making. The biases that this study argues are characteristic of reflexive mindsets, such as unrealistic optimism, the illusion of control and errors of attribution that promote adversary stereotypes, are all highly correlated with groupthink dynamics. This is because, as Irving Janis observed in his seminal publication *Groupthink*, such biases tend to reinforce perceptions of the group's collective superiority. Unsurprisingly, most identified cases of groupthink in international relations have resulted in decisions to go to war. For example, in a study of American decision-making during 19 international crises since the end of the Second World War, Janis and his colleagues found that where a large number of these groupthink symptoms (i.e. 'reflexive' biases) existed, crisis outcomes were more likely to result in international conflict. Gregory Herek, Irving L. Janis and Paul Huth, 'Decision Making During International Crises: Is Quality of Process Related to Outcome?', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution (1986–1998)* 31, no. 2 (1987): 203; Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982).

the probability of war has constituted little more than a loose and underdeveloped collection of general observations – principal among which is the suggestion that 'a bias in favour of hawkish beliefs and preferences is built into the fabric of the human mind'.[114]

Translating psychologists' general observations into a set of novel hypotheses about the proposed causal mechanisms by which mindset adoption affects the conduct of international relations demands a more robust understanding of the causal chain linking the independent variable (the onset of crisis) with that of the proposed intervening variable (mindsets) and the dependent variable (probability of war). This section applies the reflexive and reflective mindset framework to international crisis management in the form of the 'dual mindset theory' of conflict. The previous section proposed three factors relevant to decision-making that are affected by mindset adoption – threat sensitivity, risk propensity and temporal discounting. The following section continues to delineate the causal chain linking changes in the international strategic context (i.e. those that precipitate crisis), through the crucial intervening variable of policymaker mindsets, to war and peace decisions in international relations. Provided that conflict is not already pre-determined by other, overriding factors in the strategic environment, this study proposes that the heightened threat sensitivity, risk propensity and temporal discounting induced by reflexive thinking increases the probability of war. Reflective mindsets, which are expected to mitigate against these different factors, are conversely expected to reduce the probability of conflict.

Table 1.4 Causal Mechanisms of Dual Mindsets in International Relations

	Mindsets	
Causal Mechanisms	**Reflexive**	**Reflective**
Threat sensitivity	higher	lower
Risk propensity	higher	lower
Temporal discounting	higher	lower
Probability of war	**higher**	**lower**

[114] Daniel Kahneman and Jonathan Renshon, 'Why Hawks Win', *Foreign Policy*, no. 158 (2007): 34.

Hypothesis 4: Threat sensitivity increases the probability of war.

In theory, heightened sensitivity to threats could serve to make individuals more cognisant of the inherent risks of war, as well as to enhance international cooperation through the detection, deterrence and punishment of international aggressors.[115] However, a considerable amount of social science research demonstrates that threat sensitivity usually has the opposite effect: seeing one's adversaries and their respective motives in the worst possible light often results not only in missed opportunities for cooperation, but in war.[116] The basic logic underlying threat sensitivity is that under-perception of threats is more dangerous than over-perception of them. As a consequence, individuals who are particularly threat-sensitive are at greater risk of threat inflation, defined as the 'tendency to exaggerate the aggressiveness and offensive capabilities of other states'.[117] Stephen Van Evera has described threat inflation as a 'pervasive feature of international politics and an important cause of international conflict', while Levy and Thompson observe that 'exaggeration of the hostility of the adversary's intentions is a particularly common pattern in the processes leading to war'.[118]

Overestimation of the scale and scope of threats can raise the chances of conflict breaking out in one of two ways – either because threat inflation can justify the adoption of defensive manoeuvres that run the risk of being misconstrued, or because it can encourage pre-emptive offensive actions that precipitate war. The first case is an example of the security dilemma, a well-known phenomenon of international politics in which defensive actions intended to enhance security provoke just the opposite by triggering the fears of other states, who assume that such actions are indicative of aggressive intent. Such fears are rooted in paranoid cognition, discussed earlier in this chapter, in which even purely defensive steps to improve security by one state are interpreted by other states in the system as intensely personal attacks that are aimed at their respective exploitation.[119] In either case, threat inflation may lead individuals (and states) to believe they are less secure than they in fact are, and to take potentially unnecessary or counterproductive steps to gain the security they do not

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[115] Sarah Mathew and Robert Boyd, 'Punishment Sustains Large-Scale Cooperation in Prestate Warfare', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 108, no. 28 (2011).

[116] Jeffrey Cavanaugh, 'From the "Red Juggernaut" to Iraqi WMD: Threat Inflation and How It Succeeds in the United States', *Political Science Quarterly* 122, no. 4 (2008); Chaim Kaufmann, 'Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War', *International Security* 29, no. 1 (2004); A. Trevor Thrall and Jane K. Cramer, eds., *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation Since 9/11* (London: Routledge Global Security Studies, 2009).

[117] Thrall and Cramer, eds., *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear*, xi.

[118] Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), xi; Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, *Causes of War* (Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 136.

[119] For an excellent overview of the literature on the security dilemma, see Shiping Tang, 'The Security Dilemma: A Conceptual Analysis', *Security Studies* 18, no. 3 (2009); Evan Montgomery, 'Breaking Out of the Security Dilemma: Realism, Reassurance, and the Problem of Uncertainty', *International Security* 31, no. 2 (2006).

believe they enjoy.[120] As Robert Jervis observes: 'Wars can then breed wars, not only between the same participants, but more generally because the experience of other's hostility can lead decision-makers to be (over) sensitive to later threats'.[121]

Hypothesis 5: Risk propensity increases the probability of war.

A large and growing body of literature in international relations has identified a strong correlation between overconfidence and war.[122] Risk-acceptant propensities can increase the probability of aggression by encouraging individuals to underestimate the costs of war and to overestimate both its benefits and the likelihood of one's success. In his landmark study of the causes of war, Geoffrey Blainey concluded that recurring optimism is a 'vital prelude' to war because it favours 'bold, aggressive and even reckless options'.[123] Decades later, Stephen Van Evera found overconfidence to be 'crucial to an understanding of war', while Dominic Johnson has observed that 'overconfidence can play a major role in the outbreak of war because states are more prone to fight if they hold an exaggerated belief in the likelihood of victory, the extent of the benefits, or the minimal nature of the costs'.[124] Indeed, the authors of one psychological study on the costs and benefits of positive illusions found that out of the many different arenas of life affected by risk-taking, from stock market gambling to preventive medicine, 'wars are … influenced the most by positive illusions'.[125]

History is littered with examples of exaggerated confidence and high risk tolerance in the run-up to war, with the results 'sometimes leading to victory against daunting odds, sometimes to utter defeat'.[126] The foundational belief that supported the popular 'cult of the offensive' in the years prior to the Great War was the confident and, as it turned out, chimerical assumption that offensive capabilities were the key to quick and decisive military victories.[127] Decades later, after the United

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[120] Thrall and Cramer, eds., *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear*, xi.

[121] Robert Jervis, 'Understanding Beliefs and Threat Inflation', in *American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Fear: Threat Inflation Since 9/11*, eds. A. Trevor Thrall and Jane K. Cramer (London: Routledge Global Security Studies, 2009), 35.

[122] For discussion of the connection between overconfidence and war, see Victor Davis Hanson, *A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Sparta Fought the Peloponnesian War* (London: Methuen, 2005); Alistair Horne, *Hubris: The Tragedy of War in the Twentieth Century* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2015); Dominic Johnson, *Overconfidence and War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1977); Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict*.

[123] Johnson, *Overconfidence and War*, 13; Johnson and Tierney, 'The Rubicon Theory of War', 23.

[124] Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict*, 16; Johnson and Tierney, 'Bad World', 18–19.

[125] Spyros Makridakis and Andreas Moleskis, 'The Costs and Benefits of Positive Illusions', *Frontiers in Psychology* 6 (2015): 7.

[126] Johnson, *Overconfidence and War*, 2.

[127] Stephen Van Evera, 'The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War', *International Security* 9, no. 1 (1984).

States initiated a preventive war against Iraq, a military aide to former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld remarked: 'If we had had the foresight to see how long it would last and even if it would have cost half the lives, we would not have gone in'.[128] Negative biases, such as increased sensitivity to loss, can complement positive illusions in encouraging the kind of risk-seeking behaviour that results in a higher probability of war. Although the desire to respond forcefully to present or future loss may increase the credibility of attempts at deterrence, it can also make the de-escalation and resolution of international conflicts less likely. Dominic Johnson notes that actors who are sensitive in the domain of losses 'become risk acceptant, encouraging reckless decisions and the escalation of costly military campaigns'.[129]

The divisions among American decision-makers during the Cuban Missile Crisis over how to respond to the covert emplacement of Soviet missiles in Cuba forcefully illustrate the point. One of the primary differences of opinion between US Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, who sought a combination of a blockade and a negotiated solution, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who argued in favour of bombing the missile sites, combined with an invasion of Cuba if necessary, was over the appropriate reaction to relative losses: McNamara was convinced that the emplacement of Soviet missiles in Cuba would not materially affect the overall balance of nuclear terror because the United States still retained second-strike capability, while the Joint Chiefs believed that missiles stationed so close to the American mainland would have a considerable and detrimental impact. The difference among them arose because McNamara was thinking about the problem from an absolute point of view ('a missile is a missile', he observed, and 'it makes no great difference whether you are killed by a missile fired from the Soviet Union or from Cuba'), while the Joint Chiefs were more concerned about the psychological impact of relative disparities – i.e. shrinking American dominance – in missile strength.[130] As Michael Dobbs recounts in his chronicle of the crisis, *One Minute to Midnight*:

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[128] Daniel Trotta, 'Iraq War Costs U.S. More Than $2 Trillion: Study', *Reuters*, 14 March 2013.

[129] Johnson and Tierney, 'Bad World'.

[130] Jack Snyder, 'Rationality at the Brink: The Role of Cognitive Processes in Failures of Deterrence', *World Politics* 30, no. 3 (1978): 356. This example demonstrates that differences in how individuals think about decision problems can have a significant impact on foreign policy. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, McNamara adhered more closely to the reasoning expected of rational actor (i.e. expected-utility) theory by focusing on 'final states' in response to risky gambles and not the relative losses or gains from the status quo. Did the United States still have enough missiles to survive and retaliate against a Soviet nuclear attack, regardless of whether Khrushchev placed missiles in Cuba? The answer was yes. Unlike McNamara, the Joint Chiefs were willing to risk nuclear war in response to what they perceived to be a relative change to the status quo resulting from the Cuban missile emplacements. As LeMay's deputy Thomas Power once starkly put it, as long as there were 'two Americans and one Russian' left alive at the end of a [nuclear] war, 'we win'. See Michael Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro On the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008). iBooks; Philip Tetlock and Barbara A. Mellers, 'The Great Rationality Debate', review of *Choice, Values, and Frames* by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, *Psychological Science* 13, no. 1 (2002).

> Both the Joint Chiefs and McNamara were right. Deploying missiles to Cuba strengthened Khrushchev's hand, and compensated for his shortage of intercontinental missiles. On the other hand, Khrushchev could not deliver a knockout blow against the United States under any circumstances. The surviving U.S. nuclear strike force would still be able to wreak much greater damage on the Soviet Union than the Soviets had inflicted on America. The doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction – MAD for short – was alive and well even after the deployment of Soviet missiles to Cuba.[131]

For the Joint Chiefs, eliminating the additional Soviet missiles that they perceived as a change to the status quo was worth the considerable risk of a potential war with both Cuba and her communist protector, the Soviet Union. For McNamara, who was more loss-neutral, the missiles did little to change the overall picture of losses and gains on the nuclear balance sheet.

Hypothesis 6: Temporal discounting increases the probability of war.

The fields of psychology and economics have long been concerned with questions of intertemporal choice, though the subject has gained only a small following among international relations scholars.[132] Nevertheless, theories of 'temporal discounting' or 'time preference' have important implications for the study of war. For example, the decision to launch a preventive war against a rising adversary is premised on the expected trade-offs between 'the costs of a war a state expects to win now and the costs and risks associated with continued decline, a loss of bargaining leverage, and the risk of war under less favourable circumstances later'.[133] Studies of temporal discounting have demonstrated that individuals affected by 'present' bias generally prefer to receive immediate gains, as opposed to those gains that could be retrieved in the future, and they also prefer to get losses 'over with' sooner rather than later due to the anticipatory dread of even greater loss in the future.

In other words, individuals exhibiting present bias are more likely to seek the immediate resolution of both gains and losses. Research suggests that the same psychological traits that characterise reflexive mindsets are at work in the operation of the present bias that produces this kind of temporal discounting – the need for closure and certainty and the tendency to quickly become cognitively overloaded, such that immediate resolution is preferable to continual monitoring of a situation or

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[131] Dobbs, *One Minute to Midnight*, 242.

[132] Time horizons are an area of international relations research that remains remarkably under-theorised and rarely incorporated into models of foreign-policy decision-making. For the rare exceptions, see Ronald Krebs and Aaron Rapport, 'International Relations and the Psychology of Time Horizons', *International Studies Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (2012); Streich and Levy, 'Time Horizons, Discounting, and Intertemporal Choice'.

[133] Streich and Levy, 'Time Horizons, Discounting, and Intertemporal Choice', 199.

to contemplation of the myriad ways in which contingency could alter future calculations of losses and gains.[134]

So how do the dynamics associated with temporal discounting make war or conflict more probable? Many international crises arise because of some perceived slight, aggression or threatening action on the part of one state (or states) in relation to another.[135] In situations of acute international confrontation, the aggrieved state (or states) must decide whether to seek immediate gratification by responding in kind, or even escalating the response, in response to those menacing actions that are perceived to be disrespectful or harmful in some way, or whether to pursue a more moderate course of action. For decision-makers faced with the choice between a certain war now and the possibility of a war at some point in the near future, individuals experiencing high temporal discount rates are more likely to discount the subjective present value of the future gains of waiting to initiate conflict – that is, they are less likely to value the gains inherent in delay, such as the additional time to complete defensive preparations that could serve as an effective deterrent to future adversaries or to determine if a diplomatic resolution might forestall the need for a costly war altogether.

High rates of temporal discounting, particularly in respect of the near future, can help to explain why arguments in favour of war often stress their inevitability. Scholars Norrin Ripsman and Jack Levy observe that 'although few if any wars are objectively inevitable … it is striking how frequently perceptions of the inevitability of war appear in the documentary record'.[136] If war is inevitable, then there is little to no future reward to be gained from waiting to initiate conflict, as potential adversaries may use that time to grow in strength. In other words, war always involves a certain degree of risk, but actors experiencing high rates of temporal discounting are more likely to overlook these future potential risks, in large part because they more easily discount the future rewards of delaying conflict in favour of immediate action. Positive illusions assist in this regard, by minimising the impression of large costs arising from war in favour of quick, short-term costs that can be rapidly absorbed. Janice Gross Stein and Ned Lebow, in their research on the psychology of deterrence during the Cold War, found a strong correlation between the commitment of states to aggressive action against their adversaries and temporal discounting: 'Leaders facing … foreign threats they

[134] David J. Hardisty, Kristin C. Appelt and Elke U. Weber, 'Good or Bad, We Want it Now: Fixed-Cost Present Bias for Gains and Losses Explains Magnitude Asymmetries in Intertemporal Choice', *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 26, no. 4: 359.

[135] Stephen Benedict Dyson and Paul t'Hart define international political crises as 'episodes of threat, uncertainty and urgency'. Stephen Benedict Dyson and Paul t' Hart, 'Crisis Management', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, eds. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 395.

[136] Norrin M. Ripsman and Jack S. Levy, 'The Preventive War that Never Happened: Britain, France, and the Rise of Germany in the 1930s', *Security Studies* 16, no. 1 (2007).

believe can only be overcome through an aggressive foreign policy become more sensitive to the threats of inaction than action'.[137]

Moreover, a number of psychological studies have demonstrated that individuals affected by loss aversion, a defining characteristic of reflexivity, are more likely to discount future gains than future losses, and thus to give more weight to future losses than to comparable gains (also known as 'positive temporal discounting' for gains and 'negative temporal discounting' for losses).[138] If, as some political scientists argue, many wars are motivated by the aim of heading off some future threat or of preventing some future decline in state power or status, then temporal discounting of gains but not losses provides a ready explanation for the 'better-now-than-later' logic that frequently serves as a rationale for war.[139] This asymmetry in discounting between losses and gains can also explain the failure of negotiated solutions: individuals in a reflexive frame of mind will weigh more heavily the future costs of concessions relative to their future benefits.[140] We can thus predict a strong correlation between individual rates of temporal discounting and the types of foreign policy errors that most preoccupy decision-makers in crisis situations: errors of omission versus errors of commission.[141] Actors in a reflexive mindset will be more concerned with avoiding errors of *omission* (delaying or hesitating in the face of a threat, when action is required), whereas actors in a reflective mindset will, conversely, be more concerned with avoiding errors of *commission* (acting pre-emptively against a threat when delay would have been wiser).

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[137] Richard Ned Lebow, 'What Can International Relations Theory Learn from the Origins of World War I?', *International Relations* 28, no. 4 (2014): 400. See also Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, 'Deterrence and the Cold War', *Political Science Quarterly* 110, no. 2 (1995).

[138] Loewenstein, Read and Baumeister, eds., *Time and Decision*; Levy, 'Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision-Making', 319.

[139] Jack S. Levy, 'Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War', *World Politics* 40, no. 1 (1987).

[140] Levy, 'Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision-Making', 319.

[141] This is not dissimilar to some of the conclusions reached by 'construal-level' theory, which is a theory of intertemporal judgment that posits that temporal distance from an event or decision influences the evaluation and choice of future events by systematically changing the way they are construed. According to this theory, individuals who suffer from optimism biases are generally less fearful of committing errors of commission than errors of omission, and they are more likely to conceive of the long-term future in an abstract, less complex, way. Krebs and Rapport, 'International Relations and the Psychology of Time Horizons', 533.

Table 1.5 Summary of the Causal Relationship Linking International Crises, Mindsets and War

Independent Variable	Intervening Variable	Causal Mechanisms	Dependent Variable
International Crisis/Change in Strategic Context	Reflexive mindsets	Higher threat sensitivity Higher risk propensity Higher temporal discounting	Higher probability of war
	Reflective mindsets	Lower threat sensitivity Lower risk propensity Lower temporal discounting	Lower probability of war

Comparative Advantages of Dual Mindsets in International Relations

This chapter has described the types of biases that are more likely to be triggered by a reflexive, as opposed to reflective, mindset, and the higher probability of war that is expected to result. Since war is generally considered a 'bad' or sub-optimal outcome in international relations, it would be natural for readers to assume that reflexive mindsets are the product of 'defective' mental processes and that psychological explanations are useful only insofar as they can provide insight as to 'when and why things go wrong'.[142] However, this would be a misreading, both of the value of psychology to our understanding of international relations and of the comparative utility supplied by each type of mindset to the effective management of international affairs.

Instead, as the final section of this chapter will elaborate, one mindset is not necessarily superior to the other: rather, each mindset possesses distinct advantages and disadvantages that are the mirror image of those of the other. Actors in a reflexive mindset are more likely to assume the worst regarding others' intentions in the international system (eliminating uncertainty in this regard) and to act accordingly; actors in a reflective mindset are less likely to automatically assume the worst regarding others' intentions and more likely to believe in the potentiality of measures to mutually

[142] Johnson, 'Survival of the Disciplines', 751.

reduce uncertainty in this regard.[143] Good judgment results from appropriately matching environmental cues with the mindset that is best-suited to respond to those cues.

This holds true with respect to opportunities as well as threats. Political scientists Stephen Walker and Akan Malici distinguish an opportunity from a threat by observing that 'the former is a cooperative situation in which gains are likely, whereas the latter is a conflict situation in which losses are likely'.[144] International crises, with which this study is principally concerned, are particularly likely to fall into the latter category, in which political leaders must determine the level of threat and corresponding likelihood of losses posed by potential adversaries. In threat situations, there are two general categories of error: deterrence failures (errors of omission) and false alarm failures (errors of commission).

The former occurs when decision-makers do not detect the threat of losses and therefore do not take sufficient action in time to deter that threat. The latter occurs when decision-makers either misperceive the nature of the threat or initiate action that creates a threat where it did not previously exist. Reflexive mindsets are more prone to errors of commission (reflected by high-risk gambles), whereas reflective mindsets are more susceptible to errors of omission (reflected by hesitation or indecision). At the extremes, each bias of error in response to potential threats carries with it distinct advantages and disadvantages as concerns the effective management of international relations: actors adopting a reflexive mindset are less likely to be taken advantage of by prospective adversaries, while those adopting a reflective mindset are less likely to precipitate unnecessary conflicts by tilting at international windmills, believing them to be existential threats.

[143] This basic distinction matches the findings of numerous other international relations scholars who have posited the existence of two fundamental positions regarding how to cope with uncertainty in the international system. These come in many guises ('offensive' versus 'defensive' neorealism, 'deterrence' versus 'spiral' models) but all such distinctions are premised on the notion that there are only two basic postures that states can adopt in response to the pervasive uncertainty that exists with regard to others' intentions in international affairs: unconditional and conditional. See Shiping Tang, 'Fear in International Politics: Two Positions', *International Studies Review* 10, no. 3 (2008); Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, 58–113.

[144] Stephen G. Walker and Akan Malici, *U.S. Presidents and Foreign Policy Mistakes* (Stanford, California: Stanford Security Series, 2011). iBooks, 41–42.

Table 1.6 Typology of Mindsets and Foreign Policy Errors in Crisis ('Threat') Situations[145]

	Reflexive Mindsets	**Reflective Mindsets**
Decision-Making Processes	Errors of Commission	Errors of Omission
Diagnosis of Threat	**Misperception** (too great a detection of threat)	**Misperception** (too little detection of threat)
Prescriptive Response	**Pre-emption** (too soon)	**Hesitation** (too late)

Reflexive Mindsets and 'False Alarm Failures'

Mistakes of commission are represented by 'false alarm' failures. False alarm failures can occur at two different stages of the decision-making process – in the initial diagnosis of the threat (the diagnostic error of unnecessary threat detection) and in the policy response to combat it (a prescriptive failure of pre-emption). False alarm failures are epitomised by unnecessary and disastrous errors of military pre-emption and, very often, an excess of unwarranted exuberance: Japan's suicidal attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 (an episode President Kennedy later described as the 'worst experience of my life'), the American escalation of war in Vietnam in 1965 and, many contemporaries might argue, the American invasion of Iraq in 2003.[146] Sir Francis Walsingham, notorious spymaster for England's Queen Elizabeth I, allegedly avowed that 'there is less danger in fearing too much than too little'.[147] However, reflexive mindsets that err on the side of commission can prompt unnecessarily risky gambles, precipitate costly and sometimes catastrophic military clashes and exacerbate perceptions of military incompetence. History abounds with ruinous examples, from the Russian General Staff's confident assertion before defeat at the hands of the Japanese Navy in 1905 that 'we will only have to throw our caps at them and they will run away', to American General Douglas MacArthur's fatal underestimation of Chinese military élan during the Korean War.[148]

[145] Table adapted from ibid.

[146] Gus Russo, *Live By The Sword: The Secret War Against Castro and the Death of JFK* (Baltimore, MD: Bancroft Press, 1998), 19.

[147] Walker and Malici, *U.S. Presidents and Foreign Policy Mistakes*, 215.

[148] Historical evidence indicates that such unwarranted exuberance was not the result of misleading or inadequate intelligence information, as might be expected by the rational actor model. See, for example, Bruce Menning, 'Miscalculating One's Enemies: Russian Military Intelligence before the Russo-Japanese War', *War in History* 13, no. 2 (2006). Johnson, *Overconfidence and War*, 31; David Halberstam, 'MacArthur's Grand Delusion', *Vanity Fair*, 24 September 2007; David Halberstam, *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War* (London: Macmillan, 2008).

The mirror image advantage of reflexive mindsets is their comparatively more powerful cheater-detection mechanism. The social psychologist Roderick Kramer observes that 'the risks and costs associated with misplaced trust may be quite substantial … a propensity towards vigilance with respect to detecting others' lack of trustworthiness may be quite prudent and adaptive'.[149] For example, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's accurate diagnosis of, and resistance in the face of, the geopolitical threat posed by Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich earned him the honorific 'Saviour of Western civilisation'.[150] His stubborn and exceedingly risky refusal to countenance negotiations with either Adolf Hitler or Benito Mussolini after the fall of France in 1940, and his decision to fight on over the objections of Cabinet ministers, such as Lord Halifax, appear nothing short of heroic in retrospect.[151] However, that same mindset served him less well in the case of the disastrous landings at Gallipoli and in his stubborn refusal to accept self-rule for India.[152]

Thus, whether the adoption of a reflexive mindset is more advantageous to political leaders in response to international crises depends greatly on the context and on the nature of the threat. The same risk propensity that led the belligerent, cigar-chomping US Air Force General Curtis LeMay to brazenly assert his belief at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis that 'at any point the Soviet Union could have been obliterated without more than normal SAC [Strategic Air Command] losses on our side' also lay behind Churchill's confident promise in the House of Commons never to 'flag or fail' against the Nazi juggernaut but to 'defend our Island, whatever the cost may be'.[153]

Reflective Mindsets and 'Deterrence Failures'

Mistakes of omission take the form of deterrence failures. Like false alarm failures, deterrence failures can occur at two different stages of the decision-making process – in the initial detection of the threat (diagnostic error of detection) and in the policy failure to deter it (prescriptive failure of

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[149] Kramer, 'The Sinister Attribution Error', 225–226.

[150] Nassim Nicholas Taleb and Philip Tetlock, 'On the Difference Between Binary Prediction and True Exposure with Implications for Forecasting Tournaments and Decision Making Research', 25 June 2013. Available at Social Science Research Network: http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2284964.

[151] Historian Ian Kershaw emphasises that Churchill's decision was by no means foreordained and his position was exceedingly precarious: 'The impending danger now forced upon the War Cabinet one of the most momentous decisions the British government had ever taken: whether to open up channels leading to a negotiated peace with Hitler, or whether to fight on. There was no shortage of opinion, some of it in influential quarters, which looked, reluctantly, to a negotiated settlement … as the only sensible course of action for Britain in such a grave situation. The outcome of the War Cabinet's deliberations was far from obvious in the days that the bulk of the British army was stranded on the Dunkirk beaches'. Ian Kershaw, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that Changed the World 1940–1941* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 24.

[152] Taleb and Tetlock, 'On the Difference Between Binary Prediction and True Exposure with Implications for Forecasting Tournaments and Decision Making Research'.

[153] Richard Rhodes, 'Annals of the Cold War: The General and World War III', *The New Yorker*, 19 June 1995.

hesitation). The deterrence failure *par excellence* in the history of contemporary international relations was Britain's appeasement of Hitler's Germany in the 1930s. Neville Chamberlain's strategy of prudent diplomatic negotiations failed to deter a Nazi invasion and occupation of the Czech Sudetenland. Although erring on the side of caution with respect to threats may be the lesser of the two evils from a calibration-of-threat perspective, it can produce its own pattern of systematic bias and, in the face of genuine threats, it can prove just as lethal. As the psychologists A. W. Kruglanski and Donna Webster note: 'People under a high need for closure may be correct in their judgement if the initial cue they seized and froze on was correct. To the contrary, people with a high need to avoid closure may commit errors if they too readily "unfroze" correct judgements and diluted them through excessive openness to misleading or irrelevant information'.[154]

In other words, actors in a reflective frame of mind are less likely than those in a reflexive frame to heed false threat signals, but they are, conversely, more likely to experience trouble in regard to distinguishing the genuine signals from the noise. Although she devoted relatively little attention to the particular cognitive mechanisms at work, Roberta Wohlstetter's classic account of the US government's failure to anticipate the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor is one of the pre-eminent studies of the dangers of this 'dilution effect'.[155] 'Never before have we had so complete an intelligence picture of the enemy', she writes, and yet 'we failed to anticipate Pearl Harbor not for want of the relevant materials, but because of a plethora of irrelevant ones'.[156] Much the same can be said of the failure to anticipate the 9/11 attacks. The authors of the *9/11 Commission Report* found that, while 'the system was blinking red', the surfeit of information pointing to an imminent attack actually made it very difficult to predict:

> Most of the intelligence community recognised in the summer of 2001 that the number and severity of threat reports were unprecedented. Many officials told us that they knew something terrible was planned, and they were desperate to stop it. Despite their large number, the threats received contained

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[154] Arie W. Kruglanski and Donna M. Webster, 'Motivated Closing of the Mind: "Seizing" and "Freezing"', *Psychological Review* 103, no. 2 (1996): 267.

[155] Levy, 'Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision-Making', 307.

[156] The Americans had cracked Japan's complicated diplomatic cypher system, known as PURPLE, in August 1940, well over a year before the attack at Pearl Harbor. The decrypts were given the code name MAGIC and gave the Roosevelt Administration the inestimable advantage of access to privileged dispatches between Tokyo and Japanese embassies around the world. However, as Wohlstetter points out, the signals pointing to an attack at Pearl Harbor were competing with vast numbers of other signals coming from the European theatre and the Soviet Union. Many of these signals pointed towards potential attacks elsewhere, such as the Philippines, the Thai peninsula or Guam. Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962), 382–387. For further reading see Chapter 8 'Tokyo, Autumn 1941' in Ian Kershaw, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that Changed the World, 1940–1941* (London: Penguin Books, 2008). iBooks; Leonard Mlodinow, *The Drunkard's Walk: How Randomness Rules Our Lives* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 195–196, 201–202.

> few specifics regarding time, place, method or target. Most suggested that attacks were planned against targets overseas; others indicated threats against unspecified "U.S. interests". We cannot say for certain whether these reports, as dramatic as they were, related to the 9/11 attacks.[157]

The Shelby Report, the investigative report of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on the 9/11 attacks, revealed that the FBI's Counterterrorism Division had around 68,000 outstanding and unassigned leads on potential terrorists going back to 1995, but that in retrospect only around 100 could have proved useful prior to the attack.[158] Scepticism on the part of senior officials also proved a stumbling block to understanding the true nature of the threat that summer. Former CIA Director George Tenet observed that by late July the alarm bells could not 'get any worse', but that men like Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz still questioned the reporting. Perhaps Bin Laden was simply 'trying to study U.S. reactions'.[159] And while senior leaders like Tenet alerted officials across the world to the potential threat, 'no one looked at the bigger picture; no analytic work foresaw the lightning that could connect the thundercloud to the ground'.[160]

Conclusion

This chapter introduced the dual mindset theory and examined its proposed effects on decision-making in international relations. Its principal task was to suggest a series of novel psychological hypotheses for understanding and tracing the causal mechanisms by which the intervening variable of individual mindsets may affect war and peace decisions.[161] The effect of mindsets on conflict decisions, which serve as a mediating factor between the onset of international crises (precipitated by changes in the strategic international context) and their outcome, occurs through three principal causal mechanisms: sensitivity to threats, propensity for risk and temporal discounting. The central argument presented is that, for political leaders engaging in crisis decision-making, the dominance of a reflexive mindset is expected to enhance each of these mechanisms and thereby increase the probability of conflict, while that of a reflective mindset is expected to reduce it.

While each causal mechanism represents an independent means by which an individual's preference for war is enhanced or diminished, the collective traits and biases (or lack thereof) that characterise

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[157] *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States* Authorised ed. (London: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004), 262–263.

[158] Malcolm Gladwell, 'Connecting the Dots: The Paradoxes of Intelligence Reform', *The New Yorker*, 10 March 2003.

[159] *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 259.

[160] Ibid. 277.

[161] Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*, 211.

our reflexive and reflective mindsets suggest that these mechanisms are likely to reinforce one another by operating in tandem. Taken together, they affect the probability of war by encouraging or discouraging political leaders from pursuing foreign policy decisions that promote confrontation on the international stage. This increase or decrease is neither automatically 'good' nor 'bad', neither categorically 'effective' nor 'defective'. Biased decision-making processes can lead, with the benefit of hindsight, to objectively 'good' outcomes, and vice versa.

However, in examining the broad properties of these dual mindsets, this chapter has side-stepped the question of why these two mental modes exist in the first place. If individuals are indeed capable of reflective – as opposed to purely reflexive – thought, why is this not simply the default mode for all human decision-making? What are the origins of these mindsets and why must they exist in competition with each other? Moreover, why should external factors, like acute or prolonged stress, affect whether individuals switch between them? The above framework and arguments concerning mindsets are derived from the disparate, decades-long findings of cognitive and social psychology – principally in the realm of cognitive heuristics (mental 'shortcuts') and biases. However, readers familiar with the 'dual systems' revolution in behavioural science will note the alignment of this framework with some of the more recent, major discoveries across academic disciplines in regard to the functioning of the human mind.

Although the idea that a distinction exists between two systems or 'processing modes' in the brain has been explored by many cognitive and social psychologists for the past quarter of a century, it is only recently that other scientific disciplines, such as neuroscience, evolutionary biology and the amalgamated fields of 'neurobiology', 'evolutionary psychology' and 'neuropsychology', have begun to weigh in with findings of their own to support the collective intuitions of behavioural psychologists.[162] These perspectives converge in the importance they attach to information processing as the key to understanding human decision-making behaviour under conditions of uncertainty, and in the centrality they assign to competing modes of information processing in the human brain.

[162] See, for example, Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 13; Jonathan St. B. T. Evans, 'Dual-Processing Accounts of Reasoning, Judgment, and Social Cognition', *Annual Review of Psychology* 59, no. 1 (2008); Drew Fudenberg and David K. Levine, 'A Dual-Self Model of Impulse Control', *The American Economic Review* 96, no. 5 (2006); Matthew D. Lieberman, 'Social Cognitive Neuroscience: A Review of Core Processes', *Annual Review of Psychology* 58, no. 1 (2007); Laura F. Mega, Gerd Gigerenzer and Kirsten G. Volz, 'Do Intuitive and Deliberate Judgments Rely on Two Distinct Neural Systems? A Case Study in Face Processing', *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 9 (2015); Jonathan St. B. T. Evans and Keith Frankish, eds., *In Two Minds: Dual Processes and Beyond* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).

The following chapter explores in greater depth the proposed origins of our dual mindsets. The advantages of undertaking this exploration are manifold. The first advantage is that the findings of dual systems theorists provide independent corroboration – across many different, often unrelated scientific disciplines – of the assumption that reflexive and reflective mindsets play an important role in human decision-making under variable conditions of stress. The second is that dual systems theory enriches our understanding of why these mental modes exist, including what core biological and psychological functions they serve, and it characterises those functions in a way that is entirely consistent with the reflexive and reflective mindset framework introduced in this chapter. The third advantage is that dual systems theory provides an established paradigm through which international relations scholars can explore individual-level variation among political leaders in decisions for and against war, even when those leaders are confronted with the same systemic constraints and decision-making dilemmas – phenomena not comfortably accounted for by either traditional rational actor or earlier psycho-dynamic models.

CHAPTER 2

BLINKING AND THINKING

Dual Systems Theory and the Origins of Our Dual Mindsets

'The task of figuring out how to combine the best of conscious deliberation and instinctive judgment is one of the greatest challenges of our time.'

MALCOLM GLADWELL, *Blink* (2005)

'I describe mental life by the metaphor of two agents, called System 1 and System 2, which respectively produce fast and slow thinking.'

DANIEL KAHNEMAN, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (2011)

According to many behavioural and social psychologists, two mental systems provide the basic foundation for all human reasoning: the first is an evolutionarily older system that is automatic, largely unconscious and fast (the 'reflexive mind'), and the second is a more recent, distinctly human system that is controlled, conscious and slow (the 'reflective mind').[1] This chapter examines what scientists call the 'dual process' or 'dual systems' theory of the human mind – a two-system model of human judgment that distinguishes between two broad families of mental operations.[2] The discovery of the mind's dual systems, occasionally known as the 'dual process turn' in psychology, supplies compelling scientific corroboration for the existence of the reflexive and reflective mindsets introduced in the preceding chapter. As such, this chapter extends and completes our discussion of the psychology of dual mindsets. It does so by examining how the characteristics and functions attributed to them in the previous chapter converge with some of the major findings of dual systems theory, and, in so doing, it provides a plausible rationale for their respective origins.

The chapter is divided into three parts: the first examines the adaptive value of our dual systems, including their core biological and psychological functions and their comparative advantages with

[1] Jonathan St. B. T. Evans, 'Dual-Processing Accounts of Reasoning, Judgment, and Social Cognition', *Annual Review of Psychology* 59, no. 1 (2008).

[2] The terms 'dual process' and 'dual systems' have both been used to describe theories of mental architecture premised upon the notion that humans have two mental modes or minds. For convenience, hereafter these terms will be used interchangeably.

regard to decision-making; the second applies these insights to international relations and considers how these two modes of decision-making in the human brain contribute to the observed variation in conflict outcomes according to the framework introduced in the previous chapter; and the third part explores the impact of different levels and types of stress upon their respective activation.

Like many mindset theories, 'dual systems' or 'dual process' theory grew out of the related sub-fields of cognitive and social psychology.[3] However, a growing body of research across the disparate disciplines of neuroscience, evolutionary biology and behavioural psychology has led to a remarkable convergence in findings regarding these two systems of the human mind – from their adaptive value and their operational mechanisms to their proposed influence on decision-making. They are variously known as 'System 1' and 'System 2', 'automatic' and 'effortful' reasoning, 'Type 1' and 'Type 2' processing, or, more popularly, 'blinking' and 'thinking'.[4] Research reveals that each of these reasoning systems are essential for human decision-making under conditions of uncertainty, but that they differ considerably with respect to their operation, costs and effects.[5] As this chapter will elaborate, which reasoning system dominates at any given time is affected by a complex host of variables and, in the context of crisis management, by stress in particular.

Despite the growing attention dual systems theories have received across different academic fields, and the ways in which new scientific instruments over the past decade have allowed for a much better understanding of how the brain works (what some are calling the 'neurobiological revolution'), international relations scholarship has been slow to apply these findings to its own research agenda.[6] Instead, it has remained caught between the traditional rational actor model, in

[3] Although the modern evolution of dual systems theories grew out of the cognitive revolution in psychology that began in the 1960s and 1970s, the idea of the mind being partitioned is an ancient one. Plato famously claimed that the soul is divided into three parts: reason, spirit and appetite. While Plato's more fanciful psychology was heavily influenced by his political theory (the three elements of the soul neatly correspond with the three classes in his conception of the ideal society), it contains some notable analogies to dual systems approaches: 'Like dual process theory, Plato's account is designed to explain psychological conflict – to show how we can harbour conflicting attitudes towards the same object. And Plato's conception of reason is similar to some modern conceptions of System 2, being that of an analytic system, which seeks the good of the individual as a whole, and is able to override more superficial judgments and desires originating in the other parts of the mind.' Fast forward a few millennia and we can see that dual systems approaches are also reminiscent of Freud's concept of the epic struggle between the 'primal id' and the 'superego'. Although he also posited the existence of a third, preconscious system, like many contemporary dual systems theorists Freud believed that the human mind was essentially divided between the realms of the conscious and the unconscious. Keith Frankish and Jonathan St B. T. Evans, 'The Duality of Mind: An Historical Perspective', in *In Two Minds: Dual Processes and Beyond*, eds. Keith Frankish and Jonathan St B. T. Evans (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), 2, 2–10.

[4] Daniel Kahneman and Shane Frederick, 'Frames and Brains: Elicitation and Control of Response Tendencies', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 11, no. 2 (2007): 46; Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (London: Penguin Books, 2006).

[5] Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London: Allen Lane, 2011).

[6] Although it can have different meanings, the term 'neurobiology' generally incorporates 'all those biological factors in the genes-brains-behaviour pathway'. Such factors include endocrinology, brain neurochemistry and physiology. Rose

which the individual decision-maker is hyper-efficient and largely irrelevant to the policy outcome, and superannuated political psychology models, in which the decision-maker is in equal measure extremely relevant and fatally flawed.[7] The latter is the product of the so-called 'cognitive revolution' in social psychology that peaked in the 1970s and that, despite significant modifications in the intervening decades within the parent discipline of psychology, has largely remained the standard paradigm through which psychological approaches have been applied to international relations.[8] The observations of political scientists Stephen Dyson and Paul t'Hart add force to the argument that political science scholarship has generally not kept pace with newer psychological developments:

> There is often a lag between the literatures in psychology proper and political psychology. Many political scientists do not engage with new intellectual currents in psychology, but rely instead on classics in political science that have a psychology focus. The errors and biases approach, a derivative of the cognitive miser and naïve scientist paradigms, persists in political science … while it has been substantially modified in the parent discipline of psychology. It is now time to take account of developments in dual process accounts of psychology and broaden our hypotheses on the impact of human psychology on crisis decision-making.[9]

Another important reason for introducing dual process models to corroborate the hypothesis that mindsets are important in international crisis decision-making is 'consilience': the notion that we can be more confident of a particular theoretical explanation if it is supported by many different fields of inquiry.[10] The term's uncommon usage has helped preserve its original meaning: 'literally a "jumping together" of both facts and theory to produce common networks of explanation across the scientific disciplines'.[11] Unlike the natural sciences, social science has remained sceptical of consilience within and across its domains, and of translating laboratory findings to the complex universe of international relations.[12] However, although no single approach can explain human

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McDermott and Peter K. Hatemi, 'The Study of International Politics in the Neurobiological Revolution: A Review of Leadership and Political Violence', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 1 (2014): 93.

[7] Stephen Benedict Dyson and Paul t' Hart, 'Crisis Management', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, eds. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 404.

[8] Jack S. Levy, 'Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision-Making', ibid. 308–310. Robert Jervis' *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* remains the classic study in this regard. Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

[9] Dyson and t' Hart, 'Crisis Management', 404.

[10] Edward O. Wilson, 'How to Unify Knowledge', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 935, no. 1 (2001).

[11] Edward O. Wilson, 'Consilience Among the Great Branches of Learning', *Daedalus* 127, no. 1 (1998): 132–133.

[12] E. O. Wilson observes that consilience is a very familiar concept in the natural sciences, in which 'physics, with its astonishing congruity to mathematics, came to undergird chemistry, which in turn proved foundational for biology'. Ibid. 133.

decision-making in its entirety, brain imaging technologies at the neural level can link inductions made about animal and human species at the biological level to the human behaviours described by behavioural psychology, sociology and anthropology. Insights from across these rapidly advancing fields can provide important additional empirical sources of evidence for social science predictions and, to a certain extent, can enhance the generalisability of such predictions across cultures and contexts.[13] A recent spate of interdisciplinary research on dual process systems suggests that the time is particularly ripe for consilience in this area.[14]

The Adaptive Value of Our Dual Systems

The preceding chapter raised several questions about the nature of our dual mindsets, including, in the most basic sense, why they exist at all. As this chapter aims to make clear, the existence of dual mindsets arises because human beings possess, in effect, two very different brains that operate within every individual. Aesop's parable about the improvident grasshopper who sang all summer and the industrious ant who stored up food for the winter is an allegorical tale about the virtues of long-term planning. This fable, taught to schoolchildren in various forms over the centuries to inculcate the value of hard work, provides a clue to understanding these contrasting systems of the brain. System 1 is our improvident grasshopper, operating 'automatically and quickly, with little or no effort, and no sense of voluntary control', while System 2 is our industrious ant, directing the mind towards those 'effortful mental activities that demand it'.[15] The principal difference between the systems is how much attention they demand of the individual: System 1 is 'fast', 'implicit', 'automatic' and 'intuitive', slow to learn but fast to access, whereas System 2 is 'slow', 'explicit', 'controlled' and 'analytical', quick to learn but slow to access.

As is the case with mindsets, and despite the close physiological connections between the two systems, they tend to exhibit an inverse correlation: as one lights up and becomes more active, activity in the other recedes. Imaging studies of the brain have confirmed this tension:

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[13] Nicholas D. Wright, 'The Biology of Cooperative Decision-Making: Neurobiology to International Relations', in *Handbook of International Negotiation: Interpersonal, Intercultural, and Diplomatic Perspectives*, ed. Mauro Galluccio (Washington, DC: Springer International Publishing, 2015), 56.

[14] Arie W. Kruglanski and Gerd Gigerenzer, 'Intuitive and Deliberate Judgments are Based on Common Principles', *Psychological Review* 118, no. 1 (2011); Laura F. Mega, Gerd Gigerenzer and Kirsten G. Volz, 'Do Intuitive and Deliberate Judgments Rely on Two Distinct Neural Systems? A Case Study in Face Processing', *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 9 (2015); Jonathan St. B. T. Evans, 'Dual Processes, Evolution and Rationality', *Thinking and Reasoning* 10, no. 4 (2004).

[15] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 20–21.

> Human behaviour is often governed by a competition between lower level, automatic processes that may reflect evolutionary adaptations to particular environments, and the more recently evolved, uniquely human capacity for abstract, domain-general reasoning and future planning … the idiosyncrasies of human preferences seem to reflect a competition between the impetuous limbic grasshopper and the provident prefrontal ant within each of us.[16]

The following sections examine the ways in which the dual mindset framework converges with what we know about these dual systems of the human brain, and explores the implications of this knowledge for decision-making and for our understanding of human rationality. Most importantly, it will be argued that each system possesses distinct adaptive value, and that this may help to explain the enduring influence of both systems – and mindsets – on human behaviour.

Thinking Fast and Slow: Our Believing and Unbelieving Brains

The dual mindset framework identified several psychological traits that distinguish reflexive from reflective mindsets: a strong preference for cognitive simplicity, a greater aversion to dissonance and ambiguity, sensitivity to losses and a tendency towards self-serving evaluations. The collective effect of these traits is to facilitate a set of biases, both negative and positive, that simplify how actors see themselves and their external environment. Each of these characteristics and biases, as it happens, precisely align with the known features and operations of System 1. As such, System 1 could be labelled our fast 'believing brain'. It is the brain's built-in machinery for quickly jumping to conclusions, identifying mental shortcuts and rapidly advancing a plan of action without necessarily considering the longer-term consequences. As a result, the simplifying strategies and coping mechanisms of System 1 produce the habits of mind associated with reflexivity – be it the tendency to ignore disconfirming or base-rate data, or being susceptible to a variety of co-existing negative and positive illusions that can arise as a result.

This initial description of our System 1 makes it appear maladaptive: after all, the formulation of quick, confident impressions risks introducing all sorts of pernicious reasoning biases into decision-making, from the ubiquitous confirmation bias (favouring uncritical interpretations of incoming data) to availability bias (giving preference to information that is more easily recalled). However, without System 1 human beings would not be capable of the kind of automatic actions required for the most basic and essential tasks. This includes all kinds of snap decisions, from detecting hostility

[16] Samuel M. McClure et al., 'Separate Neural Systems Value Immediate and Delayed Monetary Rewards', *Science* 306, no. 5695 (2004): 506.

or anger in a face or voice, to understanding simple syntax and orienting oneself to the source of a sudden sound.[17] 'We are born prepared,' psychologist Daniel Kahneman observes, 'to perceive the world around us, recognise objects, orient attention, avoid losses, and fear spiders'.[18]

One of the greatest strengths of System 1 is its ability to produce the kind of instantaneous, seemingly telepathic, insights that can result from the combination of experience and tacit knowledge – in other words, its ability to identify, track and mark deviations from stable patterns.[19] For this reason, our automatic System 1 is sometimes called the 'adaptive unconscious', or just plain 'intuition', and its benefits have been documented across many different contexts. These range from British code-breaking during the Second World War – when British agents identified German radio operators solely on the basis of their idiosyncratic transmission cadences, or 'fists' – to speed dating.[20] This is the reason, for example, why most people can immediately identify the face of a friend in a childhood photograph and why experienced marriage counsellors can predict, with a startlingly high degree of accuracy, the success of any given couple's matrimony within minutes of observing their interactions.[21]

This intuitive ability arises because of System 1's comparative advantage in detecting simple relations between people and between objects. System 1 particularly excels at integrating information about a single thing, but it is frequently flummoxed by statistical data or logical rules – and for this reason it is the source of most of our systematic biases.[22] Why is this the case? Part of the answer lies in System 1's responsibility for a concept called associative activation, in which ideas that have been evoked in the human brain subsequently trigger many other related ideas.[23] As Kahneman explains, the psychological concept of associative activation 'does not constitute a conscious series of plodding, sequential connections made between thoughts'.[24] Instead: 'A great deal happens at once … An idea that has been activated does not merely evoke one other idea. It activates many ideas, which in turn activate others. Furthermore, only a few of the activated ideas will register in consciousness; most of

[17] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*.

[18] Ibid. 21–22.

[19] Gary Klein, 'Insight', in *Thinking: The New Science of Decision-Making, Problem-Solving, and Prediction*, ed. John Brockman (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013).

[20] Gladwell, *Blink*, 27–28; Paul Vitello, 'Jerry Roberts, 93, Code Breaker for Britain', *The New York Times*, 02 April 2014.

[21] Malcolm Gladwell identifies this phenomenon as 'thin-slicing', which refers to the ability of our unconscious mind to find patterns in situations and behaviour based on very narrow 'slices' of information or experience. Gladwell, *Blink*, 27–28.

[22] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 36–37.

[23] Ibid. 51.

[24] Ibid. 52.

the work of associative thinking is silent, hidden from our conscious selves.'[25] The central feature of this associative machine is *coherence* – meaning that our System 1 is primed to immediately connect disparate elements, concepts and ideas, and to rationalise those connections in a way that makes intuitive sense, while also filtering out any data that do not conform to the coherent narrative that is created.[26] Precisely because of System 1's speed of operations, by virtue of its automaticity, it is the first system employed by the human brain when confronted with uncertainty and, in its most basic sense, it never 'shuts off'. The psychologist Philip Tetlock clarifies that:

> The numbering of the two systems is not arbitrary. System 1 comes first. It is fast and constantly running in the background. If a question is asked and you instantly know the answer, it sprang from System 1. System 2 is charged with interrogating that answer. Does it stand up to scrutiny? Is it backed by evidence? This process takes time and effort, which is why the standard routine in decision-making is this: first System 1 delivers an answer, and only then can System 2 get involved, starting with an examination of what System 1 decided. Whether System 2 actually *will* get involved is another matter.[27]

In this regard, it is not surprising that one of the principal characteristics of System 1 is its bias towards believing and confirming incoming information. Such a confirmatory bias is linked to a sense of cognitive ease. Disbelief, as scientists have demonstrated, is more taxing for the human brain than belief. Psychological experiments have shown, for example, that the ability to deny propositions is one of the last linguistic competencies to emerge in early childhood.[28] As the British philosopher Bertrand Russell observed, 'Doubt, suspense of judgment and disbelief all seem later and more complex than a wholly unreflecting assent'.[29] Scepticism, in other words, is harder mental work. And so, with disbelief, we enter the realm of System 2.

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[25] Ibid.

[26] A classic laboratory experiment demonstrating associative coherence in action involves introducing the stimulus of an emotional word. A word such as 'vomit' will automatically bring about a rapid concatenation of complex mental and physical activities – including, but not limited to, a facial expression of disgust, an impulse to recoil, an increased heart rate, activated sweat glands and a temporarily lower threshold for responding to noxious substances. The addition of another, completely unrelated word, such as 'banana', in close proximity to 'vomit' will immediately induce a causal connection in the mind between the ingestion of a specific type of fruit and sickness. Carey Morewedge and Daniel Kahneman, 'Associative Processes in Intuitive Judgment', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 14, no. 10 (2010).

[27] Philip Tetlock and Dan Gardner, *Superforecasting: The Art and Science of Prediction* (London: Random House Books, 2015), 33–34.

[28] Daniel T. Gilbert, 'How Mental Systems Believe', *American Psychologist* 46, no. 2 (1991).

[29] Ibid. 110.

Table 2.1 General Attributes of Systems 1 and 2

System 1 ('Reflexive')	System 2 ('Reflective')
Operates automatically	Requires effortful and conscious reasoning
Neglects ambiguity and suppresses doubt	Balances probabilities and possibilities
Confounds cognitive ease with illusions of truth	Deliberately analytical and rule-following
Creates a coherent pattern of associated ideas	Has limited access to associative mechanisms
Responds more strongly to losses than gains	Does not respond more strongly to either
More sensitive to changes than to states	Less sensitive to changes than to states

If believing is the province of System 1, 'unbelieving' is the province of System 2. In the same way in which System 1 could be said to give rise to reflexivity, our second system is responsible for reflectivity – that is, a greater level of comfort with cognitive complexity and ambiguity, and the more deliberative weighing of available data, even if this analytical process does not perfectly replicate Bayesian rationality. Unlike System 1, System 2 can compare objects with respect to multiple attributes, make deliberative choices between options, and override habitual responses in favour of following set rules. This second system is responsible for the brain's ability to doubt and to disbelieve, but, as Kahneman observes, it is 'sometimes busy, and often lazy'.[30] The primary function of System 2 is to act as a mental filter, allowing some of the thoughts generated by System 1 to translate into behaviour, while suppressing or modifying the rest. However, the extent to which individuals engage in the deliberative verification of the data produced by System 1 can vary widely.[31] Typically, the impressions, intuitions and feelings that System 1 continuously generates are automatically endorsed by System 2, often with very little effort expended by the brain.[32] This relationship is optimal until problems arise:

> When System 1 runs into difficulty, it calls on System 2 to support more detailed and specific processing that may solve the problem of the moment. System 2 is mobilised when a question arises

[30] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 81.

[31] Ibid.

[32] For a sense of the radical scale of the difference in processing power between our two systems, psychologist Timothy Wilson points out that the human brain can unconsciously absorb around 11 million pieces of information per second, of which it can process only about 40 consciously. Timothy Wilson, *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious* (London: Belknap Press, 2002).

> for which System 1 does not offer an answer… [Thus] System 2 is activated when an event is detected that violates the model of the world that System 1 maintains. In that world, lamps do not jump, cats do not bark, and gorillas do not cross basket-ball courts.[33]

The psychologist Gary Klein observes that our System 1 — that is, our intuitive and reflexive grasp of reality — is marvellous but flawed. However, 'System 2 isn't the replacement for our intuition and for our experience; it's a way of making sure we don't get ourselves in trouble'.[34] In other words, System 2 is responsible for the self-control, or willpower, that allows us to override the immediate impulses generated by our System 1 when and as required. But if System 1 is so error-prone, why is System 2 not simply our default mode of reasoning? For the simple reason, Kahneman observes, that 'constantly questioning our own thinking would be impossibly tedious, and System 2 is much too slow and inefficient to serve as a substitute for System 1 in making routine decisions'.[35]

As a result, the parsimony and rapidity associated with the operation of System 1 tends to be most functional in stable or predictable environments, in which static conditions reward 'tried-and-true' formulas.[36] In that sense, Kahneman reminds us, System 1 is very good at what it does: 'its models of familiar situations are accurate, its short-term predictions are usually accurate as well, and its initial reactions to challenges are swift and generally appropriate'.[37] System 2 tends to be most functional in rapidly changing environments, in which those who check the automatic operations of System 1 and quickly abandon erroneous ideas hold an advantage.[38] Nevertheless, because of System 1's continuous automation, errors of intuitive thought can be difficult to prevent. As Tetlock warns: 'Like it or not, System 1 operations keep humming, nonstop, beneath the babbling brook of consciousness.'[39]

Thinking Hot and Cold: Dual Systems, Emotion and Self-Control

Although dual systems theory is principally concerned with human cognition, it does not just identify the 'cold' cognitive decision-making processes of the mind. Dual systems theory also

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[33] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 24.

[34] Klein, 'Insight', 195.

[35] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 28.

[36] Daniel Kahneman and Gary Klein, 'Conditions for Intuitive Expertise: A Failure to Disagree', *The American Psychologist* 64, no. 6 (2009): 515.

[37] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 25.

[38] Philip Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment: How Good is It? How Can We Know?* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 214–215.

[39] Tetlock and Gardner, *Superforecasting*, 41.

encompasses the finely tuned 'hot' emotional systems that strongly influence human behaviour, the basic design of which is common to many animal species.[40] In the social sciences, decision-makers' emotions, or 'affect', and their cognition have traditionally remained separate fields of inquiry – to the extent that psychological concepts have gained a purchase in international relations scholarship, scholars have generally examined human emotions and cognitive biases as separate impediments to rational choice theory.

However, many psychologists now recognise that emotions and cognition are deeply intertwined, and that cognitive appraisals can trigger emotions (and vice versa) that jointly shape individuals' perceptions of the world.[41] Moreover, modern neuroscience thoroughly rejects the strict separation between cognition and emotion as physiologically untenable.[42] In other words, we are increasingly aware that normal human functioning presupposes, and indeed requires, both types of neural processes: 'Human behaviour … requires a fluid interaction between controlled and automatic processes, and between cognitive and affective systems.'[43] Our dual systems, then, do not just think 'fast' and 'slow', but also 'hot' and 'cold'.[44]

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[40] Colin Camerer, George Loewenstein and Drazen Prelec, 'Neuroeconomics: How Neuroscience Can Inform Economics', *Journal of Economic Literature* 43, no. 1 (2005).

[41] Philip Tetlock, 'Social Psychology and World Politics', in *Handbook of Social Psychology*, eds. D. Gilbert, S. Fiske, and G. Lindzey (New York: McGraw Hill, 1998), 883. For an excellent overview of these discrete sub-fields see Chapter 2 'The Individual Decision-maker', in Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory*, 2nd ed. (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014). For exceptions to the view in political science that cognition and emotions are competing processes see Jonathan Mercer, 'Emotional Beliefs', *International Organization* 64, no. 01 (2010); Barbara Keys, 'Henry Kissinger: The Emotional Statesman', *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 4 (2011). For exceptions to the view that emotion impedes, rather than facilitates, rationality see Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon Books, 1994); Todd H. Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage* (London: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[42] When emotional systems are damaged or impaired by brain injury, the logical-deliberative system (System 2) cannot appropriately regulate human behaviour. Camerer, Loewenstein and Prelec, 'Neuroeconomics', 11. For example, neuroscientist Antonio Damasio has found that damage to the brain's emotional centres prevents individuals from making even the simplest of decisions because of an inability to rely upon gut feelings for guidance. Damasio has labelled these gut feelings or emotional intuitions 'somatic markers', which are 'certain emotion-related somatosensory patterns' that facilitate logical reasoning. Antonio Damasio, B.J. Everitt and D. Bishop, 'The Somatic Marker Hypothesis and the Possible Functions of the Prefrontal Cortex [and Discussion]', *Philosophical Transactions: Biological Sciences* 351, no. 1346 (1996).

[43] Camerer, Loewenstein and Prelec, 'Neuroeconomics', 11.

[44] Heightened awareness within experimental psychology and neuroscience of the intimate connections between emotion and cognition has led the traditional distinction between 'cognitive' and 'motivated' biases to be gradually replaced by the view that the two are largely indistinguishable: cognition and emotion strongly interact in the brain and jointly contribute to behaviour. Philip Tetlock, 'Attribution Bias: On the Inconclusiveness of the Cognition-Motivation Debate', *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 18, no. 1 (1982); Luiz Pessoa, 'On the Relationship between Emotion and Cognition', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 9, no. 2 (2008); Richard Ned Lebow, 'Greeks, Neuroscience, and International Relations', in *Human Beings in International Relations*, eds. Daniel Jacobi and Annette Freyberg-Inan (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Table 2.2 Emotional Attributes of 'Hot' System 1 and 'Cold' System 2

'Hot' System 1	**'Cold' System 2**
Emotional ('Go')	Cognitive ('Know')
Simple	Complex
Reflexive	Reflective
Fast	Slow
Develops early	Develops late
Accentuated by stress	Attenuated by stress
Stimulus-controlled	Self-controlled

Not surprisingly, our two mental systems are instantiated in different regions of the brain, and these respective regions coincide with our 'hot' and 'cool' – or 'cold' – emotional responses to external threats and rewards.[45] Our 'hot' System 1 primarily resides in the primeval, anterior and largely subconscious areas of the brain (those areas that are found in many other animal species). For example, the principles of associative thinking that characterise our System 1, and that the eighteenth-century philosopher David Hume identified as 'resemblance', 'contiguity in time and place' and 'causality', are now recognised by modern psychology as operating far more in the realm of the subconscious areas of the brain (principally the amygdala) than in the conscious areas (principally the pre-frontal cortex).[46] System 2 predominantly resides in the deliberative, posterior and more conscious regions of our brain. The greater development of these regions in the human brain, compared with the brains of other primate species, is often cited as the source of humans' unique cognitive abilities.[47] In the 1990s, psychologist Walter Mischel and his colleagues described

[45] Although neuroscientists have found notable levels of disassociation between the automatic and controlled systems of the brain, they have not gone so far as to claim the existence of dedicated, wholly independent sub-systems at the neural level that are specific to these modes of processing. There is, in fact, quite a bit of physiological overlap between these systems – such as the anterior cingulate cortex, which appears to play a role in both automatic and controlled functions. Alan G. Sanfey and Luke J. Chang, 'Of Two Minds When Making a Decision', in Mind Matters Blog, 03 June 2008, *Scientific American*, http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/of-two-minds-when-making/.

[46] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 51–52; Roy F. Baumeister and John Tierney, *Willpower: Why Self-Control is the Secret to Success* (London: Penguin Books, 2011).

[47] For example, there is a large discrepancy in time discounting between humans and other animal species. Scientists universally attribute this to the size of the former's pre-frontal cortex. 'Humans routinely trade off immediate costs/benefits against costs/benefits that are delayed by as much as decades. In contrast, even the most advanced primates, which differ from humans dramatically in the size of their pre-frontal cortexes, have not been observed to engage in un-pre-programmed delay of gratification involving more than a few minutes.' Experts surmise that the most intelligent, non-human primate species can mentally project approximately 20 minutes into the future. McClure et al., 'Separate Neural Systems Value Immediate and Delayed Monetary Rewards', 504; William Roberts, 'Are Animals Stuck in Time?', *Psychological Bulletin* 128, no. 3 (2002); Baumeister and Tierney, *Willpower*, 15. As would be expected, damage to parts of the frontal lobe has been shown to severely impair the future planning abilities of otherwise intelligent people. Joaquin M.

the 'hot' and the 'cool', or 'cold', processing of our brains as the 'go' and the 'know' systems:

> The cool system is cognitive, emotionally neutral, contemplative, flexible, integrated, coherent, spatiotemporal, slow, episodic, and strategic. It is the seat of self-regulation and self-control. The hot system is the basis of emotionality, fears as well as passions – impulsive and reflexive – initially controlled by innate releasing stimuli (and, thus, literally under "stimulus control"); it is fundamental for emotional (classical) conditioning and undermines efforts at self-control.[48]

Since Mischel and his colleagues made this observation, scientists have used many different names to describe the automatic 'go' system of the human mind: the 'hot system', 'System 1', the 'default network' and the 'visceral system'.[49] Many of these terms refer to the fact that, in a very literal sense, human emotion 'comes first' in response to external stimuli, because of the dominance and prevalence of our rapid and automatic System 1.[50] Once activated, System 2 is subsequently responsible for assessing and filtering these emotions before they are translated into behaviour.

Figure 2.1 Selected Regions of the Brain Affiliated with Systems 1 and 2 Processing

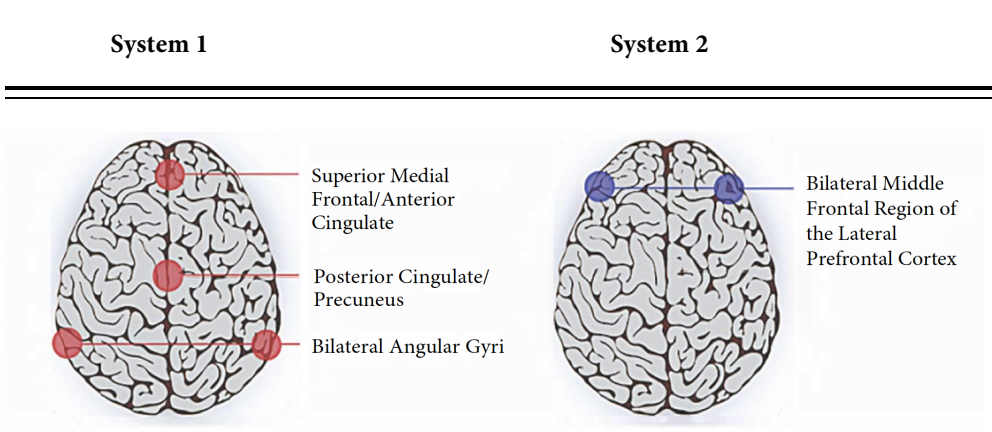


Figure courtesy of the American Accounting Association.[51]

Fuster, *The Prefrontal Cortex: Anatomy, Physiology, and Neuropsychology of the Frontal Lobe* (Philadelphia: Lippencott-Raven, 1997).

[48] Janet Metcalfe and Walter Mischel, 'A Hot/Cool-System Analysis of Delay of Gratification: Dynamics of Willpower', *Psychological Review* 106, no. 1 (1999).

[49] Diana Tamir and Jason P. Mitchell, 'The Default Network Distinguishes Construals of Proximal versus Distal Events', *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 23, no. 10 (2011); George Loewenstein, 'Out of Control: Visceral Influences on Behavior', *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 65, no. 3 (1996); Metcalfe and Mischel, 'A Hot/Cool-System Analysis'.

[50] Michael Rogan and Joseph E. LeDoux, 'Emotion: Systems, Cells, Synaptic Plasticity', *Cell* 85, no. 4 (1996).

[51] Reprinted with permission from the American Accounting Association. Anne M. Farrell, Joshua O. Goh and Brian J. White, 'The Effect of Performance-Based Incentive Contracts on System 1 and System 2 Processing in Affective Decision Contexts: fMRI and Behavioral Evidence', *Accounting Review* 89, no. 6 (2014).

Our hot system is comprised of many inter-related neural components, but there is a general consensus among scientists that the 'jewel in the crown' of this network is the amygdala.[52] The amygdala (or amygdalae, Latin for 'almond-shaped'), comprised of two, small groups of nuclei located deep within the temporal lobes of the brain, is a central component of the 'hot' or 'limbic' system; this limbic system is responsible for igniting and regulating powerful emotions, such as fear responses and sexual appetite. Although the amygdala in mammals responds to a wide range of emotionally salient stimuli, it is particularly primed to respond to those stimuli associated with stress, negativity or threat.[53]

This makes the amygdala essential in fear conditioning: 'facilitating the learning, encoding and expression of negative associations'.[54] The amygdala also forms part of what is known as the 'rage circuit' – the neural circuitry of the brain responsible for human reactions such as rage, fear, vengeance and the desire for dominance.[55] The powerful priming effect created by the limbic system in response to threats explains why 'bad' events or negative stimuli appear to have a much stronger psychological impact on the human mind than 'good' events or positive stimuli.[56] Daniel Kahneman has elaborated upon the evolutionary rationale behind this so-called 'negativity bias':

> The brains of humans and other animals contain a mechanism that is designed to give priority to bad news. By shaving a few hundredths of a second from the time needed to detect a predator, this circuit improves the animal's odds of living long enough to reproduce. The automatic operations of System 1 reflect this evolutionary history. No comparably rapid mechanism for recognising good news has been detected. Of course, we and our animal cousins are quickly alerted to signs of opportunities to

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[52] Simon Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy: A New Theory of Human Cruelty and Kindness* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 27–28.

[53] The amygdala's structure facilitates this priming: the evolutionarily ancient central amygdala plays a key role in innate fears, while the more recently evolved basolateral amygdala that surrounds it learns fear and sends this feedback to the central amygdala. Robert Sapolsky, *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* (London: The Bodley Head, 2017), 36; Paul Whalen et al., 'Human Amygdala Responsivity to Masked Fearful Eye Whites', *Science* 306, no. 5704 (2004).

[54] Emile Bruneau, Nir Jacoby and Rebecca Saxe, 'Empathic Control Through Coordinated Interaction of Amygdala, Theory of Mind and Extended Pain Matrix Brain Regions', *NeuroImage* 114 (2015): 105.

[55] More specifically, the amygdala, the hypothalamus and the periacqueductal gray (PAG) organs of the brain house the rage circuit. (The PAG is found inside the mid-brain – it lines the cerebrospinal canal that runs through this small, central part of the brainstem.) Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: A History of Violence and Humanity* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2011), 604.

[56] Roy F. Baumeister et al., 'Bad Is Stronger Than Good', *Review of General Psychology* 5, no. 4 (2001). For example, psychologists have found that negative images elicit more neural activity in the human brain than positive images. Experiments have shown that individuals are generally quicker to locate an angry face in a crowd of happy faces than the reverse, and scientists have attributed this to our natural survival instinct: directing attention and mental resources to potential sources of danger generally improves longevity. Christine H. Hansen and Ronald D. Hansen, 'Finding the Face in the Crowd: An Anger Superiority Effect', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 54, no. 6 (1988); Elaine Fox et al., 'Facial Expressions of Emotion: Are Angry Faces Detected More Efficiently?', *Cognition and Emotion* 14, no. 1 (2000).

> mate or to feed, and advertisers design billboards accordingly. Still, threats are privileged above opportunities, as they should be.[57]

Consistent with Sigmund Freud's conception of the 'id', the threat-detection sensibilities of our System 1 operate mostly automatically and unconsciously.[58] And, much like the proverbial grasshopper in Aesop's fable, the limbic system is prone to snap judgments, impulsivity and overconfidence.[59] High stress, threats and danger signals (even those that are purely symbolic) tend to trigger its automatic defensive responses, which are typically reflexive, simple and often emotional. Nevertheless, the existence of a limbic system makes sound evolutionary sense. Originally, this system helped our ancestors make the kind of split-second, life-or-death decisions necessary to cope 'with the hyenas, lions, and other wild beasts that were both their food supply and their daily mortal danger'.[60] Gathering all the evidence and mulling it over 'may be the best way to produce accurate answers, but a hunter-gatherer who consults statistics on lions before deciding whether to worry about the shadow moving in the grass isn't likely to live long enough to bequeath his accuracy-maximising genes to the next generation'.[61]

As such, the amygdala's principal role with regard to threat conditioning is to rapidly mobilise the body for action – a physiological task that has remained relatively unchanged throughout human history, irrespective of whether one is hunting game on pre-historic plains or behind the wheel of a skidding car. Because of this evolutionary role, the limbic system cannot afford to reflect upon or to worry about long-term consequences.[62] Instead, it strongly discounts the value of future rewards, and of delayed incentives, in favour of immediate action.[63] In this way, psychologists consider the limbic system to be the progenitor of our impulsive, threat-sensitive, error-prone – but absolutely vital – System 1.[64]

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[57] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 301.

[58] According to Sigmund Freud's conception of the human psyche, the 'id' is the primitive and impulsive component that responds immediately and directly to external stimuli through instinct. However, Freud's conception of the id was only ever theoretical, and in his theory the id was never related to specific somatic structures in the brain of the kind that have now been identified by neuroscience.

[59] Psychologists define overconfidence as the expectation of a better future outcome without sufficient empirical evidence to support this conclusion.

[60] Walter Mischel, *The Marshmallow Test: Mastering Self-Control* (London: Little, Brown and Company 2014). iBooks, 66–67.

[61] Tetlock and Gardner, *Superforecasting*, 34–35.

[62] Mischel, *The Marshmallow Test*, 66.

[63] Ibid. 117–118.

[64] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 301.

By contrast, the cool system, predominantly located in the frontal lobes of the pre-frontal cortex, is 'complex, reflective, and slower to activate': it is the region of the brain that is crucial for making future-oriented decisions and for facilitating long-term patience.[65] This pre-frontal cortex is what allows humans to redirect their attention, to flexibly adjust their strategies to match changes in their situational requirements, to imagine multiple futures and, above all, to exercise self-control.[66] While the limbic system is pre-programmed to favour immediate gratification, and is markedly less sensitive to the value of delayed rewards and consequences, the 'cool', or 'cold', system is able to 'evaluate trade-offs between abstract rewards, including rewards in the more distant future'.[67]

Such a control system is made possible because of the remarkable size of the brain's frontal lobes. This region, collectively part of what is called the 'neocortex', takes up a larger portion of the brain within primates, compared to other species, and it is very much larger in the human brain than in the brains of our primate cousins.[68] The human neocortex is believed to have grown at an exponential rate during our evolutionary history, in the course of which it developed a number of integral connections with our more ancient, subcortical (i.e. 'hot') brain regions. Neuroscientist Elaine Fox observes that these 'enhanced connections and neurotransmitters cascade from the higher cortical regions to the emergency and pleasure-seeking brains, allowing for some degree of regulation of these areas'.[69]

If the 'hot' aspects of System 1 primarily evolved as a threat-detection mechanism, what possible evolutionary purpose is served by our more effort-consuming System 2? Evolutionary psychologists, such as Robin Dunbar, attribute the unusual size of the human cortex – and the exceedingly costly spare capacity to maintain it – to the social skills and self-control required to sustain the cohesiveness of large and complex human social groups.[70] For example, studies have shown that aggressive, as

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[65] Mischel, *The Marshmallow Test*, 69. Long-run patience, for example, is mediated by the lateral pre-frontal cortex and associated structures. McClure et al., 'Separate Neural Systems Value Immediate and Delayed Monetary Rewards', 504.

[66] In contrast to our hot System 1, our cool System 2 evolved primarily to serve as a self-control system. Wilhelm Hofmann, Malte Friese and Fritz Strack, 'Impulse and Self-Control From a Dual-Systems Perspective', *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 4, no. 2 (2009).

[67] McClure et al., 'Separate Neural Systems Value Immediate and Delayed Monetary Rewards', 504.

[68] Cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker puts the size of the human pre-frontal cortex in perspective by noting that 'our brains are about three times too big for a generic monkey or ape of our body size … The inflation is accomplished by prolonging foetal brain growth for a year after birth. If our bodies grew proportionately during that period, we would be ten feet tall and weigh half a ton.' Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1998), 183.

[69] Elaine Fox, *Rainy Brain, Sunny Brain: The New Science of Optimism and Pessimism* (London: Arrow Books, 2012), 141.

[70] The adult human brain accounts for about 2% of total body weight but consumes around 20% of total energy intake. Leslie Aiello and Peter Wheeler, 'The Expensive-Tissue Hypothesis: The Brain and the Digestive System in Human and Primate Evolution', *Current Anthropology* 36, no. 2 (1995).

well as violent, behaviours tend to be inversely correlated with levels of self-control.[71] Known as the 'social brain hypothesis', this view is based on the idea that our large frontal lobes reflect more than the need to deliberately process factual information about the world: they also reflect the 'computational demands of the complex social systems' that characterise our species.[72]

Primary evidence for the social brain hypothesis can be found in the across-the-board correlation between mean social group size and brain size in primates. This correlation becomes stronger as the measure of brain size becomes more focused towards the frontal lobes. Secondary support for this hypothesis comes from neuroimaging studies, which show that individuals who exhibit greater processing capacity in their frontal lobes tend to have proportionately larger social networks.[73] In accordance with the social brain hypothesis, scientists across many different fields have come to the conclusion that aggression is only one means of resolving disputes between pro-social animals: human beings also developed the capacity to restrain their own aggressiveness in order to profit from the immense benefits that cooperation provides.[74] In this regard, humans differ from most other animals, and from virtually all other primates, in the extent of our dependence on cooperation.[75]

However, the regulation provided by our 'cool' – or 'cold' – System 2 requires much greater cognitive effort, and, as previously discussed, this is the reason why Kahneman has labelled our System 2 the 'lazy controller'.[76] This currency of effort, as it turns out, relies upon a shared pool of energy that is both finite and more or less easily depleted depending on the individual.[77] Psychologist Roy Baumeister and colleagues have demonstrated that all forms of voluntary, controlled effort draw on a shared and limited supply of mental energy, and that the drawing down of these mental reserves

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[71] C. Nathan DeWall et al., 'Sweetened Blood Cools Hot Tempers: Physiological Self-Control and Aggression', *Aggressive Behavior* 37, no. 1 (2011).

[72] Robin Dunbar, 'The Social Brain Hypothesis', *Evolutionary Anthropology* 6, no. 5 (1998): 178. Evolutionary biologists have not conclusively settled the question of whether *Homo sapiens* owe much of their rapid brain evolution to natural selection's favouring of traits such as skill in defeating rivals or adeptness in communication and cooperation. 'While it is plausible that *Homo sapiens* owed much of its rapid brain evolution to natural selection's favouring individuals that were smart enough to defeat their human rivals in violent competition, it is also plausible that we became highly intelligent because selection favoured those of our ancestors who were especially adroit at communicating and cooperating'. David P. Barash, 'Are We Hard-Wired for War?', *The New York Times*, 28 September 2013.

[73] Robin Dunbar, 'The Social Brain Meets Neuroimaging', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 16, no. 2 (2011).

[74] C. Nathan DeWall et al., 'Violence Restrained: Effects of Self-Regulation and its Depletion on Aggression', *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 43, no. 1 (2007): 63.

[75] Joan B. Silk, 'Empathy, Sympathy, and Prosocial Preferences in Primates', in *The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*, eds. Robin Dunbar and Louise Barrett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 115.

[76] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 39–49.

[77] Mark Muraven, Dianne M. Tice and Roy F. Baumeister, 'Self-Control as Limited Resource: Regulatory Depletion Patterns', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74, no. 3 (1998); Roy F. Baumeister, 'Ego Depletion and Self-Control Failure: An Energy Model of the Self's Executive Function', *Self and Identity* 1, no. 2 (2002).

takes the form of a process they call 'ego depletion'.[78] Baumeister discovered that ego depletion is more than a metaphor – the nervous system actually consumes more glucose than most other parts of the human body, and the parts of the brain that regulate self-control draw down especially large amounts.[79] Ego depletion stems, at least in part, from a lack of motivation and cognitive overload on our System 2.

Moreover, the effects of ego depletion can be exacerbated by additional factors, most prominently among them stress.[80] Stress, or more specifically a 'stressor', is technically defined as anything that disrupts, or is perceived to disrupt, an individual's homeostatic balance. A 'stress response' refers to an array of neural and endocrine changes in the brain and body designed to cope with the stressor and to ultimately re-establish such balance.[81] However, the term as applied to political science is most generically used to designate 'unpleasant emotional states evoked by threatening environmental events or stimuli'.[82] Severe stress typically falls into two categories: either acute, which is often of limited duration and associated with some form of time pressure, or chronic, wherein the baseline level of stress may vary but the period of exposure is prolonged. Both types of severe stress are known to have a detrimental effect on the pre-frontal functions of our System 2 and to increase the amygdaloid function of our limbic System 1 – not by directly causing individuals to lose self-control but instead by chipping away at the finite capacity of our System 2 to reign in impulsive, emotional and aggressive behaviour.[83]

Several important discoveries concerning the nature of ego depletion have important implications for our understanding of human decision-making. The first, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, is that switching tasks (and mindsets) is generally effort-consuming, which is why multi-tasking is more likely to leave individuals depleted – and therefore more reliant on the less costly operations

[78] Baumeister elected to use Freud's term 'ego' for the self, and 'ego depletion' to describe people's diminished capacity to regulate their thoughts, feelings and actions. Although many of his ideas turned out to be wrong, Freud was one of the first psychologists to suggest that mental activities involved the transfer of energy, and Baumeister clarifies that the term serves as an homage to his early insights in this direction. Baumeister and Tierney, *Willpower*, 27–28.

[79] The glucose itself does not enter the brain: rather, it is converted into neurotransmitters, which are the chemicals the brain uses to send signals, and without which thinking would be impossible. Ibid. 44; Michael Inzlicht and Jennifer N. Gutsell, 'Running on Empty: Neural Signals for Self-Control Failure', *Psychological Science* 18, no. 11 (2007); Matthew Gailliot and Roy F. Baumeister, 'The Physiology of Willpower: Linking Blood Glucose to Self-Control', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 11, no. 4 (2007).

[80] Baumeister and Tierney, *Willpower*, 19–39.

[81] Sapolsky, *Behave*, 125.

[82] Irving L. Janis and Leon Mann, *Decision Making: A Psychological Analysis of Conflict, Choice, and Commitment* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), 50.

[83] Baumeister and Tierney, *Willpower*, 33.

of System 1 – than staying focused on a single goal or activity.[84] The second is that experiments prove that the act of deciding is the most ego-depleting activity of all – more so than deliberating over options or implementing a decision once it is made.[85] The act of deciding involves the loss of other options and, as might be expected with our loss-averse System 1, which is always humming in the background, contemplation of these losses is mentally exhausting. Once mentally depleted:

> … [individuals] become reluctant to make trade-offs, which involve a particularly advanced and taxing form of decision-making. In the rest of the animal kingdom, there aren't a lot of protracted negotiations between predators and prey. To compromise is a complex human ability and therefore one of the first to decline when willpower is depleted.[86]

This concept of 'decision fatigue' helps to explain the basic mechanism behind Gollwitzer and Heckhausen's Rubicon model of action phases, which is that once individuals reach a decision they become depleted and, even if they were previously able to maintain a reflective frame of mind, they consequently switch to an 'implemental' (or what this study would consider a 'reflexive') mindset.[87] (Incidentally, this is also another way of understanding the physiological mechanisms behind the groupthink phenomenon, which is that once a group consensus appears to have been reached, the individuals who comprise the group then become depleted and impervious to external ideas or internal dissent that undermines that consensus.)[88] The third discovery is that individuals can sometimes overcome mental fatigue even when they are depleted if their motivation is strong enough, but that, at some point, everyone will eventually succumb to the effects of depletion.[89]

In sum, higher-level deliberative processes demand a greater share of our finite mental resources, whereas limbic activation engenders the impulsivity and corresponding desire for immediate gratification more commonly attributed to the relaxation of this control, and a parallel reduction in the consumption of mental resources.[90] Ultimately, both our 'hot and fast' System 1 and 'cold and

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[84] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 37.

[85] Kathleen D. Vohs et al., 'Making Choices Impairs Subsequent Self-Control: A Limited-Resource Account of Decision Making, Self-Regulation, and Active Initiative', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 94, no. 5 (2008).

[86] John Tierney, 'Do You Suffer From Decision Fatigue?', *The New York Times Magazine*, 17 August 2011.

[87] The word 'decide' shares an etymological root with 'homicide', the Latin word 'caedere', meaning 'to cut down' or 'to kill'. Ibid.

[88] David Patrick Houghton, *The Decision Point: Six Cases in U.S. Foreign Policy Decision Making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 13.

[89] Baumeister and Tierney, *Willpower*, 28.

[90] The brain's overall use of energy remains approximately the same regardless of the kind of cognition in which an individual's mental faculties are engaged. This means that the brain continues working when its resources are low but ego depletion will shift activity from energy-consuming parts of the brain to other, less energy-consuming, parts. As Baumeister observes: 'Certain parts of the brain go into high gear just as others taper off'. Ibid. 49–51. Dylan D. Wagner

slow' System 2 evolved to help human beings deal with the different challenges in their environment – that of immediate threats (or rewards) and the threat (or reward) of delayed consequences. The perennial quandary for individuals lies in knowing which system – hot or cold, fast or slow – will supply the appropriate or welfare-maximising response under conditions of uncertainty.[91]

et al., 'Self-Regulatory Depletion Enhances Neural Responses to Rewards and Impairs Top-Down Control', *Psychological Science* 24, no. 11 (2013).

[91] Mischel, *The Marshmallow Test*, 117–119.

Table 2.3 Summary of Dual Systems Cognition

System 1 **(Old 'Reflexive' Mind)**	**System 2** **(New 'Reflective' Mind)**
Defining Features	
Reflexive	Reflective
Autonomous	Deliberative
Intuitive	Analytical
Typical Correlates	
Fast	Slow
Hot ('go')	Cold ('know')
Low effort	High effort
Accentuated by stress	Attenuated by stress
Associative	Rule-based
Unconscious	Conscious
High capacity	Limited capacity
Cognitive simplicity	Cognitive complexity
Confident	Doubtful
Loss-sensitive	Loss-neutral
More affected by changes than states	Less affected by changes than states
Neglects ambiguity	Balances probabilities and possibilities
Stimulus-controlled ('impulse' system)	Self-controlled ('constraint' system)
Evolutionary Origins	
Evolved early	Evolved late
Similar to other types of animal cognition	Distinctively human
Implicit knowledge	Explicit knowledge
Basic emotions	Complex emotions
Evolutionary rationality (gene level)	Instrumental rationality (individual level)

Thinking Evolutionarily and Instrumentally: Dual Systems and Human Rationality

If both mental systems reflect useful adaptations in response to conditions of uncertainty, what are the implications of dual systems theory and our corresponding mindsets for traditional notions of

rationality? The economic model of rationality that has long dominated the social sciences is known as rational choice theory.[92] The only test of rationality according to the Von Neumann-Morgenstern theory of rational choice is whether a person's choices are internally consistent and probabilistically updated in such a way as to maintain the logical coherence of those preferences.[93] Furthermore, choices reveal preferences, and those preferences are assumed to be fixed – neither changing nor conflicting. As behavioural economist Richard Thaler observes, 'Although it is never stated explicitly as an assumption in an economics textbook, in practice economic theory presumes that self-control problems do not exist'.[94] The notion that human beings have two selves that can pursue contradictory goals – a fast, impulsive, 'reflexive' self that is more concerned with the present, and a slow, controlled, 'reflective' self that is more concerned with the future – is not a dichotomy accounted for by the rational actor model. Instead, any deviation from that model's prescriptions of optimal behaviour is considered to be evidence of irrationality.[95]

However, decades' worth of research in behavioural and experimental psychology has conclusively demonstrated that most individuals consistently fail to meet these supposedly optimal standards.[96] Indeed, one of the primary reasons cited by the Nobel Committee for conferring its award upon Daniel Kahneman for his work [often in collaboration with Amos Tversky] on cognitive biases was that it addressed 'deep issues concerning human rationality'.[97] Yet Kahneman has clarified that 'I often cringe when my work with Amos is credited with demonstrating that human choices are irrational, when in fact our research only showed that humans are not well described by the rational-

[92] Kahneman and Frederick, 'Frames and Brains', 46.

[93] According to the definition of rationality provided by the rational actor model, a 'rational' person can theoretically believe in all kinds of mistruths, such as the existence of animal spirits, poltergeists or extra-terrestrials, as long as all of their other beliefs are internally consistent with this view. Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 411.

[94] Richard Thaler, *Misbehaving: The Making of Behavioural Economics* (Great Britain: Allen Lane, 2015), 86.

[95] Keith E. Stanovich, *Rationality and the Reflective Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4. The notion of probabilistically updating one's beliefs or preferences in response to new information is why rational choice is often synonymous with 'Bayesian updating'. Thomas Bayes' renowned essay, *Toward Solving a Problem in the Doctrine of Chances*, examined how individuals formulate probabilistic beliefs about the world when encountering new data. Bayes believed that humans learn about the universe 'through approximation, getting closer and closer to the truth as we gather more evidence'.[95] Moreover, according to Bayes, 'good judges should be good hypothesis testers: they should update their beliefs in response to new evidence and do so in proportion to the extremity of the odds they placed on possible outcomes before they learned which one occurred.' Nate Silver, *The Signal and the Noise: The Art and Science of Prediction* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 240–242; Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment*, 121.

[96] According to neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, the only people who attempt to maximise their utility in line with the rational actor model are those who have suffered brain damage (specifically to the ventromedial pre-frontal cortex, the region that both regulates emotions and aids in the formulation of quick judgments). In his book *Descartes' Error*, Damasio relates the story of one patient suffering in this way who, when asked to schedule his next doctor's visit, undertook an exhaustive deliberation lasting many hours to adjudicate the costs and benefits of every possible date in his diary. Damasio, *Descartes' Error*.

[97] Keith E. Stanovich and Richard F. West, 'The Assessment of Rational Thinking', *Teaching of Psychology* 41, no. 3 (2014): 265.

agent model'.[98] As described earlier in this chapter, many of our error-prone System 1 processes are nonetheless essential to normal human functioning, and even to survival. Kahneman summarises that 'System 1 is indeed the origin of much of what we do wrong, but it is also the origin of most of what we do right'.[99] Although rational choice is an idealised form of decision-making, it is not the only way to achieve optimal behaviour. Dominic Johnson and James Fowler concur that 'in evolution, and perhaps especially in decision-making mechanisms, simplicity can trump complexity'.[100] Consequently, dual systems theorists have begun to question whether evidence of bias automatically reveals irrationality.[101]

Because each system possesses distinct advantages and disadvantages with respect to the processing of information, dual systems theorists argue that they embody two distinct forms of rationality – neither of which precisely conforms to the notion of rationality as defined by rational choice theory. System 1 rationality involves trusting one's instincts to arrive at the best answer by identifying essential information ('signals') and filtering out inessential information ('noise'). System 2 rationality involves logically and deliberatively thinking through problems by weighing the available data.[102] However, this does not mean that our second system is a 'paragon of rationality' in the rational choice sense.[103] The very fact that System 2 is reliant on System 1 for most of the data it receives makes it vulnerable to error and constrains its computational capabilities. Thus, while our second system can improve human performance in many complex problem-solving tasks, its 'abilities are limited and so is the knowledge to which it has access'.[104]

To determine which is the more appropriate form of rationality to employ at any given time, proponents of dual systems theory have proposed using the concept of 'ecological rationality'. Ecological rationality rests upon the premise that human rationality should be measured as a function of the requirements of the environment and the corresponding capabilities of the actor to

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[98] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 411.

[99] Ibid. 416.

[100] Dominic Johnson and James H. Fowler, 'Complexity and Simplicity in the Evolution of Decision-Making Biases', *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 28, no. 8 (2013): 446–447.

[101] Martie G. Haselton et al., 'Adaptive Rationality: An Evolutionary Perspective on Cognitive Bias', *Social Cognition* 27, no. 5 (2009).

[102] Gerd Gigerenzer, 'Why Heuristics Work', *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 3, no. 1 (2008); Gerd Gigerenzer and Wolfgang Gaissmaier, 'Heuristic Decision Making', *Annual Review of Psychology* 62, no. 1 (2011).

[103] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 415.

[104] Ibid.

meet those requirements.[105] Because our two types of mental systems serve very different functions, and therefore exhibit very different types of strengths and weaknesses, ecological rationality entails matching cues from the environment with the system best-suited to respond in the service of goal achievement.[106] This perspective lends some support to the widely accepted notion in the biological sciences that evolutionary adaptation does not guarantee rationality in the traditional Bayesian or 'rational choice' sense; at the same time, it reveals the limitations of the biological view.

Richard Dawkins and several evolutionary biologists have argued that evolutionary adaptation resides at the level of the genes, whereas more deliberative or instrumental types of utility-maximisation remain at the level of the individual.[107] Biological or 'evolutionary rationality' is automatically geared towards whatever best promotes reproductive success, not necessarily towards truthful intuitions or accuracy, per se:

> The idea that the primary function of the brain is to generate true beliefs and valid inferences is, of course, not entirely wrong. An organism that always made invalid judgments and false inferences could not be very successful. But this is quite different from claiming that the brain essentially strives for truth, as if it were evolutionarily optimised for arriving at truthful judgments and logical inference. From an evolutionary perspective, truth should matter only to the degree that it contributes to survival and reproductive success.[108]

However, we know that natural selection does not always guarantee the reliability or suitability of our System 1 processes in our contemporary environment.[109] What may have been adaptive in our pre-historic past may not always remain so in our modern world, in which our System 1 responses 'can be blind to special circumstances or to longer range goals'.[110]

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[105] Herbert Simon, 'Invariants of Human Behavior', *Annual Review of Psychology* 41, no. 11 (1990). See also Rose McDermott, James H. Fowler and Oleg Smirnov, 'On the Evolutionary Origin of Prospect Theory Preferences', *The Journal of Politics* 70, no. 2 (2008).

[106] Stanovich, *Rationality and the Reflective Mind*, 16–17.

[107] Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 30th Anniversary ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). iBooks.

[108] Haselton et al., 'Adaptive Rationality', 736.

[109] A classic example is the hard-wiring of the human brain to crave foods that are high in fat and sugar content, which reflects an evolutionarily adaptive feature of our resource-scarce pre-historic environments. However, this preference is blind to the abundance of rich food available in advanced technological societies and to the unhealthy consequences that can result from a surfeit of their intake. See Daniel Lieberman, *The Story of the Human Body: Evolution, Health and Disease* (London: Allen Lane, 2013).

[110] Clare Saunders and David E. Over, 'In Two Minds About Rationality?', in *In Two Minds: Dual Processes and Beyond*, eds. Jonathan St. B. T. Evans and Keith Frankish (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 321.

For this reason, dual systems theorists argue that evolutionary rationality at the gene level, the only relevant goal of which is reproductive success, is too limited a construction of rationality. Instead, our deliberative System 2 can help us to override our System 1 impulses, or even to change them through practice or habit – potentially even altering some of our System 1 processes over the longer term.[111] In this regard, psychologists Keith Stanovich and Richard West, who originally proposed the terms 'System 1' and 'System 2', hypothesise that 'the features of System 1 are designed to very closely track increases in reproduction probability of genes', and that 'System 2, while also clearly an evolutionary product, is … primarily a control system focused on the interests of the whole person'.[112] They clarify that the latter is the ability of an individual to follow normative rules that maximise personal utility in line with higher-order goals and beliefs – occasionally resulting in a sacrifice of genetic fitness.

In other words, System 1 represents the traditional evolutionary rationality espoused by many biologists, such as Richard Dawkins, who situate evolutionary optimisation processes exclusively at the sub-individual level of the genes, whereas System 2 represents a more deliberative or 'instrumental' form of rationality that optimises utility at the level of the individual, which houses these genes.[113] 'Because System 2 is more attuned to normative rationality than is System 1, System 2 will seek to fulfil the individual's goals in the minority of cases where those goals conflict with the responses triggered by System 1'.[114] Stanovich and West surmise that natural selection has placed System 1 processes on a 'short leash' and System 2 processes on a 'long leash', such that the behavioural goals associated with the latter have considerable latitude to conflict with – and even to trump – those of the former.[115] Thus, according to these dual systems theorists, an appreciation of how the two systems work together – and how their goals can conflict – is necessary in order to achieve a more complete understanding of human rationality.[116]

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[111] Second-language acquisition may fall into this category.

[112] Keith E. Stanovich and Richard F. West, 'Individual Differences in Reasoning: Implications for the Rationality Debate?', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 23, no. 5 (2000): 660–661.

[113] Ibid. 660.

[114] Ibid. 661.

[115] Saunders and Over, 'In Two Minds About Rationality?', 322. Table adapted from ibid. 323; Keith E. Stanovich, *The Robot's Rebellion: Finding Meaning in the Age of Darwin* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 65.

[116] Another way 'to view the difference between … evolutionary and normative rationality is to note that they are not really two different *types* of rationality but are instead terms for characterizing optimization procedures operating at the sub-personal and personal levels, respectively. That there are two optimization procedures in operation here that could come into conflict is a consequence of the insight that the genes – as sub-personal replicators – can increase their fecundity and longevity in ways that do not necessarily serve the instrumental goals of the vehicles [individuals] built by the genome'. Stanovich and West, 'Individual Differences in Reasoning', 661; Brian Skyrms, *Evolution of the Social Contract* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Table 2.4 Dual Reasoning Processes and Rationality Types

	System 1	**System 2**
Evolutionary Rationality	Pursuit of genetic interests **(more likely)**	Pursuit of genetic interests **(less likely)**
Deliberative or Normative Rationality	Pursuit of individual interests **(less likely)**	Pursuit of individual interests **(more likely)**

Dual Systems and the Dual Mindset Theory of International Relations

This study has so far described two mindsets, and two systems from which the former are hypothesised to originate: a reflexive and intuitive System 1, which does the hot and fast thinking, and a reflective and deliberative System 2, which 'does the slow thinking, monitors System 1 and maintains control as best it can within its limited resources'.[117] Chapter 1 revealed that most of the psychological biases that facilitate conflict are associated with our reflexive mindset – the product of our System 1 way of thinking. And if System 1 is designed to very closely track reproductive success, then it is not surprising that some scholars have arrived at the conclusion that human beings must simply be 'hard-wired for war'.[118] After all, the evolutionarily older parts of our brain – the seat of our System 1 – are responsible for eliciting fear, aggression and the 'flight or fight' response in reaction to threats. However, this view exposes one of the main paradoxes inherent in most psychological explanations of international relations, which is that certain cognitive traits and biases associated with the outbreak of war, such as overconfidence, premature cognitive closure and positive illusions, remain very prevalent in human nature but do not necessarily precipitate conflict in all – or even in most – cases.[119]

To resolve this paradox, many political psychologists have adopted the position that conflict situations in which reconciliation prevails must either be attributable to the resumption of 'rational' decision-making, as described by the rational actor model, or to factors exogenous to the psychological mindsets of the actors involved. The dual mindset framework – and the dual systems

[117] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 408.

[118] Dominic Johnson and Bradley A. Thayer, 'What Our Primate Relatives Say About War', *The National Interest*, 06 October 2014.

[119] For additional literature on the link between these specific biases and the outbreak of war, see Dominic Johnson, *Overconfidence and War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1977).

theory upon which it is premised – provides an alternative explanation, which is that human beings are psychologically capable of reasoning very differently under conditions of uncertainty. One form of reasoning, the product of a reflexive System 1, is fast and efficacious but flawed, and prone to impulses and biases of judgment that enhance the probability of conflict; the other, the product of a reflective System 2, is slow and methodical, but of more limited capacity, and less likely to exhibit the kinds of impulses and biases that increase the probability of conflict. This argument accords with the general observations of the military historian Azar Gat on mankind's inherently contradictory nature:

> The potential for both war and peace is embedded in us. The diverse human behavioural toolkit comprises a variety of major tools, geared for violent conflict … and cooperation … Certainly, these deep evolution-shaped patterns are variably calibrated to particular conditions through social learning. However, the reason why they are there, very close under our skin and readily activated, is that they were all very handy during our long evolutionary past. They all proved highly advantageous, thereby becoming part and parcel of our biological equipment.[120]

Moreover, in other areas of research, such as neuroscience, scientists are increasingly finding that 'the success of social animals like human beings rests precisely on managing this delicate trade-off between conflict and collaboration, a task for which we possess such exquisite neural machinery'.[121] Dual systems theory, then, corroborates the broad hypothesis of this study that how individuals process information has an impact on the conduct of international relations, and in particular on the management of international crises, by increasing or decreasing the probability of confrontation and conflict. The previous chapter proposed three intervening causal variables by which this impact occurs: threat sensitivity, risk propensity and temporal discounting. The following sections explore these variables in the context of dual systems theory, the findings of which are not only consistent with the hypotheses of the dual mindset framework, but also further enrich our understanding of the various psychological and neurobiological rationales behind their operation.

Dual Systems and Threat Sensitivity

This chapter has already discussed how the operation of our System 1 is naturally designed to privilege threats by imprinting our brains with an inherent negativity bias towards our external

[120] Azar Gat, 'Proving Communal Warfare Among Hunter-Gatherers: The Quasi-Rousseauan Error', *Evolutionary Anthropology* 24, no. 3 (2015): 124.

[121] Nicholas D. Wright and Karim Sadjadpour, 'The Neuroscience Guide to Negotiations with Iran', *The Atlantic Monthly*, 14 January 2014.

environment.[122] For very basic reasons of survival, neuroscientist Elaine Fox observes that System 1, our fast 'emergency' system, is 'not democratic and naturally prioritises danger-relevant information'.[123] Furthermore, our System 2, which to some degree regulates and controls our threat-sensitive impulses, 'cannot entirely switch off the emergency brain's warning signal', and our anatomy tells us why. 'The vast number of amygdala-cortical connections – outnumbering those going in the opposite direction – allows the emergency brain to unduly influence the more advanced cortical areas.'[124] This includes an acute sensitivity to very obvious physical threats, but also to symbolic ones, such as to emotionally charged words and painful negative memories.[125] The neurobiology of this broad negativity dominance coincides with the predictions of a theory of cognitive bias origination called Evolutionary Management Theory.

Evolutionary Management Theory (EMT) proposes that humans are designed to be predictably biased as a response to asymmetrical costs in our evolutionary history. According to EMT's proponents, 'whenever there exists a recurrent cost asymmetry between two types of errors over evolutionary time, selection will fashion mechanisms biased toward committing errors that are less costly in reproductive currency'.[126] From a long-term perspective, missed opportunities to detect and deter threats ('false negatives' or 'Type 2' errors) are, on average, costlier than false alarms ('false positives' or 'Type 1' errors).[127] The latter might result in a grave error, but the former can easily result in death. Indeed, averaged over evolutionary time, a number of scientists argue that both overestimation of threats and overconfidence about being able to confront them would have consistently been the less costly error of bias to make: 'Fitness decrements resulting from physical harm or death due to insufficient vigilance are greater than those resulting from lost social opportunities due to excessive caution'.[128] For this reason, human beings are naturally geared

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[122] Baumeister et al., 'Bad Is Stronger Than Good'. The psychologist Paul Rozin, an expert on disgust, provides an illustrative example of this broad negativity dominance with his observation that while a single cockroach will ruin a bowl of cherries, a single cherry will not redeem a bowl of cockroaches. Paul Rozin and Edward B. Royzman, 'Negativity Bias, Negativity Dominance, and Contagion', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 5, no. 4 (2001); Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*.

[123] Fox, *Rainy Brain, Sunny Brain*, 79.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 301.

[126] Martie G. Haselton and Daniel Nettle, 'The Paranoid Optimist: An Integrative Evolutionary Model of Cognitive Biases', *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 10, no. 1 (2006): 48–49.

[127] The previous chapter has already discussed how, in the realm of potential threats, two types of prediction errors can arise under conditions of uncertainty: false-positives ('false alarm failures') and false-negatives ('deterrence failures'). Decision-makers cannot minimise both errors simultaneously because decreasing the chances of committing one type of error necessarily increases the chances of committing the other. Martie G. Haselton and David M. Buss, 'Error Management Theory: A New Perspective on Biases in Cross-Sex Mind Reading', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 78, no. 1 (2000).

[128] Andrew Galperin et al., 'Seeing Storms Behind the Clouds: Biases in the Attribution of Anger', *Evolution and Human Behavior* 34, no. 5 (2013): 358.

towards exploiting this recurrent cost asymmetry by being biased in the direction of making false alarms.[129] The explanations provided by EMT can help to explain why System 1 is our default mode of human decision-making, and why so many of the negative heuristics and biases associated with our reflexive mindset trend in the direction of threat inflation.

However, our System 1 does more than just prime individuals to be generally threat-sensitive: its tendency to form causal interpretations by jumping to conclusions (associative coherence) and to default to cognitively simple heuristics (such as rejecting ambiguity, doubt or cognitive dissonance) also plays a role in threat inflation. The former occurs because System 1 is the quintessential causal machine, 'particularly adept at finding a coherent causal story that links the fragments of knowledge at its disposal'.[132] Even before the advent of modern behavioural psychology, psychologists were conducting experiments that proved that human beings are hard-wired from birth to form impressions of intentional causality – that is, to attribute intentional cause to the effects we observe all around us.[133] The mind is 'ready and even eager to identify agents, assign them personality traits and specific intentions, and view their actions as expressing individual propensities'.[134]

The latter is a product of System 1's inherent bias to believe and to confirm.[135] This confirmatory bias tends to favour unquestioning acceptance of suggestions, and to therefore exaggerate the probability of extreme events.[136] If sufficiently primed or provoked with the thought of a particular threat (getting hit by a tsunami, contracting a brain tumour, being invaded by a foreign adversary), System 1 will inflate the likelihood of its occurrence without regard for statistical probabilities.[137]

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[129] Haselton and Nettle, 'The Paranoid Optimist', 48.

[132] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 75.

[133] The Belgian psychologist Albert Michotte overturned centuries of thinking about causality by proving that we 'see' causality in the same way that we see colour. He did this by creating visual episodes in which a black square comes into contact with another square, which subsequently begins to move. Even six-month-old infants 'see' the cause-and-effect scenario and express surprise when the sequence is altered. Albert Michotte, *The Perception of Causality* (London: Methuen, 1963); Fritz Heider and Mary-Ann Simmel, 'An Experimental Study of Apparent Behavior', *The American Journal of Psychology* 57, no. 2 (1944); Alan Leslie and Stephanie Keeble, 'Do Six-Month-Old Infants Perceive Causality?', *Cognition* 25, no. 3 (1987).

[134] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 76. In its more extreme form, this belief is exemplified by the appeal of conspiracy theories – a class of ideas that attributes to certain 'agents' extraordinary powers of planning and control. The philosopher and scientist Karl Popper has pointed out that conspiracy theories frequently overlook the unintended consequences of action, which reflects System 1's overwhelming desire to eliminate arbitrary, random or spontaneous causes in its unremitting quest for simplicity and coherence. Cass R. Sunstein, *Conspiracy Theories and Other Dangerous Ideas* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), 5–7.

[135] To prove this point, Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert and colleagues reported a series of trials in which participants were presented with true and false linguistic propositions. In some trials, their processing of that information (System 2) was interrupted. The psychologists found that interruption increased the likelihood that subjects would consider false propositions true, but not vice versa. Daniel T. Gilbert, 'Unbelieving the Unbelievable: Some Problems in the Rejection of False Information', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 59, no. 4 (1990).

[136] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, 'On the Reality of Cognitive Illusions', *Psychological Review* 103, no. 3 (1996).

[137] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 81.

This is because events are much easier for System 1 to grasp than non-events (this type of fallacy is commonly known as base-rate neglect and is central to the operation of most of our reflexive biases), and this explains why studies show that in our media-saturated age people routinely overestimate the impact of terrorism and their chances of dying in a terrorist-related incident. [138]

Daniel Kahneman has summed up this phenomenon as WYSIATI, or 'what you see is all there is'.[139] The acronym implies that System 1 exhibits an important asymmetry in the way it treats information it *has* versus information it *does not have*, and that it is profoundly biased in favour of the former. This makes System 1 'radically insensitive' to the quality and quantity of information that it possesses.[140] As Kahneman has elaborated:

> System 1 excels at constructing the best possible story that incorporates ideas currently activated, but it does not (cannot) allow for information it does not have. The measure of success for System 1 is the coherence of the story it manages to create. The amount and quality of the data on which the story is based are largely irrelevant. When information is scarce, which is a common occurrence, System 1 operates as a machine for jumping to conclusions.[141]

In other words, leaping to conclusions and worst-case scenario thinking is part and parcel of how our System 1 functions with a view to our evolutionary survival. This extends to humans' natural tendency to dichotomise between in-groups ('us') versus out-groups ('them'), and to form negative stereotypes and impressions of the latter while maintaining positive ones of the former. The human brain, specifically the amygdala and a region called the insula, requires only minimal sensory input for it to rapidly process group differences, and to make assumptions based on these differences. This process is automatic, emotional, intuitive and unconscious. [142] As one scholar in this field has clarified: 'Stereotyping isn't a case of lazy, short-cutting cognition. It isn't conscious cognition at all.'[143]

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[138] Ibid. 88. After the 9/11 attacks, close to 2 million people changed their travel plans by opting to drive instead of flying, even though the total number of fatalities from road accidents dwarfs that from either terrorist-related incidents or airplane crashes (or terrorist-related airplane crashes) by many orders of magnitude. Tara Parker-Pope, 'Wrong About Risk? Blame Your Brain', *The New York Times*, 16 January 2008.

[139] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 85–88.

[140] Ibid. 86.

[141] Ibid. 85.

[142] Jonathan Haidt, 'The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment', *Psychological Review* 108, no. 4 (2001); Joan Y. Chiao et al., 'Cultural Specificity in Amygdala Response to Fear Faces', *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 20, no. 12 (2008).

[143] Sapolsky, *Behave*, 400. David Berreby, *Us and Them: Understanding Your Tribal Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 2006).

By contrast, conscious, deliberative evaluation as to whether potential threats are actually harmful to us, particularly over the longer term, requires methodically identifying and integrating disparate, and often conflicting, pieces of data – something System 2 is far better equipped to do. Such deliberation is essential to developing a sophisticated grasp of the intentions and desires of one's potential adversaries, with a view to determining their past and future motivations for action. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), scientists have traced the brain's ability to compare one's own perspective with that of another person's perspective to the medial pre-frontal cortex – the seat of System 2 and a region of the brain that is essential for thinking about another person's thoughts and feelings, as well as for contemplating how others see you. This region also forms a crucial aspect of what is now known as the brain's 'empathy circuit'.[144] Cognitive empathy involves actively seeking to understand another individual's mental and emotional state, and how this relates to one's own.[145]

This imaginative leap is what some psychologists call 'dual focus', 'mentalising', 'theory of mind' or 'double-minded attention', implying that cognitive empathising is a complex task that requires keeping in mind someone else's mind congruently with keeping in mind one's own.[146] As the psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen has explained, the reason the act of empathising is so complex is because it 'involves simultaneously keeping track of different points of view and fluctuating emotional states in a social interaction, at high speed'.[147] This generally demands greater mental effort and cognitive complexity on the part of the empathising individual – two attributes we associate with our reflective mindset and our System 2.[148]

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[144] Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, 20. Ulrike M. Kramer et al., 'Emotional and Cognitive Aspects of Empathy and their Relation to Social Cognition—an fMRI-study', *Brain Research* 1311 (2010).

[145] There are two distinct types of empathy: affective empathy and cognitive empathy. Although these two forms of empathy are often closely intertwined, affective empathy refers to the sharing or mirroring of emotional states in others (what most people experience when they watch a particularly gruesome scene in a film), whereas cognitive empathy refers to the imaginative leap required to recognise that other people have different perspectives, tastes and desires to one's own. Roman Krznaric, *Empathy: Why It Matters, and How To Get It* (London: Rider Books, 2014), 24. Moreover, while affective empathy resides primarily (though not exclusively) in brain regions like the middle cingulate cortex and the anterior insula, theory of mind depends much more heavily on pre-frontal neural functioning. Indeed, fMRI experiments have demonstrated that the pre-frontal cortex is very closely associated with cognitive empathy – and that this is the same region of the brain that is responsible for the kind of complex cognition, future planning and decision-making, as well as the moderation of social behaviour, that are associated with System 2. Valerie E. Stone, Simon Baron-Cohen and Robert T. Knight, 'Frontal Lobe Contributions to Theory of Mind', *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 10, no. 5 (1998).

[146] Baron-Cohen, *Zero Degrees of Empathy*, 11–12.

[147] Ibid. 83.

[148] Ibid. 51. In much the same way that Systems 1 and 2 dynamically interact, the 'unconscious' mirroring systems of affective empathy and the more 'conscious' neural systems involved in cognitive empathy are not mutually exclusive. Ibid. 27.

Because of its ability to foster cognitive empathy, theory of mind is essential to cooperation. The Dutch primatologist Frans de Waal, who has extensively studied empathy mechanisms in primates, has concurred that 'effective cooperation requires being exquisitely in tune with the emotional states and goals of others.'[149] Unsurprisingly, adversarial situations that raise the threat sensitivities of System 1 automatically mute the empathy circuit signals of the brain – making it cognitively much more taxing to put oneself in the proverbial shoes of a perceived adversary, and making it cognitively much easier to reinforce one's own perspective.[150]

Conversely, social psychologist Adam Galinsky and his colleagues have found that in humans, perspective-taking through theory of mind tends to increase individuals' negotiating abilities – particularly in the discovery of hidden areas of agreement.[151] Galinsky cites the example of US State Department adviser Llewellyn 'Tommy' Thompson during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Thompson became famous for his role in encouraging President John F. Kennedy to respond to Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's more conciliatory message on 26 October 1962, while temporarily side-stepping his second, harsher, message that arrived the following day demanding the removal of Jupiter missiles from Turkey. As a former ambassador to the Soviet Union who had lived with Nikita Khrushchev and his wife for a time, Thompson understood perhaps better than any other member of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (or 'ExComm') the pressure the Soviet Premier faced from hardliners in his regime, and his overriding need to save face.[152]

However, we know that System 2 does more than just facilitate the complex mental processes required to ascertain the beliefs, intentions and motivations of others. As discussed, the pre-frontal cortex is also linked to cognitive control processes, such as overriding impulsive responses to threats, to emotionally charged situations or to perceived injustices. For example, psychological research has

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[149] Krznaric, *Empathy*, 19.

[150] Jeneen Interlandi, 'The Brain's Empathy Gap', *New York Times Magazine*, 19 March 2015.

[151] This is one of the many reasons political leaders often go to great lengths to learn about their counterparts first-hand. As David Reynolds observes of modern summitry: 'Face to face across the conference table, statesmen can sense each other's needs and objectives in a way that no amount of letters, phone calls and emails can deliver… Summitry is often undertaken because of the inadequacies of intelligence, in the hope that by going to the very top you can soar above the fog and gain a clear view of the other side.' Although the impressions that leaders form of one another may not always be objectively correct, personal exchanges that enhance cognitive complexity through theory of mind should boost the likelihood of cooperation – whereas those that diminish it should have the opposite effect. David Reynolds, *Summits: Six Meetings that Shaped the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2007). iBooks, 393, 398.

[152] As Thompson observed in the fateful 27 October ExComm meeting that shaped President Kennedy's response to Khrushchev's contradictory messages: 'His [Khrushchev's] position, even in this public [second] statement, is this is all started by our threat to Cuba. Now he's [able to say he] removed that threat.' Ernest R. May and Philip D. Zelikow, eds., *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2002), 349; Adam D. Galinsky et al., 'Why It Pays to Get Inside the Head of Your Opponent: The Differential Effects of Perspective Taking and Empathy in Negotiations', *Psychological Science* 19, no. 4 (2008).

shown that people often reject offers they deem to be unfair for emotional reasons, even if accepting the offer would make both the proposer and the responder objectively better off. In the realm of bargaining, game theory's Nash equilibrium suggests that the optimal or 'rational' (i.e. rational choice) solution is for the proposer to offer as little as possible and for the responder to accept this small amount on the basis of the logic that something is still better than nothing (which is what both parties get if the offer is not accepted).

Neuroimaging research into what is known as the 'Ultimatum Game' reveals that the minority of individuals who accepted unequal offers exhibited greater capacity for cognitive control than those who rejected unfair offers – that is, they exhibited stronger brain activation in their pre-frontal cortex. In fact, scientists found an inverse correlation in the areas of brain activation between those who accepted and rejected offers in the Ultimatum Game, which validates what we know about the operation of our dual systems: stronger brain activity in areas related to emotional processing (the anterior insula, which connects to, and receives input from, the amygdala), resulted in the rejection of asymmetrical offers, whereas stronger brain activity related to cognitive control processing (the pre-frontal cortex) resulted in their greater acceptance.[153]

Moreover, individuals participating in the Ultimatum Game were more likely to reject offers that were perceived to be unfair if they were told the proposer was another human being and not a computer.[154] Once again, this indicates System 1's acute sensitivity to threatening *agents*, as opposed to *objects*, and to its desire to attribute intentional cause – a product of our ancient threat-detection system that is exquisitely sensitive to the immediate perils our ancestors faced, be it slithering snakes, romantic rivals or angry neighbouring tribes.[155] Our brain's System 2, which, as we know, expends an inordinate amount of its frontal lobe processing power on deconstructing and navigating social relationships, may actually exacerbate our System 1 reactions in this regard. As the Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert explains:

> Our brains devote a great deal of time and real estate to processing information about other people – about what they think, know, want and intend. Because we specialise in understanding other minds,

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[153] See Wim De Neys et al., 'Cognitive Control and Individual Differences in Economic Ultimatum Decision-Making', *PLoS ONE* 6, no. 11 (2011); Alan G. Sanfey et al., 'The Neural Basis of Economic Decision-Making in the Ultimatum Game', *Science* 300, no. 5626 (2003); Wright and Sadjadpour, 'The Neuroscience Guide to Negotiations with Iran'.

[154] Daniel T. Gilbert, 'Buried by Bad Decisions', *Nature* 474, no. 7351 (2011): 276.

[155] Ibid. Our System 1 explains why human beings find it harder to get exercised about climate change, antibiotic-resistant bacteria and obesity than they do about immigrants, school shooters and radicalised Muslim youth. Greenhouse gases, super bacteria and French fries are difficult to villainise; even though the statistical chances of any given individual dying from them are astronomically higher, we do not attribute to them the same level of animate agency.

> we are hypersensitive to the harms those minds produce … We are especially concerned when the threats those human agents produce are to our dignity, values and honour. Moral rules bind communities together, enable trust and the division of labour and cause people to behave honestly when no one is watching. Because these rules have such a crucial role in the formation and functioning of human social groups, we are obsessed with their violation.[156]

In other words, the harder mental work of cognitive empathising and mutual rule-abiding facilitated by System 2 contributes to our ability to trust and to cooperate as a species. But System 1 is ever-present, and blatant transgressions will often automatically bring it back to the fore of our behavioural responses.

Dual Systems and Risk Propensity

The previous chapter sought to resolve the paradoxical coexistence of both negative and positive biases associated with our reflexive mindset by suggesting that each type of bias applies to different domains – the external environment (negative biases) versus the internal self (positive biases). Johnson and Tierney affirm that many people 'are drawn toward negative information about the external environment and other actors, but they are drawn to positive information about themselves.'[157] However, this observation does not explain why these domain-specific biases co-exist in the first place. Why do positive illusions and higher risk propensities so often accompany negative biases and threat inflation? Blame our System 1! We already know that System 1 is prone to base-rate neglect, illusions of validity and control, confirmation bias and associative coherence (the 'causal machine'). These collective traits of System 1 not only make it easier to inflate threats, they also make it much harder for human beings to be aware of the actual risk probabilities in respect of their own endeavours, and of the likelihood of errors in their formulation of judgments. Even if we are not necessarily addicted as a species to extreme gambles, such 'risk-blinkering' – if not risk-blindness – increases confidence, which naturally increases risk propensities.[158]

The inevitable outcome of these heightened risk propensities can be summed up by another broad form of bias: the optimism bias. The optimism bias is a fundamental characteristic of our System 1 and of our reflexive frame of mind, and it diminishes our aversion to risk by endowing us with

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[156] Ibid.

[157] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'Bad World: Negativity Bias and the Cycle of War', paper presented at the Annual International Studies Association Convention, Toronto, Canada (2013): 6.

[158] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 263.

positive illusions about the future. Although our lazy System 2 may accept the positive illusions that System 1 produces, its principal role in this regard is to help us to doubt and to disbelieve by checking the assumptions produced by System 1. However, the optimism bias, like many of the other biases that characterise our reflexive mindset, is a very powerful cognitive illusion.

The eighteenth-century German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz is generally credited with introducing the technical term 'optimism' into the lexicon: he defined it as 'living in the best of all possible worlds'.[159] Most people are at least mildly optimistic about themselves and their prospects, which explains why, when surveyed, they tend to rank themselves in the upper percentiles on everything from driving to leadership ability (a statistical fallacy since *most* people cannot be superior to *most* people).[160] When rivals are on the brink of war, for example, their estimates of their chances of winning commonly sum to more than 100 percent.[161] In fact, the only people who consistently do *not* over-inflate in this way are among the estimated 15 percent of the human population diagnosed with mild clinical depression (who, perhaps unsurprisingly, tend to make more accurate forecasts about their future than their non-depressed counterparts, in a phenomenon known as 'depressive realism').[162] But although our pesky System 1 is the source of most of our cognitive errors, it should be fairly clear by now that there are compelling adaptive reasons for its basic design. The overconfidence and risk-blinkering associated with its operation are no different in this regard.

We have already discussed how humans' large frontal lobes allow them to mentally travel forward in time, make plans, empathise with others, control behavioural impulses and possess a certain degree of self-awareness. While conscious foresight has numerous advantages, it comes with an enormous cost: an understanding of our own mortality. Such blanket knowledge would be paralysing, to say the least, and would most likely have brought the affective and cognitive functions required for human survival to a screeching halt, were it not that cognitive illusions, such as the optimism bias, evolved alongside it. As the biologist Ajit Varki affirms, denial of death was the only way to overcome the 'dead-end evolutionary barrier' of overwhelming fear of the impending

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[159] Tali Sharot, *The Optimism Bias: A Tour of the Irrationally Positive Brain* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2011). iBooks, 23.

[160] Ola Svenson, 'Are We All Less Risky and More Skillful Than Our Fellow Drivers?', *Acta Psychologica* 47, no. 2 (1981).

[161] Johnson, *Overconfidence and War*, 4.

[162] L. B. Alloy and L.Y. Abramson, 'Judgment of Contingency in Depressed and Nondepressed Students: Sadder but Wiser?', *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 108, no. 4 (1979). David A. F. Haaga and Aaron T. Beck, 'Perspectives on Depressive Realism: Implications for Cognitive Theory of Depression', *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 33, no. 1 (1995); Sapolsky, *Behave*, 643.

future.[163] Such optimism is what allows human beings to persist in the face of crippling setbacks and to undertake risky ventures, and it is what generally accompanies many of the most breath-taking achievements of humanity.[164]

Although unbridled optimism is the source of many catastrophic and unnecessary conflicts, it is also useful in waging one of the riskiest human endeavours of all: war. Biological anthropologist Richard Wrangham has proposed that over-inflation of one's capabilities and positive illusions concerning our ability to control events and our invulnerability to risk promoted the necessary resolve and optimism for pre-historic foraging tribes to confront immediate threats and to persevere in the face of setbacks. This is another reason why positive illusions and overconfidence so often appear to accompany threat inflation in response to the perceived advance of war. In the case of impending conflict, positive illusions served a useful evolutionary purpose by enhancing morale, associated with combat effectiveness, and the credibility of bluffs and other deterrence tactics used to counter opponents.[165] In other words, positive illusions conferred specific advantages that increased the probability of winning conflicts in our evolutionary past.[166]As the psychologist Daniel Goleman confirms: 'we seem most likely to fall back on our illusions in the face of an overwhelming threat'.[167]

This heady brew of negative (threat-sensitive) and positive (risk-acceptant) biases that characterises our System 1 may help to explain why actors adopting a reflexive frame of mind are particularly sensitive to the threat of losses, and simultaneously much more willing to accept disproportionate risks to recoup them. As we know from our discussion of mindsets in the previous chapter, loss aversion is directly linked to a particular type of negative emotional bias known as the negative impact bias – the tendency to overestimate the impact of negative feelings derived from potential future 'bad' events, as compared to the positive feelings derived from 'good' events.[170] The

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[163] Ajit Varki, 'Human Uniqueness and the Denial of Death', *Nature* 460, no. 7256 (2009): 684.

[164] Deborah D. Danner, David A. Snowdon and Wallace V. Friesen, 'Positive Emotions in Early Life and Longevity: Findings from the Nun Study', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 80, no. 5 (2001).

[165] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, '"We Shall Be Smashed": The Munich Crisis, Underconfidence and War', paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, 28 August–2 September (2007): 5; Richard Wrangham, 'Is Military Incompetence Adaptive?', *Evolution and Human Behavior* 20, no. 1 (1999); Dominic Johnson, Richard W. Wrangham and Stephen Peter Rosen, 'Is Military Incompetence Adaptive? An Empirical Test with Risk-taking Behaviour in Modern Warfare', ibid. 23, no. 4 (2002).

[166] Johnson, Wrangham and Rosen, 'Is Military Incompetence Adaptive?'.

[167] Johnson, *Overconfidence and War*, 46.

[170] The negative impact bias can help to explain asymmetric patterns of human behaviour that are evident across a wide range of domains. It can, for example, provide an explanation for why professional golfers are more successful when putting for par than for birdie (one stroke under par), and why it is difficult to hail a taxi on rainy days (drivers tend to work many more hours on sunny days, even though demand is lower, and go home early on rainy ones, even though demand is higher, which is the opposite behaviour of that which would be predicted by rational actor theory). Devin G. Pope and Maurice E. Schweitzer, 'Is Tiger Woods Loss Averse? Persistent Bias in the Face of Experience, Competition, and

psychologist Deborah Kermer has noted that the negative impact bias 'occurs in part because these defensive processes operate automatically and unconsciously'.[171] Evidence suggests that loss aversion is yet another adaptive feature of System 1 that aligns with the predictions of evolutionary management theory, which is premised on the idea that marginal losses ('missed detections of threat') are far more critical to our evolutionary survival than marginal gains ('false alarms'). This is true in relation to tangible threats, such as predators, as well as intangible ones, such as starvation. For example, optimal foraging theory predicts that animals will be more risk-acceptant when foraging for food in environments where starvation is a high possibility, than in environments where survival is virtually assured.[172] (After all, hungry animals should be more motivated to find food than those with full stomachs.)[173]

This asymmetry is the basic premise of prospect theory, a school of behavioural economic thought that asserts that individuals are more likely to be risk-seeking in the domain of losses than gains. International relations scholars have relied on prospect theory's insights to explain decisions that deviate from the expectations of rational actor theory.[174] In the political realm, prospect theory predicts that loss aversion and its attendant risk-taking is likely to precipitate conflict: this is because political leaders tend to favour riskier options, such as pre-emptive strikes or even war, in the domain of losses – faced with a choice between a significant loss and the prospect of a bigger disaster, but with a chance to escape, actors are prone to accept gambles that appear unreasonable to a more objective observer. Prototypical risk-seeking behaviour is especially likely to occur when leaders face what they consider to be a desperate situation. And in the same way that other products of our System 1, such as threat inflation and the accompanying loss of cognitive empathy, impede cooperative solutions, loss aversion is also known to contribute to impasses in negotiations. Concessions made by one's own side are felt more strongly than the equivalent concessions made

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High Stakes', *The American Economic Review* 101, no. 1 (2011); Colin Camerer et al., 'Labor Supply of New York City Cabdrivers: One Day at a Time', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 112, no. 2 (1997).

[171] Deborah A. Kermer et al., 'Loss Aversion is an Affective Forecasting Error', *Psychological Science* 17, no. 8 (2006).

[172] McDermott, Fowler and Smirnov, 'On the Evolutionary Origin of Prospect Theory Preferences'.

[173] C. Athena Aktipis and Robert Kurzban, 'Is Homo Economicus Extinct? Vernon Smith, Daniel Kahneman and the Evolutionary Perspective', in *Evolutionary Psychology and Economic Theory*, eds. Roger Koppl and Steven Horwitz (Amsterdam: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2005).

[174] Examples include President Jimmy Carter's highly risky and unsuccessful attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran and George H. W. Bush's decision to refrain from ousting Saddam Hussein in Iraq after liberating Kuwait during the successful Persian Gulf War. Rose McDermott, 'Prospect Theory in International Relations: The Iranian Hostage Rescue Mission', *Political Psychology* 13, no. 2 (1992); Rose McDermott, 'Prospect Theory in Political Science: Gains and Losses from the First Decade', *Political Psychology* 25, no. 2 (2004). Prospect theory also provides a psychological explanation for other schools of thought in international relations, such as defensive neorealism. Defensive realists assume that states expand only when they are threatened, and that security-poor rather than security-rich nations are most liable to act aggressively: they identify the fear of other states balancing against them as the reason for this predilection, while proponents of prospect theory would instead point to the operation of the impact bias. See Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, 'Security Seeking Under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited', *International Security* 25, no. 3 (2000).

by the other side, and following losses individuals struggle to adjust their reference points.[175] Moreover, when both sides face potential losses, which often characterises international crisis situations, the likelihood of conflict increases even further. As Kahneman explains, 'Negotiations over a shrinking pie are especially difficult, because they require an allocation of losses. People tend to be much more easy-going when they bargain over an expanding pie'.[176] Our System 2 brain, by contrast, is more emotionally neutral with regard to losses and gains, and is therefore less susceptible to such risk-seeking behaviour in the domain of losses.[177]

Dual Systems and Temporal Discounting

Philosophers and psychologists agree that one of the greatest achievements of the human brain is its ability to imagine that which does not exist. Our brain, according to one philosopher, is a veritable 'anticipation machine', and engineering hypothetical futures is among the most important things that it does.[178] We have already learned earlier in this chapter that no other species can mentally propel itself into an imaginary future quite like human beings can. This astonishing capacity is due to the sudden and disproportionate growth of our frontal lobes – the seat of our System 2 – sometime within the last two to three million years, which 'transformed the one-and-a-quarter-pound brain of *Homo habilis* [in]to the nearly three-pound brain of *Homo sapiens*'.[179] Psychologist Daniel Gilbert stresses that, as human beings, 'we think about the future in a way that no other animal can, does, or ever has, and this simple, ubiquitous, ordinary act is a defining feature of our humanity'.[180]

However, this astonishing capacity does not mean that our two systems anticipate the future – or value it – in quite the same way.[181] This chapter's earlier discussion of emotion briefly touched on the fact that there is a distinct temporal bias associated with the respective operations of our dual systems, and that it generally runs in opposite directions: System 1 is present-focused, more likely

[175] Jack S. Levy, 'Prospect Theory, Rational Choice, and International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1997).

[176] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 304.

[177] Ibid. 282-284.

[178] Daniel T. Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006). iBooks, 29.

[179] Ibid. 39. Daniel Clement Dennett, *Kinds of Minds: Towards An Understanding of Consciousness* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996).

[180] Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness*, 28.

[181] The knowledge that individuals are not necessarily time-consistent in the manner assumed by rational choice theory, due to a conflict between their longer-term and shorter-term selves, is not limited to the province of psychology. Thomas Schelling – retrospectively viewed as the father of economic game theory – started writing on the topic of time inconsistency and self-control issues in the early 1980s. Thomas C. Schelling, 'Self-Command in Practice, in Policy, and in a Theory of Rational Choice', *The American Economic Review* 74, no. 2 (1984).

to value the immediate over the longer term, and more prone to making automatic, confident assertions about the future based on what it already feels and knows, whereas System 2 is more future-focused, more likely to value the longer term over the immediate moment, and more likely to appreciate the impact of contingency on multiple potential futures.

As we know, our hot System 1 is primed for rapid action against threats, and is biased towards the satisfaction of immediate needs. This makes sense, since the quintessential, survival-focused traits of System 1 are its speed and action-orientation. System 1's myopia and corresponding tendency towards high rates of temporal discounting reflect what behavioural economist Richard Thaler calls its 'doer' bias, as opposed to what he calls the 'planner' bias exhibited by System 2.[182] Experiments involving brain imaging seem to confirm this basic cleavage – at a neural and not just a theoretical level – between the two, with short-term impatience driven by the limbic system, 'which responds preferentially to immediate rewards and is less sensitive to the value of future rewards', and long-term patience mediated by the pre-frontal cortex and associated structures, 'which are able to evaluate trade-offs between abstract rewards, including rewards in the more distant future'.[183] Together with his colleagues, George Loewenstein, who specialises in the study of 'hot-cold empathy gaps' (the recognition that individual intertemporal preferences are often state-dependent), elaborates that:

> Parts of the limbic system associated with the midbrain dopamine system, including paralimbic cortex, are preferentially activated by decisions involving immediately available rewards. In contrast, regions of the lateral prefrontal cortex and posterior parietal cortex are engaged uniformly by intertemporal choices irrespective of delay. Furthermore, the relative engagement of the two systems is directly associated with subjects' choices, with greater relative fronto-parietal activity when subjects choose longer term options.[184]

Among its many advantages in this regard, System 1's short-term orientation means that it can respond automatically and definitively to decision problems, although it is relatively inflexible. This confidence and decisiveness arises in part because our first system suffers from a kind of 'presentism' – which is to say it is biased towards the immediate feelings and available data generated by the present to rapidly predict both feelings and events in the future. Moreover, the sense-making machinery of System 1 makes us see the world as more tidy, simple, predictable, and coherent than

[182] For more on the doer-planner dichotomy, see Thaler, *Misbehaving*, 99–110.

[183] McClure et al., 'Separate Neural Systems Value Immediate and Delayed Monetary Rewards', 504.

[184] Ibid. 503; George Loewenstein and Drazen Prelec, 'Anomalies in Intertemporal Choice: Evidence and an Interpretation', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 107, no. 2 (1992).

it really is: 'the illusion that one has understood the past feeds the further illusion that one can predict and control the future.'[185]

As a result, Daniel Gilbert asserts that our System 1 brain does not so much predict as it 'nexts' – that is, it continuously and subconsciously makes simple predictions about the 'immediate, local and personal future' of the individual concerned, without that individual being aware of it.[186] Part of the reason System 1 can do this is that it bases its predictions on information it has readily available to hand – a phenomenon we have already discussed that is known as WYSIATI ('what you see is all there is'). WYSIATI explains why our first system struggles to grasp non-events as opposed to those events that do occur (base-rate neglect), and why, as a result, it tends to regret inaction more than actions. In other words, the perceived future stakes of not acting are much more definitive and clear for our System 1, and much less so for our System 2. Gilbert notes that this makes it easier for our System 1 to 'rationalise an excess of courage more easily than an excess of cowardice'.[187]

Our cold System 2, by contrast, is our delayed gratification system. It is less rapid and has limited capacity, but it is significantly more flexible.[188] This holds true of our second system in general, but particularly in regard to how it conceives of, and relates to, the future. Although every individual has their own unique 'hot spots' of vulnerability, people who are more self-controlled generally tend to be more sensitive and alert to delayed or otherwise unanticipated long-term consequences of present actions.[189] The greater cognitive flexibility attached to the operation of System 2 means that it is less sensitive to base-rate neglect, and more capable of conceptualising multiple, different futures – none of which yet exist, or may ever exist. This in turn gives System 2 a greater appreciation of the role of contingency and increases our self-doubt about the confident projections of the future supplied by our System 1. However, as is generally characteristic of all System 2 operations, checking the stream of future 'nexts' that System 1 continuously produces takes both time and energy, neither of which are in unlimited supply.[190]

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[185] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 204–205.

[186] Gilbert notes that most of these 'nexting' predictions are quite reasonable and help us to navigate our everyday world with fantastic speed and accuracy. One does not, for example, need to be fed on a steady diet of cheap detective novels and film noir to instantaneously predict that the word 'night' will follow the phrase 'it was a dark and stormy'. Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness*, 31.

[187] Ibid. 357.

[188] Dyson and t' Hart, 'Crisis Management', 379.

[189] Mischel, *The Marshmallow Test*, 308.

[190] This is the basic reason for the 'Stroop effect' – the phenomenon named after psychologist James Stroop, who demonstrated that overriding the first predictions occasioned by the automatic system of the brain took time and energy. He did so in what is now a classic experiment called the Stroop task, in which individuals are required to name the colour of certain printed letters. If the word 'green' is printed in red ink, for example, it takes extra effort for native English speakers to determine that the correct answer is red. For this reason, the Stroop task became a tool of American intelligence

Stress, Crisis Decision-Making and Our Dual Systems

The study of international crisis management in relation to dual systems theories is a particularly fruitful field of research because high-stakes situations provide the kind of antecedent stimuli that are believed to activate the responses of our respective reflexive and reflective systems. In this regard, no stimulus related to crisis decision-making has been the focus of more scholarly attention than that of stress. Indeed, stress is often viewed as the crucial link between the operation of our dual systems – and the mindsets they engender – and international crisis management. For this reason, political scientists Stephen Benedict Dyson and Paul t'Hart observe that decision-making in international crises, and the various types of stress often associated with such situations, is a 'fertile area of application' for the newer dual process psychological models.[191] This is because 'dual-process models provide a framework for understanding the interplay of cognitions, emotions and stress that are cued by circumstances of threat, uncertainty and urgency.'[192]

However, the results of studies examining the behavioural responses of decision-makers under conditions of stress have been decidedly mixed. Some studies posit a very firm link between stress and the activation of System 1, while others observe a polar-opposite effect, with System 2 found to be firmly at the helm of our cognitive processes under stressful conditions. As a general rule, prolonged or chronic stress is inversely correlated with the operations of our System 2 because, over time, it causes ego depletion, which chips away at the regulatory and self-control mechanisms that use up a greater share of our brain's energy reserves.[193] The chronic stress associated with experiencing a sustained state of scarcity or insecurity, for example, has been shown in psychological experiments to reduce mental 'band-with' through ego depletion (to include reduced reasoning ability, cognitive complexity, executive control, control of attention, risk aversion and conflict monitoring – all of which are associated with our System 22).[194] Although chronic stress is believed to have the most detrimental long-lasting effects on our prefrontal executive brain function, the kind of acute stress typically associated with time pressure is also known to deplete the reserves of energy

officials during the Cold War in determining whether suspected covert agents were native Russian speakers. Baumeister and Tierney, *Willpower*, 29.

[191] Dyson and t' Hart, 'Crisis Management', 405.

[192] Ibid. 395.

[193] Baumeister and Tierney, *Willpower*, 33; Megan Oaten and Ken Cheng, 'Academic Examination Stress Impairs Self-Control', *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 24, no. 2 (2005).

[194] For the latest psychological literature on the mental effects of scarcity, see Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir, *Scarcity: The True Cost of Not Having Enough* (London: Penguin Books, 2014).

required for the operation of System 2 at a particularly fast rate. As Kahneman observes, 'the most effortful forms of slow thinking are those that require you to think fast'.[195]

Laboratory experiments on humans seem to confirm that for many individuals either very acute or very prolonged stress (or both) tends to enervate the cold system and strengthen the hot.[196] Proponents of the disruptive stress hypothesis, for example, have demonstrated that anxiety can facilitate ego depletion, which impedes the complex, deliberative cognitive functioning of System 2, and thereby encourages a reversion to the cognitive simplicity and reflexivity of System 1.[197] Political scientist Alexander George has given support to the theory that emotional duress generates diminishing (and eventually very negative) returns to otherwise highly functioning decision-makers by impairing or depleting their complex cognitive capabilities, executive function and judgment.[198] According to George, this depletion tends to distract attention away from the longer-term consequences of action, to foreshorten one's perception of the range of available options, and, most importantly, to encourage a greater reliance on simple heuristics and emotional priming.[199] In short, high levels of stress can both elicit and accentuate our System 1 way of thinking, with all of the corresponding effects we would expect in relation to behaviour and decision-making in international relations.

This is biologically sensible, since an easy way to conserve energy under stress is by seeking a pre-determined conclusion rather than undertaking an exhausting, deliberative search for a solution – an outcome System 1 is only too happy to supply.[200] As a corollary, chronically severe stress has been shown to have materially detrimental effects on our second system, by shrinking those energy-consuming regions in the pre-frontal cortex that regulate and control emotions (particularly fear).[201] Indeed, studies demonstrate that sustained stress can disrupt a range of pre-frontal functions

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[195] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 37.

[196] John A. Bargh and Tanya L. Chartrand, 'The Unbearable Automaticity of Being', *American Psychologist* 54, no. 7 (1999).

[197] Mischel, *The Marshmallow Test*, 68; Peter Suedfeld, 'The Cognitive Processing of Politics and Politicians: Archival Studies of Conceptual and Integrative Complexity', *Journal of Personality* 78, no. 6 (2010): 1676; Michael Wallace, Peter Suedfeld and Kimberley Thachuk, 'Political Rhetoric of Leaders under Stress in the Gulf Crisis', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 37, no. 1 (1993); Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*.

[198] Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1980), 47–49; Robert M. Yerkes and John D. Dodson, 'The Relation of Strength of Stimulus to Rapidity of Habit-Formation', *Journal of Comparative Neurology and Psychology* 18 (1908).

[199] George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy*, 49.

[200] Baumeister and Tierney, *Willpower*, 36.

[201] Robert Sapolsky, 'Why Stress is Bad for Your Brain', *Science* 273, no. 5276 (1996); Emily Ansell et al., 'Cumulative Adversity and Smaller Gray Matter Volume in Medial Prefrontal, Anterior Cingulate, and Insula Regions', *Biological Psychiatry* 72, no. 1 (2012).

associated with System 2, including 'impulse control, emotional regulation, decision-making, empathy and pro-sociality'.[202]

However, while George's view has remained the dominant one, other scholars have arrived at the opposite conclusion about the effects of stress and anxiety on decision-makers. James Blight argues in *The Shattered Crystal Ball* that overwhelming fear of inadvertent nuclear catastrophe facilitated the kind of complex, reflective thinking by members of President Kennedy's Cabinet that was necessary to avoid calamity during the Cuban Missile Crisis. According to Blight, the Cuban Missile Crisis accentuated, within President Kennedy's advisory circle, the characteristics we commonly associate with our reflective mindset, and with System 2 thinking in general: prudence, greater balancing of probabilities and enhanced cognitive complexity.

As Blight explains, once President Kennedy and his close advisers realised that 'the real adversary was the uncontrollable situation they had created, they grappled with the perverse situation and reversed its trajectory'.[203] In this instance, 'fearthought' had given way to forethought: 'Instead of becoming less sensitive to the perceptions and needs of the adversary, leaders in October 1962 were obsessed with how their actions would be perceived by the adversary.'[204] Moreover, Blight's finding echoes more recent experimental evidence that suggests that, rather than encouraging a reversion to simple decision-making heuristics, grave threats can instead prompt due diligence, an expanded information search and consideration of a greater number of decision alternatives.[205]

The differing reactions predicted by our two systems can help to illuminate why previous studies that have focused on the effects of stress on policymakers during moments of international crisis have arrived at such mixed conclusions: the answer lies with which system and which mindset dominates at any given time. But what determines which system is dominant? Whether or not stress is more likely to activate our first or our second system is generally regarded as being a combined function of the level of stress (both its acuteness and duration) and what is commonly called

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[202] Sapolsky, *Behave*, 134; Farid F. Youssef et al., 'Stress Alters Personal Moral Decision Making', *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 37, no. 4 (2012); Katrin Starcke et al., 'Does Stress Alter Everyday Moral Decision-Making?', ibid. 36, no. 2 (2011).

[203] James G. Blight, *The Shattered Crystal Ball: Fear and Learning in the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1990), 8.

[204] Ibid. 162.

[205] Allison Astorino-Courtois, 'The Effects of Stakes and Threat on Foreign Policy Decision-Making', *Journal of Political Psychology* 21, no. 3 (2000): 492. Robert Kennedy alluded to these different reactions in his memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis: 'That kind of pressure does strange things to a human being, even to brilliant, self-confident, mature, experienced men. For some it brings out characteristics and strengths that perhaps even they never knew they had, and for others the pressure is too overwhelming.' Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: The Cuban Missile Crisis October 1962* (London: MacMillan and Company Ltd., 1969), 22.

'mindware' – the mental resources associated with System 2 that are available to an individual at any given time. As a result, we can expect either the activation of what is often labelled a 'challenge' or 'stimulatory' state of motivation (the activation of System 2), or alternatively a 'threat' or 'over-stimulatory' state of stress, consisting of defensive coping mechanisms and a reversion to simple heuristics (the activation of System 1).[206]

According to this biopsychosocial model of stress reactivity, a challenge state of stress occurs 'when evaluated resources meet or exceed demands' and a threat state of stress occurs 'when demands exceed resources'.[207] Lower stress levels and/or a greater capacity with respect to mindware make it more likely that individuals will perceive stress as a challenge (that is, a problem that can be solved), rather than as a threat, whereas higher stress levels and/or a lower capacity for mindware will have the opposite effect. In other words, how an individual appraises his or her condition of stress 'can elicit qualitatively distinct emotional and physiological responses'.[208]

Although research in this area is still nascent, and our understanding of the mechanisms of causality remain underdeveloped, emotions are also believed to feed into the stress-mindware equation. As emotion experts Ted Brader and George Marcus observe, 'emotion is increasingly understood to play a principal role in shaping which route, or path, is active and in serving to sustain each'.[209] For example, research into emotion and dual systems models has found that generalised feelings of anxiety are more likely to activate System 2, whereas directed emotions like anger, fear and enthusiasm are more likely to activate System 1's cognitive defences.[210] In his theory of affective intelligence, Marcus finds strong evidence in support of the hypothesis that 'anxiety increases attention to contemporary information relevant to the decision choice, while both anger and enthusiasm lead to automatic reliance on relevant convictions'.[211] Given System 1's predisposition towards negative biases concerning the external environment and positive biases concerning the self, this finding aligns with those of the dual mindset framework presented in this study. The following

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[206] Margaret Kemeny, 'The Psychobiology of Stress', *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 12, no. 4 (2003); Sapolsky, *Behave*, 126–136.

[207] Mark Seery, 'Challenge or Threat? Cardiovascular Indexes of Resilience and Vulnerability to Potential Stress in Humans', *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 35, no. 7 (2011): 1603.

[208] Kemeny, 'The Psychobiology of Stress', 124.

[209] Ted Brader and George E. Marcus, 'Emotion and Political Psychology', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, eds. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 184.

[210] Nicholas A. Valentino et al., 'Is a Worried Citizen a Good Citizen? Emotions, Political Information Seeking, and Learning Via the Internet', *Political Psychology* 29, no. 2 (2008).

[211] Brader and Marcus, 'Emotion and Political Psychology', 185; George Marcus, *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000).

sections explore individual variation in the activation of dual systems as a function of both the antecedent stress load and the 'mindware' or 'reflective' capacity of the individual decision-maker.

Dual Systems and the Inverted-U Curve Theory of Performance Under Stress

Most research on the effects of stress begins with the Yerkes-Dodson law relating to arousal and performance, commonly known as the 'inverted-U curve' theory of performance under stress. This is a well-known and longstanding psychological theory of the general relationship between stress and performance execution, and is a foundational concept in the field of stress research.[212] According to this theory, every individual will eventually reach a maximum threshold beyond which stress no longer enhances, but rather rapidly detracts from, performance.[213] Crucially, 'performance' is defined in the Yerkes-Dodson model as the demonstration of the effortful, deliberative thinking associated with our reflective System 2. It is not necessarily synonymous with objectively 'good' or 'positive' outcomes – although some researchers have construed it in this way.

[212] Robert Sapolsky, 'Stress and the Brain: Individual Variability and the Inverted-U', *Nature Neuroscience* 18, no. 10 (2015).

[213] Why does the brain exhibit the inverted-U curve concept in relation to stress, in which a moderate rise in stress levels generally contributes to higher-order cognitive functioning, while an even bigger rise generally does the opposite? Although the inverted-U curve concept was conceived through decades of psychological research on observed human cognitive abilities, scientists are increasingly finding a molecular basis in the brain for this theory that helps confirm the bridge between activity at the cellular level and human cognitive experience. One hypothesis is that the brain has evolved to have two receptor systems for glucocorticoids, a class of hormones that produce an array of effects in response to stress. One set of receptors (mineralocorticoid receptors or 'MR') is responsive to small increases in glucocorticoid levels above baseline and mediates the positive stimulatory effects. The other set (glucocorticoid receptors or 'GR') responds only to big, prolonged increases in glucocorticoid levels and mediates the adverse effects. Robert Sapolsky notes that 'predictably, levels of the two types of receptors vary by brain region, person and circumstance'. Sapolsky, *Behave*, 128; Kelly A. Butts et al., 'Glucocorticoid Receptors in the Prefrontal Cortex Regulate Stress-Evoked Dopamine Efflux and Aspects of Executive Function', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 108, no. 45 (2011); Susheel Vijayraghavan et al., 'Inverted-U Dopamine D1 Receptor Actions on Prefrontal Neurons Engaged in Working Memory', *Nature Neuroscience* 10, no. 3 (2007).

Figure 2.2 Yerkes-Dodson Model of the Inverted-U Stress Curve

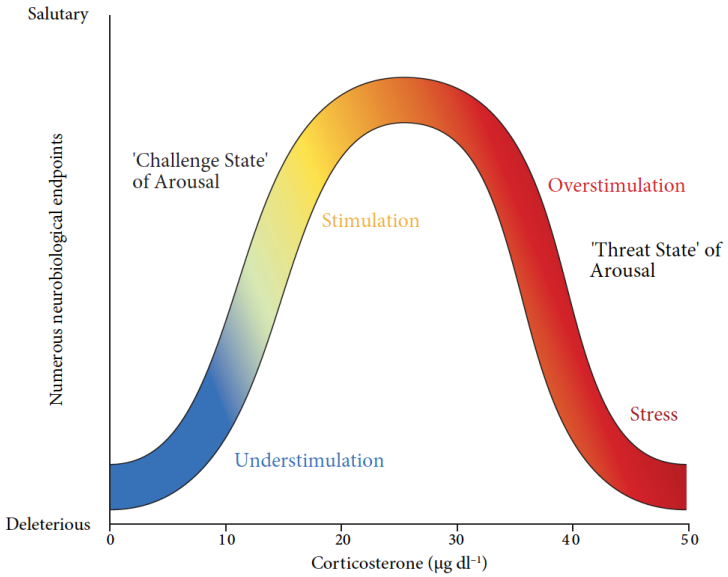


Figure courtesy of the Nature Publishing Group.[214]

The inverted-U curve theory is labelled as such because low levels of stress theoretically provide little motivation to engage in effortful, energy-consuming cognition, and decision-making is largely the product of our automatic System 1; then, as stress increases from low to moderate levels, System 2 becomes activated as decision-makers make more concerted efforts to focus on the task or problem at hand; finally, as stress moves from moderate to extremely high levels, cognitive overload sets in and System 1 re-enters the decision-making equation by encouraging policymakers to revert back to mental heuristics and involuntary emotional responses.[215] In other words, as System 2 is increasingly depleted, System 1 reasserts itself. This is to prevent or to otherwise forestall psychological collapse and incapacitation, which is what occurs at the extreme right-hand tail of the inverted-U curve.[216] Such a state of acute stress is known as 'hyperarousal', or panic, and arises when the time available for escaping from an oncoming threat is severely curtailed.[217] System 1 can attempt

[214] Adapted by permission from Macmillan Publishers Ltd: [Nature Neuroscience] Robert Sapolsky, 'Stress and the Brain: Individual Variability and the Inverted-U', ibid. 18, no. 10 (2015). Copyright 2015.

[215] George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy*, 47–49; Yerkes and Dodson, 'The Relation of Strength of Stimulus to Rapidity of Habit-Formation'.

[216] Dyson and t' Hart, 'Crisis Management', 406.

[217] Janis and Mann, *Decision Making*, 51.

to avoid this state of mental paralysis in a number of ways, from encouraging cognitive simplification to emotional priming.[218]

In other words, emotional cues from System 1 can trigger the activation of System 2, and the cognitive overload of our System 2 can trigger a reversion back to the operations of System 1. Much previous work in this field has focused on extreme cases of psychological collapse leading to 'defective decision-making' – i.e. war. This is consistent with political psychology's traditional focus on cognitive errors and failures (most of which we know originate in System 1), and on the ways in which extreme stress induces what are normatively considered 'bad' outcomes in international affairs: namely the outbreak of conflict.

On the one hand, this reassertion of System 1 when stress reaches particularly high levels is not terribly surprising. Because our System 2 is prone to fatigue and more or less rapid ego depletion, we may easily return to System 1 in our decision-making when the stress load becomes too great, in order to supply simpler and faster strategies to arrive at a solution.[219] Although the re-activation of our System 1 is often attributed to the need to prevent individuals from collapsing in a paroxysm of panic and paralysis, Kahneman suggests the reason for this re-activation may in fact be more mundane.[220] Quite simply, 'the voice of reason may be much fainter than the loud and clear voice of an erroneous intuition, and questioning your intuitions is unpleasant when you face the stress of a big decision'.[221] More doubt and uncertainty is often the last thing people wish for when they are already caught in the maw of a stressful situation.[222]

In fact, evidence suggests that causality works in both directions to reinforce the positive feedback loop between high levels of stress and our System 1: higher stress levels as indicated by the elevated presence of the stress hormone cortisol are more likely to induce System 1 thinking, at the same time that a greater susceptibility to System 1 biases simultaneously increases stress levels. This is because stress increases the overall excitability of the amygdala, while sustained or chronic stress can severely weaken the hold of the pre-frontal cortex – which is responsible for mediating or even unlearning

[218] Susan Folkman and Judith Tedlie Moskowitz, 'Stress, Positive Emotion, and Coping', *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 9, no. 4 (2000).

[219] Kahneman and Frederick, 'Frames and Brains'.

[220] Dyson and t' Hart, 'Crisis Management', 407.

[221] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 417.

[222] Furthermore, we know that once a decision has been made, the appeal of System 1 is likely to be significantly magnified, as numerous psychological experiments demonstrate that the act of deciding is the most ego-depleting activity of all. Vohs et al., 'Making Choices Impairs Subsequent Self-Control'.

previously learned fears or threat associations – over the amygdala. Once the amygdala becomes overstimulated, its neurons are much slower than those of the prefrontal cortex in their ability to reverse these learned associations, and it explains why experimental studies have shown that sustained stress makes people subconsciously more sensitive to angry faces.[223] In turn, neuroscientist Elaine Fox and colleagues have found that natural susceptibility to the kind of threat-sensitive, negative biases associated with our reflexive System 1 facilitates increased levels of cortisol in the body.[224]

However, newer research has begun to question the universal validity of the Yerkes-Dodson model. Not only is total mental collapse actually quite rare, human beings also appear to exhibit a range of responses to stress that fall between the optimum high point of the performance curve (moderate stress that magnifies the operation of our reflective mindset) and the total collapse of performance (extreme stress that results in mental breakdown). As a result, the shape and length of these performance curves can vary significantly by individual. For example, several researchers have noted that President Kennedy's capacity for complex cognitive deliberation was maintained, if not enhanced, as the Cuban Missile Crisis reached the point of maximum danger.[225] Blight observes that 'fear of the shattered crystal ball led not to psychological breakdown under stress, as one might have predicted, but to a peaceful resolution.'[226] For other individuals, by contrast, the same stress load automatically induces the desire to revert to simple decision-making heuristics. (Recall the contrary reaction of US Air Force Chief of Staff General Curtis LeMay, who spent the entire duration of the Cuban Missile Crisis eagerly waiting for nuclear war to erupt so the United States could use its first strike capability to permanently eradicate the threat from the Soviet Union.)[227]

In sum, individual reactions to stress do not appear to have a uniform relationship with the objective level or 'load' of stress. But if both systems are reliably hard-wired into the human brain, what

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[223] Sapolsky, *Behave*, 128–129; Stephen Peter Rosen, *War and Human Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 117.

[224] Fox and her colleagues observe that 'an early bias to process threat activates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical (HPA) axis, leading to an increase in circulating glucocorticoids, such as cortisol. Indeed, a tendency to selectively process threatening facial expressions rather than smiling faces has been associated with enhanced cortisol release in humans'. Elaine Fox, Shanna Cahill and Konstantina Zougkou, 'Preconscious Processing Biases Predict Emotional Reactivity to Stress', *Biological Psychiatry* 67, no. 4 (2010): 371.

[225] Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 331–338.

[226] Blight, *The Shattered Crystal Ball*, 7.

[227] During the Cuban Missile Crisis, LeMay's advice was unremitting and unequivocal: 'The Russian Bear has always been eager to stick his paw in Latin American waters. Now we've got him in a trap, let's take his leg off right up to his testicles. On second thought, let's take off his testicles, too.' Joshua Rothman, 'Waiting for World War III', *The New Yorker*, 16 October 2012.

accounts for individual variation in their operation under the same stressful conditions? In other words, what explains why humans differ in their behavioural response to similar levels of stressors in the environment, i.e. whether individuals remain on the left- or the right-hand of the inverted-U curve in their response to a crisis? And what explains whether, at any given time, their entire stress curve is shifted to the left (indicating vulnerability to future stress and likelihood of System 1 activation) or to the right (indicating resilience against future stress and likelihood of System 2 activation)? For proponents of dual systems theory, the answer lies with a concept called mindware.

'Mindware' and the Puzzle of Individual Variation Under Stress

While behavioural psychologists have demonstrated that the basic architecture of human cognition and neurobiology makes everyone prone to System 1 errors of judgment, they have long known that important variations among individuals exist. In other words, although people's brain circuits can be found in roughly the same locations and have the same basic structures, individuals can vary enormously in their neural (and behavioural) responses to similar events. For example, as a (very general) rule, women tend to be less impulsive and overconfident than men, people are generally less likely to fall prey to cognitive biases in the morning than in the afternoon (before decision fatigue sets in), and individuals from different cultural backgrounds can exhibit differing susceptibilities to established cognitive biases in laboratory-controlled experiments.[230] Moreover, experiments have shown that while some individuals can maintain their reflective capability, or mindware, despite the effects of ego depletion, others succumb relatively quickly.[231]

Although the operation of automatic System 1 is believed to be universal, the varying strength of System 2 can help to explain why many of the most common cognitive errors associated with our reflexive mindset are not manifested in the same way and to the same degree across the human population. As Stanovich and West note:

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[230] The observed gender disparity is typically attributed to the existence of much higher average levels of testosterone in men. John Coates, *The Hour Between Dog and Wolf: Risk-taking, Gut Feelings and the Biology of Boom and Bust* (London: Fourth Estate, 2013); Dominic Johnson et al., 'Overconfidence in Wargames: Experimental Evidence on Expectations, Aggression, Gender and Testosterone', *Proceedings: Biological Sciences* 273, no. 1600 (2006); Tierney, 'Do You Suffer From Decision Fatigue?'; Shai Danziger, Jonathan Levav and Liora Avnaim-Pesso, 'Extraneous Factors in Judicial Decisions', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 108, no. 17 (2011); E. C. Chang, K. Asakawa and L.J. Sanna, 'Cultural Variations in Optimistic and Pessimistic Bias: Do Easterners Really Expect the Worst and Westerners Really Expect the Best When Predicting Future Life Events?', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81, no. 3 (2001).

[231] Roy F. Baumeister, Kathleen D. Vohs and Dianne M. Tice, 'The Strength Model of Self-Control', *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 16, no. 6 (2007): 353.

> The biases introduced by System 1 heuristic processing may well be universal – because the computational biases inherent in this system are ubiquitous and shared by all humans. However, it does not necessarily follow that errors on tasks from the heuristics and biases literature will be universal (we have known for some time that they are not). This is because, for some individuals, System 2 processes operating in parallel will have the requisite computational power (or a low enough threshold) to override the response primed by System 1.[232]

Stanovich has labelled this computational power 'mindware'. Mindware refers to the cognitive rules, procedures and strategies that facilitate critical System 2 thinking, and that override the immediate reactions of System 1.[233] Thus, an individual's level of mindware refers to the availability of his or her System 2 resources at any given time. According to dual systems theorists, the level of mindware individual decision-makers possess, and not just the objective stress load, helps determine whether they are capable of coping with their respective levels of stress, and the emotions such stress produces, in an effortful, deliberative way. If they are, we can expect the activation of a 'challenge' state of stimulation and motivation (System 2); if they are not, we can expect the activation of a 'threat' state of stress, consisting of defensive coping mechanisms and a reversion to simple heuristics (System 1).[234]

Broadly speaking, mindware is understood to be both trait- and state-dependent – meaning it is affected by endogenous factors, such as personality and genetics, as well as exogenous factors, such as culture, memory and situational context. Such individual variation in mindware and, by extension, stress vulnerability, can be superimposed onto the inverted-U concept, allowing researchers to frame the differences in terms of the width, height or symmetry of the U-shaped curve (Figure 2.3).[235] Some individuals exhibit strong emotional (i.e. reflexive) reactions even to moderate levels and/or acute but brief periods of stress, while others can positively thrive (i.e. maintain their reflective capacity) on objectively high levels and/or prolonged periods of stress.[236] As Robert Sapolsky concludes, 'the number of social stressors to which an individual is subjected is less

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[232] Stanovich and West, 'Individual Differences in Reasoning', 660.

[233] Keith E. Stanovich, *What Intelligence Tests Miss: The Psychology of Rational Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). The Olympic Games provide an excellent example of how athletic competitors across the world exhibit the same spontaneous human reactions to the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat while at the same time varying considerably across cultures in terms of whether and how they override their initial impulses in front of the cameras. David Matsumoto and Bob Willingham, 'The Thrill of Victory and the Agony of Defeat: Spontaneous Expressions of Medal Winners of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 91, no. 3 (2006).

[234] Kemeny, 'The Psychobiology of Stress'.

[235] Sapolsky, 'Stress and the Brain', 1346.

[236] Michael Nicholson, *Rationality and the Analysis of International Conflict* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 128-129.

important to physiology than is the emotional style with which one perceives and copes with the stressors'.[237] On average, however, chronic periods of stress exposure will affect an individual's pre-existing level of mindware, thereby changing the actual shape of an individual's inverted-U curve (typically not for the better in regard to stress resilience), while the intensity of present stress will affect where an individual falls at any given time along their unique inverted-U curve.

Figure 2.3 Individual Variability in Inverted-U Stress Curves as a Function of 'Mindware'

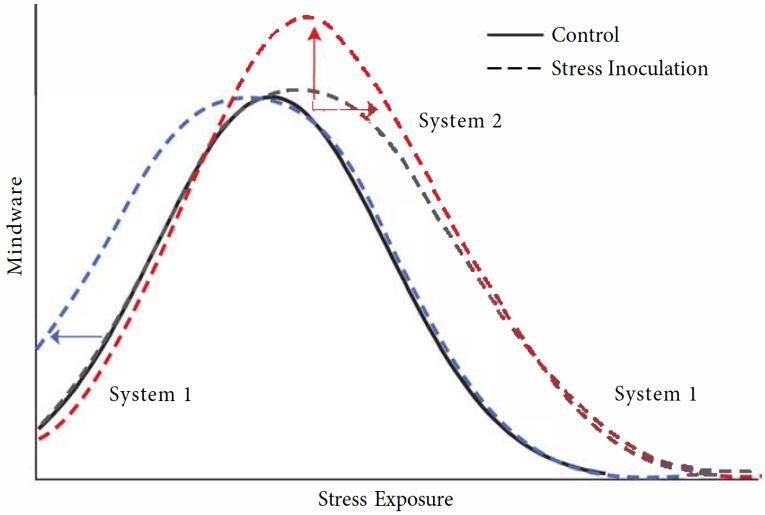


Figure courtesy of the Nature Publishing Group.[238]

The extent to which individuals possess different levels of mindware that they can apply to stressful problems, exemplified by the peak of an individual's inverted-U curve, can depend upon many different, often compounding, factors.[239] With respect to 'trait' (i.e. personality) differences, variation in mindware among individuals corresponds to physiological variations in brain scans observed by neuroscientists. Each individual human brain is unique – size, shape and even important chemical receptors can differ dramatically from person to person. Some individuals 'have an amygdala that reacts to the faintest hint of danger, and others need a serious and imminent threat to get their amygdala going'.[240] This helps explain why certain personalities perceive many forms of behaviour on the part of others as threatening, while others are able to differentiate more precisely

[237] Rosen, *War and Human Nature*, 116.

[238] Adapted by permission from Macmillan Publishers Ltd: [Nature Neuroscience] Scott Russo et al., 'Neurobiology of Resilience', *Nature Neuroscience* 15, no. 11 (2012). Copyright 2012.

[239] Delimiting the scope of the thesis in this way is a legitimate and necessary exercise of any social science research. Explanations for human (and, by extension, state) behaviour may 'break a chain of cause and consequence at different points' without rendering any of these individual aspects less valid. Hugh Stretton, *The Political Sciences: General Principles of Selection in Social Science and History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 52–55.

[240] Fox, *Rainy Brain, Sunny Brain*, 140.

between threatening and neutral situations.[241] Moreover, increasing evidence of neuroplasticity – the capacity of the brain to physically reshape itself – suggests that our environment has as much a role to play in how our brains uniquely develop over our lifetimes as does our genetic code.[242]

This brings us to 'state' differences – the contextual and environmental factors that help determine which system gets activated in the brain at any given time. Previous experiences appear to have universal relevance to an individual's inverted-U curve, particularly those that occurred close in time to the decision problem at hand. This is because our understanding and experience of prior events can affect the rate and state of our ego depletion. Indeed, ego depletion, tied to our finite and limited System 2, is very affected by our previous experiences – anything which previously depletes or otherwise impedes our finite willpower, such as prior stressful situations or events that forces us to exert such control, leaves us more likely to fall back upon the operations of System 1.

Not only do studies suggest that people respond more aggressively and exhibit less emotional self-control when they are ego-depleted, but previous periods of depletion can also prevent individuals devoting the kind of attention and deliberate focus to complex tasks that require these attributes in order to arrive at an appropriate solution.[243] Studies using electroencephalographic (EEG) recording, a method that scientists use to detect electrical activity inside the brain, have shown that individuals who have already depleted their reflective resources as a result of engaging in other, simultaneously difficult tasks struggle to control their reactions and to exert self-control as their error-detection ability deteriorates.[244] Although people can sometimes overcome mental fatigue, individuals who have largely used up their reserves of mental energy by exerting a tremendous amount of willpower, or by making a series of ego-depleting decisions over a relatively short period of time, will almost always eventually succumb to the temptations of the hot and fast System 1.[245]

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[241] The neuroendocrinologist Robert Sapolsky conducted a series of experiments that found that the same personality differences hold true for males within baboon primate groups – with some males prepared to fight nearly all of the time and others only initiating fights only when actually challenged by their rivals. Rosen, *War and Human Nature*, 114-116.

[242] The literature on neuroplasticity is large and growing. For recent highlights, see Sharon Begley, *The Plastic Mind: New Science Reveals our Extraordinary Potential to Transform Ourselves* (London: Constable, 2009); Eleanor Maguire, 'Navigation-Related Structural Change in the Hippocampi of Taxi Drivers', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 97, no. 8 (2000); Norman Doidge, *The Brain that Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science* (London: Penguin, 2008).

[243] Jeffrey Osgood and Mark Muraven, 'Does Counting to Ten Increase or Decrease Aggression? The Role of State Self-Control (Ego-Depletion) and Consequences', *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 46, no. 2 (2016).

[244] Inzlicht and Gutsell, 'Running on Empty: Neural Signals for Self-Control Failure'.

[245] Baumeister and Tierney, *Willpower*, 19–39. This pattern holds true across many different contexts, from patients suffering with chronic pain and students who feel the strain of academic pressure as exam time nears, to negotiators involved in legal mediation settlements with strictly imposed deadlines. Lise Solberg Nes et al., 'Self-Regulatory Deficits in Fibromyalgia and Temporomandibular Disorders', *Pain* 151, no. 1 (2010); Megan Oaten and Ken Cheng, 'Improved Self-Control: The Benefits of a Regular Program of Academic Study', *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 28, no. 1 (2006); Roy

Memory contributes in this regard by framing our understanding of how much mental exertion is required to deal appropriately with the decision problem at hand. For example, vivid and very recent experiences of success are likely to encourage the activation of System 1 by confirming faith in our own judgments. Such confidence retrospectively enhances the illusion that we are in control of events and encourages the conservation of our finite System 2 resources.[246] As Bill Moyers, close aide and White House Press Secretary to President Lyndon Baines Johnson during the Vietnam War, admitted in the aftermath of his resignation: 'There was a confidence, it was never bragged about, it was just there – a residue, perhaps of the confrontation over the missiles in Cuba – that when the chips were really down, the other people would fold.'[247]

By contrast, spectacular experiences of recent failure can have the opposite effect, by encouraging us to slow down and by injecting a dose of self-doubt into our decision-making, which are the hallmarks of System 2 at work. President Kennedy's handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis is a prime example. Although Kennedy was no doubt heavily influenced by Barbara Tuchman's Pulitzer-prize-winning novel *The Guns of August*, detailing how Europe had blundered into the First World War, many historians agree that it was the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion 18 months prior that left its indelible mark on Kennedy's mentality during the crisis.[248] Recent scientific advances suggest that this 'failure effect' of lowering the threshold at which System 2 is activated may be particularly salient for individuals who have a naturally higher stress resilience, as reflected in their inverted-U curves. Indeed, laboratory experiments have revealed that individuals who possess naturally lower biological thresholds for risk may be particularly affected by the experience of recent losses with respect to the rapid reactivation of their System 2.[249]

F. Baumeister et al., 'The Glucose Model of Mediation: Physiological Bases of Willpower as Important Explanations for Common Mediation Behavior', *Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal* 15 (2015).

[246] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 256.

[247] Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), 120.

[248] In the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy reportedly remarked that the 'first advice' he would offer to his successor would be to 'watch the generals' and not to believe that 'just because they were military men their opinions on military matters were worth a damn'. Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War* (London: Profile Books, 2013), 592; Lawrence Freedman, *Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 219; Benjamin Bradlee, *Conversations with Kennedy* (New York: Norton, 1975).

[249] Scientists have discovered that the nucleus accumbens, or NAcc, a part of the brain that is linked to both our dopamine network and our limbic system, helps determine whether risky decisions are made. In recent experiments on laboratory rats, brain activity in this area peaked in risk-averse rats, which were strongly influenced by previous choices that resulted in losses. Experts suggest the research findings could be very similar in human beings. Kelly A. Zalocusky et al., 'Nucleus Accumbens D2R Cells Signal Prior Outcomes and Control Risky Decision-Making', *Nature* 531, no. 7596 (2016).

Individual variation in the operation of our dual systems has important implications for the development of international relations theory. As discussed in the introductory chapter, international relations scholarship has remained trapped between two inadequate models of the individual: the rational actor model and the psycho-dynamic 'cognitive miser' model. Although this study argues that psycho-dynamic models represent a considerable improvement upon rational actor models, neither paints a fully satisfying picture of the actual processes of human decision-making.[250] This is because most psychological accounts of international relations along the lines of the 'cognitive miser' model possess little to no explanatory value outside of the operation of the traditional cognitive errors they identify – meaning that when those cognitive errors do not appear, traditional psychological explanations flounder in explaining the behaviour of individuals and, by extension, states in the international system.[251] By contrast, the insights supplied by dual systems theory suggest that mindsets may have an important intervening role to play in explaining different decision-making choices under objectively stressful conditions – even when the biases associated with our System 1 appear to be subdued or absent entirely.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the discovery of the mind's dual systems supplies compelling scientific corroboration of the dual mindset framework introduced in the previous chapter. Our dual systems evolved to serve very different functions and they generate very different solutions to decision-making problems – all of which align with the predicted characteristics and effects of the reflexive and reflective mindsets discussed in depth in Chapter 1. Both systems are simultaneously necessary and uniquely flawed. Our first system facilitates our natural intuition, which is essential to our survival but which is also the source of many of our cognitive illusions, some of which are as powerful and as overwhelming as optical illusions. Our second system is our built-in reality check: it endows us with the capacity to deliberately scrutinise the 'quick and dirty' version of reality produced by the fast and frugal operations of System 1. However, our second system is lazier and more prone to cognitive overload than our first system.[252] As Daniel Gilbert has elegantly asserted: 'We cannot do without reality and we cannot do without illusion. Each serves a purpose, each imposes a limit on the influence of the other, and our experience of the world is the artful

[250] Thaler, *Misbehaving*, 4.

[251] Joseph Nye and David A. Welch, *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation: An Introduction to Theory and History*, 8th ed. (London: Longman, 2011), 49.

[252] Jim Holt, 'Two Brains Running', *The New York Times*, 25 November 2011.

compromise that these tough competitors negotiate.'[253] Thus, for most human beings, 'blinking' and 'thinking' is not an either-or proposition but a question of balancing between the two under conditions of uncertainty.

As it relates to the conduct of international relations, dual systems theory enriches our understanding of the psychological and neurobiological mechanisms behind the reflexive and reflective mindsets discussed in the previous chapter. The notion that our two systems and the mindsets they produce facilitate our human capacity for both enmity and empathy – whose adoption, it is argued, respectively contributes to variations in foreign policy decisions regarding war and peace – echoes the views of other scientists, such as Stephen Pinker, about the intrinsic dualities built into the machinery of the human mind:

> The mind is a complex system of cognitive and emotional faculties implemented in the brain which owe their basic design to the processes of evolution. Some of these faculties incline us toward various kinds of violence. Others – 'the better angels of our nature' … incline us toward cooperation and peace … The neuroanatomy suggests that in *Homo sapiens* primitive impulses of rage, fear, and craving must contend with the cerebral restraints of prudence, moralisation, and self-control — though as in all attempts at taming the wild, it's not always clear who has the upper hand.[254]

If some of our worst behaviours are the products of our evolutionary biology, then, as Pinker describes it, the same applies to our best behaviours.

The empirical cases examined in the following chapters apply the theoretical observations made in the preceding two chapters concerning the impact of our reflexive and reflective mindsets on foreign policy decisions for and against war. Although perfectly controlled comparisons in the social sciences are impracticable, the two cases that have been selected in order to probe the plausibility of the dual mindset theory come as close as possible in the unruly laboratory of international politics to replicating a most-similar case comparison. The Balkan stand-offs of 1912–1913 and the July Crisis of 1914 that unleashed the Great War occurred only months apart, with all of their deadly fuse-lines intact, but they differed in one important regard: whether or not crisis escalated into a continental war.[255] Moreover, there is good reason to believe that this particular case comparison merits closer examination out of the universe of possible comparisons.

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[253] Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness*, 322.

[254] Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, 605.

[255] T. G. Otte, *July Crisis: The World's Descent Into War, Summer 1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 6–7.

The outbreak of the First World War is undoubtedly the most scrutinised case in the broad canon of international relations scholarship; however, the series of crises that preceded the cataclysm that rocked the European continent in 1914 have rarely been the subject of intensive study. Historians, with certain exceptions, have treated the succession of crises before 1914, particularly the years 1912–1913 during the two Balkan Wars, as merely the prelude, a kind of symphonic overture, to the crescendo of the Great War. Political scientists, predominantly focused on identifying the systemic causes of war, have neglected them almost entirely. However, it is a fact that in the summer of 1913 Europe's leaders confronted significant turmoil in the Balkans for the third time within a year, and for a third time they refused to be drawn into a continental conflagration. Less than 12 months later, when, paradoxically, the 'short-term indicators pointed towards peace', and when 'European diplomats spoke of a new era of détente', the leaders of the Great Powers instead chose to take up arms and to march into the maelstrom of war.[256]

Much ink has been spilt on the minute-by-minute decisions made in different European capitals during that fateful Edwardian summer. This thesis neither attempts to recreate them nor to apportion blame to the specific actors involved. Instead, the following chapters will argue that the drastic differences in outcome between these historical episodes that were only a handful of months apart are puzzling in their own right, and are not fully explained by existing theories of international relations. If, as the historian T. G. Otte has observed, the 'concerns about the present and fears for the future' held by the individual decision-makers 'hold one of the keys to a deeper understanding of the events of the summer of 1914', then it is to mindsets that we must turn.[257]

[256] Ibid. 1.

[257] Ibid. 7.

CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND THE TIMING PARADOX OF 1914

Dual Mindset Theory and the Puzzle of Europe's Descent to War

'The peremptory transition from an apparently profound peace to violent general war in a few mid-summer weeks in 1914 continues to defy attempts at explanation.'

JOHN KEEGAN, *The First World War* (1998)

'Each country decided that 1914 would be a favourable year for war despite having roughly similar information and fearing a chance of disaster.'

JACK SNYDER, 'Better Now Than Later' (2015)

For more than a century, the complex sequence of events in the summer of 1914 that culminated in the bloodletting of Europe has captured the public imagination and fuelled intense historical debate. Scholars have used and re-used this test case to demonstrate innumerable *a priori* theories about the origins of war. Indeed, no other political crisis in history has spawned a literature of such 'unparalleled size, sophistication and moral intensity'. [1] For international relations theorists, the First World War has remained the case study *par excellence*, whose pride of place within the firmament of international relations scholarship has shaped the field in seminal ways.[2] Jack Levy and John Vasquez observe that:

> The war has had a disproportionate impact on the development of numerous theories of international conflict, from theories of balance of power, power transitions, alliances, economic interdependence, and offence-defence, to theories of scapegoating, rigid organisational routines, and misperceptions. It is also a commonly used case to illustrate and test a wide range of theories of international conflict. The First World War remains *the* case to which nearly every IR conflict theorist is drawn.[3]

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[1] Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), xxi.

[2] For more on the ways in which the First World War catalysed the development of international relations theory see Keir A. Lieber, 'The New History of World War I and What It Means for International Relations Theory', *International Security* 32, no. 2 (2007); Richard Ned Lebow, 'What Can International Relations Theory Learn from the Origins of World War I?', *International Relations* 28, no. 4 (2014).

[3] Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez, *The Outbreak of the First World War: Structure, Politics, and Decision-Making* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 4.

The sheer volume of existing explanations makes this a particularly daunting test case for any new theory seeking to add to our understanding of the outbreak of war. Culture, society, alliance configurations, mobilisation schedules, domestic politics, balances of power, nationalism, militarism, finances and bureaucracy are just a few of the drivers that have been fingered for blame over the decades. Given this dazzling array of factors, it is not surprising that the literature on the war's origins is replete with allusions to the 'perfect storm' of circumstances that made it likely that conflict would break out.[4] Moreover, hindsight with respect to the diversity of forces pushing in the direction of war has also coloured how we view Europe's successive pre-war crises – most notably the series of Balkan Wars that brought the continental powers to the brink of mobilisation and conflict more than once in the one to two years just before the Sarajevo assassinations. In this regard, the crises before the First World War now appear as mere 'preludes to the grand finale in July 1914', and, consequently, 'an implicit quasi-teleology, with world war as Europe's inevitable destiny, remains endemic in much of the literature'.[5]

Nevertheless, despite the retrospectively staggering confluence of martial forces at work, the decision for war came down to 'those few generals, crowned heads, diplomats or politicians who in the summer of 1914 had the power and authority to say either yes or no'.[6] Many, if not most, of them were the same individuals who had counselled for peace during the previous two years, when the First and Second Balkan Wars threatened to drag the Great Powers into continental conflict (see Appendix Table 1).[7] This contrast was arguably nowhere more marked than in Germany, the leaders of which had deliberately restrained their Austro-Hungarian ally through multiple Balkan crises in 1912–1913, and yet which, in July 1914, 'dramatically switched to pushing Vienna to attack Serbia as soon as possible'.[8] Such a disparity presents scholars with an historical puzzle: why were Europe's leaders mutually willing to gamble on the possibility of a continental war to achieve their individual aims in July 1914, when they had refused to do so just a few years, if not months, earlier during the

[4] Samuel R. Williamson Jr., 'July 1914 Revisited and Revised: The Erosion of the German Paradigm', in *The Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 61.

[5] T. G. Otte, 'A "Formidable Factor in European Politics": Views of Russia in 1914', in *The Outbreak of The First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 87.

[6] Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War* (London: Profile Books, 2013), xxx.

[7] Ibid. 436–468. This was particularly true with respect to the mobilisation measures adopted at various points during the year of Balkan crises, which bore close parallels to the series of moves and countermoves that would later be made by the Great Powers in July 1914. Dale Copeland, 'International Relations Theory and the Three Great Puzzles of the First World War', in *The Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 179.

[8] Copeland, 'International Relations Theory and the Three Great Puzzles of the First World War', 177.

Balkan crises in 1912–1913? On at least three separate occasions during this exceedingly tumultuous year, the Great Powers had managed to pull themselves and their allies back from the brink of a general conflict.[9] The historical conundrum grows even more puzzling when we consider that the capabilities of the participants, and the principal structural factors, such as the alliance blocs dividing Europe and the fundamental balance of military power on the continent, were essentially unchanged between the two periods, separated only by a handful of months.[10] Indeed, the historian David Fromkin contends that:

> Thirty-seven days before the Great War the European world was comfortably at peace. Europe's leaders were starting their summer vacations and none of them expected to be disturbed while away. What went wrong? All of the fuse lines ... had been as dangerous to the peace of Europe in 1910 and 1912 as they were in 1914. Since they had not led to war in 1910 or 1912, why did they in 1914? The question is not only why war came, but why war came in the European summer of 1914; not why war? but – why *this* war?[11]

Margaret MacMillan echoes this sentiment. In writing about the general fears that were widespread throughout Europe in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Great War, she observes that 'such fears could have played out either way: to make the powers more cautious or to make them ready to gamble on war'.[12] In the tumultuous year 1912–1913, when it seemed that a general war might be on the verge of breaking out, Europe's leaders chose caution; in the aftermath of the Sarajevo assassinations of June 1914, when the Balkan storm clouds appeared to have dissipated and Europe seemed to be experiencing a period of unusual calm, they instead chose to 'leap into the dark' by gambling on war.[13] How did a similarly fraught strategic context produce both peace and war outcomes in such a short period of time?

This chapter examines the central puzzle associated with the timing of the war's outbreak in the summer of 1914. As such, it marks the beginning of the empirical portion of this thesis and is divided into four parts: the first part elucidates the particular paradox of the outbreak of a general European war in August 1914 and the reasons for this paradox; the second part examines the traditional

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[9] Ibid. 168.

[10] Military historian David Hermann confirms that 'when the Archduke and his wife were assassinated in 1914, the balance of military power in Europe was not very different from that in the last major crisis'. David Herrmann, *The Arming of Europe and the Making of the First World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 200.

[11] David Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer: Why the World Went to War in 1914* (London: Vintage, 2005), 11.

[12] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 471.

[13] Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig, eds., *The Origins of World War I* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 178.

explanations, both short-term and long-term, that have been advanced to explain it; the third part specifically addresses the two models of the decision-maker introduced earlier in this thesis and why each is inadequate in accounting for the timing paradox; and the fourth part outlines the remaining puzzles that persist in regard to the timing of the war's outbreak. Dale Copeland observes that any 'good theory should not only explain why war broke out in August 1914, but also why it did not break out earlier under apparently similar circumstances'.[14] The test of any theoretical framework, therefore, is not just how well it clarifies our understanding of concrete historical decisions, but also how well it clarifies our understanding of why those decisions were not made at a different time and place under arguably similar conditions. Despite the staggering multiplicity of factors that have been put forward by political scientists and historians to explain the events of 1914, many such explanations often fall short of explaining why the war did not, conversely, break out in response to previous European crises – in particular, those that occurred during the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, when structural conditions and the sequence of diplomatic and military measures across the two opposing alliance blocs most closely prefigured those that prevailed in 1914 (see Table 0.2).[15]

Chapters 4 and 5 apply the dual mindset framework to this historical puzzle in the form of a comparative case study of decision-making during the succession of Balkan crises in response to the Balkan Wars, which lasted from October 1912 until approximately one year later, and the July Crisis of 1914. The central argument advanced in this thesis is that the mindsets of decision-makers served as a crucial intervening variable that affected how strategic events were interpreted and the decisions that resulted from those interpretations. Specifically, the dominance of a reflective frame of mind, brought on by a 'challenge state' of motivation among the principal decision-makers on both sides, may help to explain why European leaders proved capable of pulling themselves and their allies back from the brink of a general conflagration in 1912–1913. The switch to a predominantly reflexive frame of mind during the July Crisis, by contrast, brought on by a 'threat state' of stress, may help to account for the outbreak of war in the summer of 1914. The dual mindset theory thus introduces a novel theoretical explanation of a well-known historical puzzle, the timing paradox of the First World War's outbreak – one that may help to shed light on not only the dissolution of European peace in 1914, but also its continuity in the years immediately prior to the outbreak of conflict.

[14] Copeland, 'International Relations Theory and the Three Great Puzzles of the First World War', 177.

[15] David Stevenson argues that, from a mobilisation perspective, 'the most highly militarised of all the pre-war crises resulted from the first Balkan war in the winter of 1912–1913'. David Stevenson, 'Militarization and Diplomacy in Europe before 1914', *International Security* 22, no. 1 (1997): 140.

The Timing Paradox of 1914: War or Peace?

The timing of the outbreak of the First World War presents a particular paradox that has not gone unnoticed, either by contemporaries at the time or by scholars since: 1914 was supposed to be a calm year. The contrast between the relatively tranquil atmosphere that prevailed in the first few months of 1914 and the tempest that broke over the European continent after the Sarajevo assassinations only deepens the puzzle surrounding the war's outbreak in the summer of 1914. Indeed, many diplomats and politicians saw the general European situation as *less* dangerous in 1914 than it had been in previous years, when acute tensions between the Central Powers and the Triple Entente over events in the Balkans and North Africa were successfully defused by diplomacy.[16] 'I have not seen such calm waters', remarked Sir Arthur Nicolson, Permanent Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs at the British Foreign Office, in early May 1914.[17] Raymond Poincaré, the French President, testified to the 'harmonious atmosphere thereby created' by the successful resolution of the Balkan crises due to the cooperative interactions of the Great Powers.[18] Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, reflected that: 'In the early months of 1914 the international sky seemed clearer than it had been. The Balkan clouds had disappeared'.[19]

Although the territorial boundaries of Albania remained a sore point in the resolution of the Balkan Wars, there were no significant disputes pending between the Great Powers of Europe in the early summer of 1914.[20] Even as the stockpiling of armaments continued apace, and despite the fact that certain quarters of the general public had grown more militant in the preceding years, European leaders had nevertheless retained a remarkable capacity for crisis management.[21] Historian Gordon Martel sums up the general view that:

> In June 1914 the prospects for the European future seemed bright. Diplomatic storms had blown up from time to time over the past decade – but these had always been weathered without war. Quarrels over far-off possessions in Africa, Asia, and the Far East seemed perpetual – but these had become fewer and farther between over the last decade. In the meantime, the voices advocating the peaceful

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[16] Max Hastings, *Catastrophe: Europe Goes To War 1914* (London: William Collins, 2014), 19.

[17] Zara Steiner, *The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898–1914* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 153.

[18] Friedrich Kießling, 'Unfought Wars: The Effect of Détente before World War I', in *An Improbable War? The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture Before 1914*, eds. Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 187.

[19] Sir Edward Grey, *Twenty-Five Years: 1892–1916*, People's Library ed., 3 vols., vol. 2 (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1928), 112.

[20] Bernadotte E. Schmitt, *The Coming of the War, 1914*, vol. 2 (New York: Howard Fertig, 1966), 175.

[21] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*.

> arbitration and conciliation of disputes were growing in number and volume. And those men who counted most when it came to choosing between war and peace seemed, by their own history and sense of national interest, to favour clearly the keeping of the long European peace.[22]

There was therefore good reason to be optimistic that Europe had weathered the worst of her Balkan storms. As Martel observes, this sentiment was amplified by the existence of an international peace movement that had grown in popularity and that remained exceedingly active right up to the eve of the war: the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 had been dedicated to disarmament and to the international arbitration of disputes, and a third such conference was scheduled for 1915, with preparations for it already underway across multiple European capitals by the summer of 1914.[23] Pacifism had become a multi-faceted and vigorous antidote to the philosophy of social Darwinism, with prominent intellectuals and activists citing Darwin's own work to counter Herbert Spencer's notion that social life was an inexorable 'struggle of the fittest'.[24] Norman Angell's bestselling *The Great Illusion* (1909), which augured a 'new pacifism' that appealed to hard-nosed economic self-interest rather than to sentiment in arguing against the folly of war, even proved quite popular with the more conservative and traditional elements of society.[25]

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[22] Gordon Martel, *The Month That Changed the World: July 1914* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 45–46.

[23] Jost Dülffer, 'Effort to Reform the International System and Peace Movements Before 1914', *Peace & Change* 14, no. 1 (1989).

[24] For example, philosopher and anarchist Prince Pyotr Kropotkin published his hugely influential *Mutual Aid* in 1902, relying on Darwin's own examples of altruism in the natural world to counter the belief that strife between nations was both to be expected and encouraged, while French-educated sociologist Jacques Novicow 'attacked the precepts of social Darwinism head-on' in his 1910 *La Critique du Darwinism Sociale.* Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 4–10. Herbert Spencer was a nineteenth century British political philosopher who translated Darwin's laws of nature into a social ideology epitomised by his phrase (often wrongly attributed to Darwin) 'survival of the fittest'. Frans de Waal, *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society* (London: Souvenir Press Ltd, 2010), 28.

[25] Martin Ceadel, 'The Peace Movement: Overview of a British Brand Leader', *International Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2014): 359.

Photograph 3.1 Female Delegates to the 1915 Women's Peace Conference in The Hague



Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Creative Commons.

On the military side, the most acute phase of the Anglo–German naval race had passed by early 1914, and the land armaments race across Europe, while continuing apace, remained primarily defensive in posture: even with regard to its more offensive strategic aspects it never entailed an explicit political commitment by any of the Great Powers to a preventive war.[26] As such, the arms race was but a permissive feature of the European strategic landscape that was conducive to war – it did not guarantee the outbreak of a war in 1914. British Secretary Sir Edward Grey concluded as much, stating that 'the failure to arrest expenditure in armaments was but a negative feature, and there was nothing new about it'.[27] 'Europe had grown used to such expenditure, and to failures to arrest its

[26] The extent to which Britain and Germany had reached a peaceful consensus on naval matters was reflected in the British government's decision to send four dreadnought battleships to Kiel harbour for a state visit in June 1914. Joseph Nye, 'Inevitability and War', in *The Next Great War? The Roots of World War I and the Risk of U.S.–China Conflict*, eds. Richard E. Rosecrance and Stephen E. Miller, Belfer Center Studies in International Security (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015), 189–190. More broadly, the historical assumption that arms races necessarily lead to war is not unassailable. The Cold War, for example, included several similar periods of armaments competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, involving recurrent diplomatic confrontations, intensified weapons deployments and strategic reorientation, without the outbreak of war. A similarly competitive dynamic over a succession of army bills occurred, albeit on a much smaller scale, in continental Europe during the 1880s between an Austro-German bloc and a Franco-Russian bloc, which eventually resulted in a peaceful equilibrium by the 1890s. David Stevenson, 'Was a Peaceful Outcome Unthinkable? The European Land Armaments Race before 1914', in *An Improbable War? The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture Before 1914*, eds. Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 142–143.

[27] Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, vol. 2, 143.

growth. There seemed no reason to suppose that it would cause a crisis [in 1914] … any more than it had done in previous years'.[28]

Most notably, the period 1912–1914 was marked by fresh attempts at détente across the alliance blocs, the most significant expression of which was the détente between Great Britain and Germany.[29] The apogee of these efforts was the Conference of Ambassadors in London, a series of informal exchanges at the ambassadorial level that lasted from December 1912 to August 1913, during which representatives from each of the Great Powers met to manage the various tensions unleashed by both Balkan Wars, and in which Anglo–German cooperation played an essential role.[30] Winston Churchill, serving at the helm of the British Admiralty during this period, recalled that:

> All through the tangle of the Balkan Conferences British and German diplomacy laboured in harmony … The peaceful solution of the Balkan difficulties afforded justifications for the feeling of confidence. For months we had negotiated upon the most delicate questions on the brink of local rupture, and no rupture had come. There had been a score of opportunities had any Power wished to make war. Germany seemed, with us, to be set on peace.[31]

Indeed, the notion that the European situation in 1914 was more fluid and less unqualifiedly antagonistic than many scholarly accounts have suggested has gained significant historiographical ground over the past few years.[32] The German historian Friedrich Kießling has observed that détente prior to 1914 was not relegated to a few isolated cases but instead was 'discernible across the gamut of relationships' between the powers of the opposing camps – a fact that heightened perceptions of the mobility of these alliance blocs and, paradoxically, may have intensified fears on both sides of international isolation.[33] Christopher Clark reinforces this point, observing that the interlocking

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[28] Ibid.

[29] The scope of Anglo–German détente included a British offer to negotiate the liquidation of Portugal's African colonies on favourable terms for Germany and an agreement over the Berlin–Baghdad railway, in which it was agreed that Britain would no longer oppose the construction of the railway and Germany would respect British control of the area south of Baghdad. Visible, too, on the horizon, was the prospect of a potential Anglo–German deal to prop up what remained of the Ottoman Empire after the Balkan Wars. Moreover, historian T. G. Otte observes that mutual concern in both countries about the accelerated growth of Russian power meant that the phenomenon of détente 'appeared to many of the key players in the chancelleries of Europe to have become a prominent feature of Anglo–German relations … whose significance scholars have come to appreciate more fully in recent years'. T. G. Otte, 'Détente 1914: Sir William Tyrrell's Secret Mission to Germany', *The Historical Journal* 56, no. 1 (2013): 176; MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*; Dominic Lieven, *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia* (London: Allen Lane, 2015).

[30] Richard J. Crampton, *The Hollow Detente: Anglo–German Relations in the Balkans, 1911–1914* (London: George Prior, 1980).

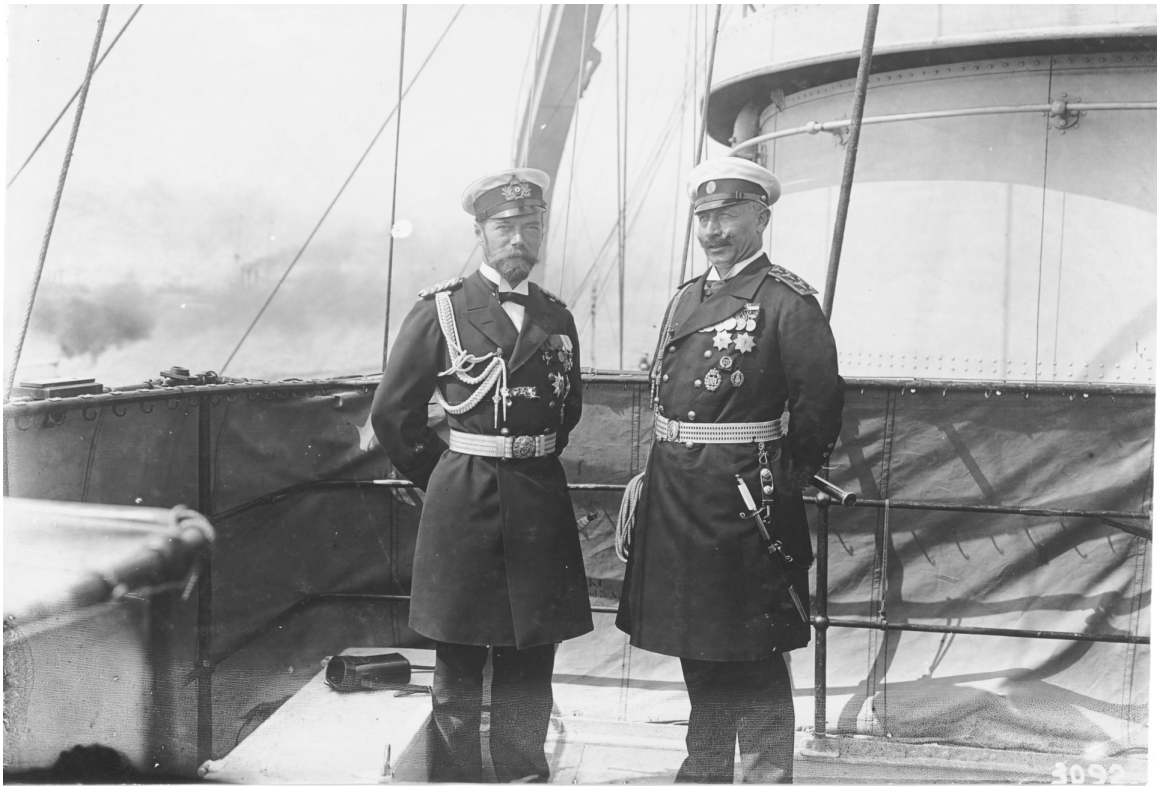
[31] Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911–1918* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 87.

[32] See Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson, eds., *An Improbable War? The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture Before 1914* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).

[33] Kießling, 'Unfought Wars', 185.

alliance commitments that helped produce catastrophe in 1914 'were not long-term features of the European system, but the consequence of numerous short-term adjustments that were themselves evidence of how swiftly relations among the powers were evolving'.[34]

Photograph 3.2 Tsar Nicholas II and Kaiser Wilhelm II, 5 August 1907



Photograph courtesy of the German Federal Archive and Wikimedia Creative Commons.

For example, many of France's leading statesmen, most prominent among them Prime Minister Joseph Caillaux, had not ruled out the possibility of a future *rapprochement* with Germany during these years.[35] This view was even more enthusiastically adopted by France's ambassador to Berlin, Jules Cambon, who believed that a Franco-German détente could best serve France's security needs and who persistently manoeuvred to try to bring this about.[36] John Keiger, a leading historian of the

[34] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 364. Historian Max Hastings drives home the point that European allegiances during this period were not set in stone: 'The French entered the new century with a possible invasion of England docketed in their war scenarios, and in 1905 the British still had contingency plans to fight France. They believed for a time that Russia might abandon the Triple Entente and join the Triple Alliance … In 1912 Austria's Count Berchtold indeed dallied with a rapprochement with St. Petersburg … The following year, Germany offered loans to Serbia'. Hastings, *Catastrophe*, 7.

[35] Prominent German banker Max Warburg remarked to his government in 1913: 'By and large it is certainly ridiculous to speak today of the possibility of a French-English-German rapprochement, but I was told seriously in conversations that one would not be surprised if we were there in five years' time'. Annika Mombauer, ed., *The Origins of the First World War: Diplomatic and Military Documents*, *Documents in Modern History* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2013), 41.

[36] John Keiger, 'Jules Cambon and Franco-German Détente, 1907–1914', *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 3 (1983).

politics of the period, has argued that 'there is no doubt that at the end of 1913 Franco-German relations were on a better footing than for years'.[37] There was thus reason to hope that, with time, the continental alliance blocs might lose their 'functionality and cohesion', and that détente 'was not merely a temporary respite from mutual hostility, but a genuine potentiality of the international system'.[38] Moreover, the alliance system could operate in both directions – acting not just as an accelerant of, but also as a brake on, conflict escalation. Allies could serve 'as a drag on one another by indicating their unwillingness to risk war over issues in which they had no clear and immediate interest at stake' – as, indeed, was the case at multiple points during the Balkan Wars. On several occasions, for example, Germany made it painfully clear that it would not unequivocally support her ally Austria-Hungary without sufficient provocation, and France frequently played a double game with respect to her ally Russia, at certain times serving as a brake on escalation and at other times forcing the pace of confrontation.[39]

Moving from the international to the domestic level, most European politicians were at least reasonably aware that any war would be fraught with great uncertainty, and that defeat and social upheaval were just as likely outcomes as the alternative of national glory and internal consolidation.[40] Indeed, the historiography concerning the role of domestic politics in propelling Europe to war has shifted, from an emphasis on the myth of a universal outpouring of martial enthusiasm in European capitals to a more balanced consideration of the numerous countervailing political movements in favour of peace. In Berlin, for example, the prominent anti-war Social Democratic party, which had won a third of the seats in the last Reichstag elections, publicly criticised the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, and on the day that Vienna declared war on Belgrade 100,000 individuals took to the streets to protest – more than had turned out in its favour.[41] As late as June 1914, politicians such as Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg of Germany presciently feared that 'a world war, because of its incalculable consequences, would immensely increase the power of Social Democracy, which sermonises the virtues of peace … and bring many a throne crashing down'.[42] Russia experienced

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[37] John Keiger, *France and the Origins of the First World War* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1983), 133.

[38] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 326.

[39] Ibid. 293–301.

[40] Jack Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later: The Paradox of 1914 as Everyone's Favored Year for War', in *The Next Great War? The Roots of World War I and the Risk of U.S.-China Conflict*, eds. Richard N. Rosencrance and Steven E. Miller, Belfer Center Studies in International Security (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015), 25.

[41] Lebow, 'What Can International Relations Theory Learn from the Origins of World War I?', 393; Roger Chickering, '"War Enthusiasm?" Public Opinion and the Outbreak of War in 1914', in *An Improbable War? The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture Before 1914*, eds. Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).

[42] T. G. Otte, 'War, Revolution and the Uncertain Primacy of Domestic Politics', in *The Next Great War? The Roots of World War I and the Roots of U.S.-China Conflict*, eds. Richard N. Rosencrance and Stephen E. Miller (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2015), 108.

more workers' strikes in the first half of 1914 than at any time since the revolutionary uprising of 1905, an event whose connection to Russia's disastrous defeat in the Russo-Japanese War was not lost on either the Tsar or his military advisers.[43] Although each of the major powers, particularly the three eastern European monarchies of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia, faced very different forms of internal strife and domestic paralysis on the eve of the Great War, T. G. Otte writes that:

> The effect of this pervasive sense of domestic crisis … was the same in all of the major powers in that it hampered the ability of governments to act with confidence. Standing close to the crater's edge, and staring down into the abyss of social and political turmoil, if not revolution, it seemed more sensible not to move than to take a possibly fateful step.[44]

That domestic political factors served as much to restrain as to force the pace of confrontation in 1914 was evident by the fact that, at the outbreak of war, European governments were everywhere surprised that there were no general strikes to interfere with their respective military mobilisations.[45]

With hindsight, it is easy to claim that the Balkan Wars set the stage for what happened next. However, it does not follow that the succession of crises that plagued the continent's leaders led inexorably to the European clash that followed. Based on the outcome of the Balkan Wars and European leaders' relatively successful crisis management in this regard, it was certainly not a foregone conclusion that the peace would collapse within one to two years, nor that adjustment to a new distribution of power on the European continent would only come about through war.[46] Instead:

> The scope for compromise and for Concert diplomacy remained in early 1914. Despite tensions rising high in the Balkans and Italian forces struggling to suppress Arab resistance in Libya, many informed observers were confident in the spring of 1914 that Europe had passed the worst. The former French Foreign Minister, Gabriel Hanotaux, wondered whether it was a positive omen that the treaty of Bucharest, marking the end of the Second Balkan War, was concluded just as the Peace Palace in The Hague, the home of the Court of Arbitration, was officially opened. 'In Rome, when war ended', he wrote, 'the temple of Janus closed its doors; this [temple de la paix], the moment war finishes, opens

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[43] D. W. Spring, 'Russia and the Coming of War', in *The Coming of the First World War*, eds. R. J. W. Evans and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 62–63; Hans Rogger, 'Russia in 1914', *Journal of Contemporary History* 1, no. 4 (1966).

[44] Otte, 'War, Revolution and the Uncertain Primacy of Domestic Politics', 124.

[45] Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 143–144, 162–163.

[46] Richard Langhorne, *The Collapse of the Concert of Europe: International Politics 1890–1914* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1981), 110.

its doors.'[47]

When it came, the war took most Europeans by surprise – for many it was akin to 'a peal of thunder out of a cloudless sky'.[48] Contrary to the popular accounts of mass jubilation in the streets, many reacted with fear, disbelief and utter shock that the long European peace had ended so abruptly and decisively. When the German ambassador to Russia, Friedrich Pourtalès, handed over his country's declaration of war, he did so in tears.[49] Although this was an age before the advent of polling, historian Margaret MacMillan writes that 'the majority of Europeans, as far as it is possible to tell, were simply stupefied at the speed and finality with which Europe's long peace had ended'.[50]

Traditional Explanations for the Timing Paradox of 1914

Scholarly theories of the First World War's causes and origins are as diverse as they are extensive, and an exhaustive review of the vast literature prompted by this historical moment is beyond the scope of this study. However, many, if not most, of the standard explanations for the war's outbreak in 1914 fall into one of two broad categories: 'structural', or long-term causes, and 'contingent', or short-term causes. Although scholarly debates about structure and agency include questions about the inter-relationship between the two, most scholars tend to place greater causal emphasis on either one or the other.[51] It is worth briefly exploring these two traditional categories of explanation for the outbreak of the conflict and why each is insufficient in providing a comprehensive accounting of the timing paradox of 1914.

Accounts focusing on the former emphasise the 'big events, processes and structures' that moved decision-makers towards war in the summer of 1914.[52] Although many international relations scholars understand 'structure' to mean the systemic, or inter-state, interactions that brought about the war, structural accounts span systemic, domestic and transnational explanations, and comprise any number of categorical causes, from 'imperialism, nationalism, armaments, alliances, [and] high

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[47] Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan and Andreas Rose, eds., *The Wars Before the Great War: Conflict and International Politics before the Outbreak of the First World War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 16.

[48] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 553.

[49] Norman Stone, *World War One: A Short History* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 26.

[50] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 593.

[51] Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez, 'Introduction: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Causes of the First World War', in *The Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 19.

[52] Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig, *Decisions for War, 1914–1917* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5.

finance' to 'ideas of national honour, [and] the mechanics of mobilisation'.[53] By contrast, explanations emphasising the latter principally focus on human agency – that is, the critical decisions made by individuals in the course of the July Crisis and the role of contingency, human error and culpability therein. Each category of explanation encompasses a diverse range of theories and sub-theories, and each places more or less emphasis on the probability (structural camp) versus improbability (contingent camp) of the outbreak of war.

One of the more popular metaphors to describe the distinction between the two is that of 'powder kegs' and 'sparks': the former are windows of opportunity that reflect structural change in the international system and the latter the kinds of contingent catalysts that are necessary for the former to have maximum causal effect. Scholars differ over whether to place greater emphasis on the powder keg (the structure of European politics) or the spark (the Sarajevo assassinations and resulting July Crisis) in their search for the causes of the war. Those who emphasise the powder keg see the war as the product of long-term forces that produced a set of structural conditions that made it highly likely that 'some crisis at some point would come along that would escalate into war'.[54] Those who emphasise the spark, which, like most catalysts, is usually the result of contingent actions taken by agents, focus 'on the role of perception, interpretation, judgment and decision-making'.[55]

This thesis will not attempt to contribute to this debate, except to argue that neither category of explanation offers a fully satisfactory explication of the timing of the war's outbreak in the summer of 1914. This is particularly evident when we set the outcome of the July Crisis against the peaceful resolution of the pre-war Balkan crises. Structural and contingent explanations either over-determine or under-determine, respectively, the timing of the conflict, which was arguably neither foreordained nor improbable, neither premeditated nor purely accidental.[56] 'Important as it is to understand that this war might easily not have happened and why,' observes Christopher Clark, 'this insight has to be balanced with an appreciation of how and why it did in fact happen'.[57] As a consequence, each category of explanation is susceptible to its own particular brand of biased narrative that risks imposing a retrospectively distorting effect on our understanding of why war broke out in 1914 – the former that of a 'steadily building causal pressure', in which the patterns of causality appear overwhelmingly clear (arguably too clear), the latter a narrative of nations

[53] Levy and Vasquez, 'Introduction', 19.

[54] Levy and Vasquez, *The Outbreak of the First World War*, 19.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 428.

[57] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 362.

inadvertently slithering 'over the brink', in which patterns of causality are hardly discernible at all.[58]

Long-Term Causes: Structures and Streetcars

A multitude of theoretical explanations for the outbreak of the Great War have concentrated on the long-term trends that their proponents argue made a European conflagration over-determined, if not inevitable. All such explanations underscore the fact that the war was largely foreordained due to the overwhelming structural forces at work, while relegating the precise timing of its outbreak as an issue of lesser importance. Given the unprecedented scale of the carnage that followed the respective declarations of war in August 1914, it is not surprising that historians and political scientists alike have searched for deeper causes to explain the conflict. The most established of these structural explanations span multiple levels of analysis. They include: systemic accounts encompassing power transition, balance-of-power, security dilemma and alliance chain-ganging dynamics; domestic political explanations (Fritz Fischer's thesis being the most notable among them); the bureaucratic dictates of railway timetables and the associated internal logic of mobilisation plans; and a variety of broad cultural imperatives, from the widespread 'cult of the offensive' and beliefs about social Darwinism to the pre-war glorification of masculine honour.[59]

According to structural accounts, the double assassinations in Sarajevo represented one among many hypothetical 'streetcars' that were regularly rattling along the combustible boulevard of history at the turn of the twentieth century – one of which would eventually have ignited a general war on a European continent already primed, like a powder keg, for conflagration.[60] Such explanations place

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[58] Ibid. xxvii.

[59] For a representative sampling of these diverse structural and theoretical explanations for the outbreak of the Great War, see Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001); Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity', *International Organization* 44, no. 2 (1990); Jack S. Levy, 'Preventive War and Democratic Politics', *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2008); Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York: Norton, 1967); A. J. P. Taylor, *War by Time-table: How the First World War Began* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1969); Stephen Van Evera, 'The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War', *International Security* 9, no. 1 (1984); Avner Offer, 'Going to War in 1914: A Matter of Honor?', *Politics & Society* 23, no. 2 (1995). Fritz Fischer argued that the German government deliberately instigated the First World War in response to various domestic pressure groups within Germany that advocated for an aggressive and expansionist foreign policy. According to Fischer, Berlin's aim was to 'consolidate the position of the ruling classes with a successful imperialist policy'. Fritz Fischer, *War of Illusions: German Policies from 1911 to 1914*, trans. Marian Jackson (London: Chatto and Windus, 1975), 8. For a trenchant repudiation of the Fischer thesis, see Otte, 'War, Revolution and the Uncertain Primacy of Domestic Politics'.

[60] The 'streetcar' metaphor, while frequently invoked to support structural arguments for the causes of the First World War, was first employed in relation to the US escalation of the Vietnam War. Many contemporaries and historians, including the authors of the Pentagon Papers, argued that the 1965 Vietcong attack on the US military base at Pleiku represented an important cause of the American decision to escalate involvement in the war effort. McGeorge Bundy, President Johnson's National Security Advisor, supplied an implicit critique of this argument (and the genesis of the

a premium on structural variables, as against contingent catalysts, by taking the latter's routine availability for granted, 'assuming that as long as the right underlying conditions are present, some incident will sooner or later set armies on the march'.[61] As such, the precise timing of the war's outbreak in 1914 is not so much paradoxical as it is arbitrary. In this way, structural explanations describe the confluence of diverse forces – systemic, domestic, bureaucratic as well as cultural – that made Europe conflict-prone and due to which a continental war became very possible, if not probable.

However, such forces are not equivalent to policy decisions. The predictable corollary of exclusively focusing on underlying factors is hindsight bias, in which 'causes trawled from the length and breadth of Europe's pre-war decades are piled like weights on the scale until it tilts from probability to inevitability'.[62] Whether the deeper forces favouring war that are singled out for blame include the hardening of competitive alliance blocs, the rapid acceleration of armaments, or the rise of belligerent world powers, many structural accounts of the war's origins present the years leading up to 1914 as a kind of ineluctable march, often spurred on by a merciless preventive logic, towards a general European clash.

Such explanations suffer from mirror-image defects: firstly, they struggle to explain why such underlying forces were insufficient to unleash war in the aftermath of previous 'streetcars' that had rumbled along history's pre-war highway – including, but not limited to, the two Moroccan stand-offs of 1905 and 1911, the Bosnian annexation crisis of 1908-1909, and Italy's invasion of Libya in 1911, as well as the two major Balkan wars that had punctuated European politics in the 18 months prior to the outbreak of war in 1914; secondly, they struggle to explain why the considerable factors favouring peace – including, but not limited to, the fear of triggering a balancing coalition, the inherent risks of war, concerns about domestic revolt, the civilian control of the military, normative constraints on the resort to preventive war within the Concert of Europe, and the strategic

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streetcar analogy) when he famously remarked that 'Pleikus are like streetcars; if you miss one, another will come along shortly'. Jack S. Levy, 'Counterfactuals, Causal Inference, and Historical Analysis', *Security Studies* 24, no. 3 (2015): 399; Mike Gravel, *The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decision-Making on Vietnam*, vol. III (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 286–287.

[61] William R. Thompson, 'A Streetcar Named Sarajevo: Catalysts, Multiple Causation Chains, and Rivalry Structures', *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (2003): 454.

[62] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 362. Hindsight bias, a product of our reflexive System 1 and colloquially known as the 'knew-it-all-along' effect, refers to the tendency to view an event after it has occurred as having been predictable, despite there being little or no objective basis for predicting the event before its occurrence. Baruch Fischhoff, 'Hindsight is Not Equal to Foresight: The Effect of Outcome Knowledge on Judgment Under Uncertainty', *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 1, no. 3 (1975); Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, 'Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases', *Science* 185, no. 4157 (1974).

possibilities of détente – were conversely unable to avert war in 1914, when the international political system had already successfully weathered previous shocks.[63]

In this regard, several contravening indicators leading up to 1914 would seem to confound – or, at least, to complicate – linear explanations that neatly link underlying structures to the outcome of war. Despite the valorisation of offensive mobilisation plans, jingoistic publics, the accelerating pace of the accumulation of armaments and jittery alliance partners, the decision-makers of 1912–1913 (many of whom would reprise their crisis management roles in 1914 – see Appendix Table 1) strove to keep the peace during the Balkan Wars. Austria-Hungary, for example, seriously considered and ultimately rejected the idea of going to war with Serbia on at least three separate occasions before the Sarajevo assassinations – in December 1912, April–May 1913 and October 1913 – when Austria-Hungary's military posture was viewed by her own general staff as more favourable in regard to war.[64] German civilian leaders, such as Kaiser Wilhelm and Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, who have borne the brunt of the historical blame for instigating the war, reined in their military leadership during these pre-war years. Far from having settled on a preventive war, they were in fact preoccupied at the time with further rounds of armaments augmentation and a massive, multi-year programme of strategic railway building.[65] During the Winter Crisis of 1912–1913, Russia activated the same military precautions of mobilisation readiness that her leadership would adopt in July 1914, without provoking a reciprocal German mobilisation and an outbreak of hostilities.[66]

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[63] For a good overview of many of the factors mitigating against war, see William Mulligan, 'Restraints on Preventive War Before 1914', in *The Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Moreover, if previous streetcars were insufficient to unleash the structural forces favouring war, it is reasonable to question whether, in the absence of the Sarajevo attacks, later such streetcars would have necessarily compelled the Great Powers to continue marching towards the abyss. If the First World War was over-determined for the structural reasons discussed above, it was arguably also far from inevitable. For example, had Franz Ferdinand's driver not made a wrong turn in the streets of Sarajevo on the morning of 28 June, or if Oskar Potiorek, the Governor-General of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who was in the car with the Archduke, had been killed instead, the moment for a European war might have conceivably passed without incident. The reasons for this are manifold: Franz Ferdinand's longstanding resistance to a war with Serbia (he would have assumed the Austro-Hungarian throne upon Franz Joseph's death in 1916), Germany's perception that it could not successfully prosecute a war from 1916 onwards, and both Russia and Britain's preoccupation with their own internal domestic troubles, namely the threat of a Bolshevik revolution and the struggle for Home Rule in Ireland. Furthermore, rising tensions with Russia over its surreptitious growth in Central Asia in the years immediately preceding the First World War had given way to widespread doubts within the British Foreign Office as to whether the 1907 Anglo–Russian Entente would be renewed in 1915. For a rigorous counterfactual analysis in support of this view see Richard Ned Lebow, *Archduke Franz Ferdinand Lives! A World Without World War I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). iBooks.

[64] Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, *Aus Meiner Dienstzeit, 1906–1918*, 5 vols., vol. 4 (Vienna: Rikola Verlag, 1921–1925), 53–57, 72.

[65] Stevenson, 'Was a Peaceful Outcome Unthinkable?', 141–142.

[66] Hastings, *Catastrophe*, 56–57.

Critics of the structuralist view rightly point out that 'structural approaches, while valuable, provide only part of the analytical purchase needed to understand foreign policy decisions'.[67] As the historian T. G. Otte observes, it is much easier to blindly assert the significance of '*les forces profondes*' than it is to demonstrate any causal nexus between those forces and specific policy decisions.[68] Impersonal historical forces do not devise ultimatums or mobilise millions on the battlefield – real flesh-and-blood political leaders do.[69] For this reason, historians Richard Hamilton and Holger Herwig contend that 'economic rivalries, alliance structures, or imperial adventures – those "structural factors", the "big causes" often touted by historians seeking to explain decision-making in 1914 – do not cause wars. War … stems from decisions taken by national leaders'.[70] Much like the geological theory of plate tectonics, structural accounts provide scholars with an understanding of the permissive conditions in which geopolitical earthquakes are more or less likely to erupt, but they cannot easily explain or predict specific instances of eruption in the absence of other explanatory variables.[71]

Short-Term Causes: Contingency and Culpability

Scholars who view the First World War as highly contingent emphasise the immediate causes of the war and the role of human agency in bringing it about. Such a view represents a revisionist perspective in relation to the more traditional orthodoxy of the structural approach, whose dominant narrative of steadily building tension implies that war was the logical, if not inevitable, culmination of international relations during this period. Rather than embracing what historian Wolfgang Mommsen has called the 'topos of inevitable war', the revisionist perspective places greater causal weight on the 'topos of avoidable war' – that is, the contingent circumstances and decisions that explain the war's outbreak.[72] Such accounts tend to focus on the 'catalytic spark' provided by the Sarajevo assassinations and the specific actions and reactions by various European governments in their aftermath that accelerated the pace of crisis escalation.[73] As such, the July Crisis

[67] Richard Ned Lebow, 'Contingency, Catalysts and Nonlinear Change: The Origins of World War One', in *Explaining War and Peace: Case Studies and Necessary Condition Counterfactuals*, eds. Gary Goertz and Jack S. Levy (New York: Routledge, 2007), 88.

[68] Otte, 'War, Revolution and the Uncertain Primacy of Domestic Politics', 104.

[69] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 425.

[70] Hamilton and Herwig, *Decisions for War*, 73.

[71] Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, *Causes of War* (Chichester, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 21.

[72] See Wolfgang J. Mommsen, 'The Topos of Inevitable War in Germany in the Decade Before 1914', in *Germany in the Age of Total War: Essays in Honor of Francis L. Carsten*, eds. Volker R. Berghahn and Martin Kitchen (London: Croom Helm, 1981).

[73] For example, Ned Lebow suggests that the chance success of the Black Hand's plot to murder Archduke Franz Ferdinand was sufficient to create the psychological environment necessary for Kaiser Wilhelm and Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg to overcome their inhibitions about war. Lebow, *Archduke Franz Ferdinand Lives!*, 69.

represents a significant cause of the war in its own right, rather than an arbitrary trigger for the manifestation of deeper tensions.[74] Structures, in other words, are irrelevant without agents to imbue them with meaning. The historian Avner Offer suggests that this distinction between structures and agents is more than just an issue of scholarly semantics:

> The *causes* of war are not the same as the *decision* for war. Had the Cold War of 1945–1989 descended into warfare in Europe, we would not have lacked for structural explanations. But there was no war. War must be caused by human agency. After economics, politics, and strategy had set the stage, someone had to pull the trigger.[75]

The puzzle is that most of the individuals who could be said to have 'pulled the trigger' in one form or another in July 1914 were, barring certain notable exceptions, such as Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the same individuals who had chosen not to pull the trigger during previous crises. As is the case with structural accounts, personality-driven explanations of the First World War often neglect to explain this variation in foreign policy outcomes. Such neglect is driven, at least in part, by the obsessive focus on responsibility in many agent-centred accounts of the outbreak of war.

Indeed, in the course of recounting the crisis, many revisionist accounts aim to assign some degree of guilt to one or more of the powers in relation to the outbreak of war.[76] This intensive focus on culpability is understandable, since it directs more attention towards the choices of political leaders than to the international structural forces that shaped those choices.[77] If those who proffer structural explanations, in their quest for analytical clarity and parsimony, tend to relegate political actors to 'mere executors of forces long established and beyond their control', then contingent accounts can occasionally resemble an Agatha Christie novel, 'at the end of which we will discover the culprit standing over a corpse in the conservatory with a smoking pistol'.[78] The literature on the July Crisis

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[74] William Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War*, eds. William Beik, T. C. W. Blanning, and Brendan Simms, New Approaches to European History (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[75] Offer, 'Going to War in 1914: A Matter of Honor?', 213.

[76] The 'blame game' attributing responsibility for the First World War admittedly predates the more contemporary debates between structural and revisionist accounts discussed here, and spans both long-term and short-term causes. Almost as soon as the war began in August 1914, each of the participants sought to exculpate themselves of guilt before the tribunal of world opinion, in what German staff officer-turned-historian Bernhard Schwertfeger has called the 'world war of the documents'. These exculpatory efforts were given additional political impetus after the war with the inclusion of the 'war-guilt clause' in the Paris peace treaties that foisted sole responsibility for the conflict onto the vanquished Central Powers. T. G. Otte, *July Crisis: The World's Descent Into War, Summer 1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 4.

[77] Levy and Vasquez, *The Outbreak of the First World War*.

[78] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, xxvii; Harold Evans, 'On the Brink: "The Sleepwalkers" and "July 1914"', *The New York Times*, 09 May 2013. For a contemporary example in this accusatory genre see Sean McMeekin, *July 1914: Countdown to War* (London: Icon Books Ltd., 2014).

is extensive enough that each of the Great Powers has, in one historical version of events or another, been found in possession of a proverbial smoking gun. However, a century after Sarajevo, it is unclear how useful the blame game remains in contributing any fresh insight to our understanding of why the collective decisions taken in 1914 differed so drastically from those taken just one to two years previously. The historian Gordon Martel is not without justification in lamenting that:

> One hundred years on, those who continue the futile search for a guilty man offer us little more than an entertaining parlour game: pin the tail on the Kaiser or Moltke; on the tsar or Sazonov; on Berchtold or Conrad; on Grey or Poincaré. Many have played this game, but no one has managed to win it. And, if they had, what would we have learned from it? That great wars are caused by wicked or incompetent individuals – and that we must in the future insist on being led by those who are neither wicked nor incompetent? A sterile and not particularly helpful guideline.[79]

Whether the contingent cause fingered for blame is venality or incompetence, premeditation or accident, neither category of agent-centred explanation – that of 'intention' or 'inadvertence' – satisfactorily addresses the timing paradox of 1914. Such accounts either fail to explain why 1914 was, in the case of the former, the favourable moment for European countries to pursue a calculated war when 'rational' assessments of the strategic balance of power suggested otherwise, or why, in the case of the latter, human foibles and cognitive errors were more likely to precipitate conflict in 1914 than in previous years. The latter is particularly puzzling when we consider that many, if not most, of the decision-makers in 1914 were the same individuals who had navigated earlier Balkan and North African crises. Thus, despite the emphasis within agent-centred accounts on who did what to whom, many struggle to adequately explain precisely why the nations involved moved with such speed towards war once the Sarajevo assassination spark was ignited. As the following two case study chapters will demonstrate, the general concerns for the present and fears for the future held by many of the participants in the summer of 1914 were not dissimilar to those they had held in previous years. However, 'unlike 1912–1913 … events [in 1914] moved quickly, decisively; there was no point when the momentum slowed'.[80]

Decision-Making Models and the Timing Paradox of 1914

As this chapter's discussion of the traditional explanations for the war's outbreak has underscored, any good theory must explain not just the puzzle of war in 1914 but also the puzzle of peace in the

[79] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 425.

[80] Williamson Jr., 'July 1914 Revisited and Revised', 61.

previous years. The two dominant models of the decision-maker introduced earlier in this study, the rational actor 'optimiser' model and the psycho-dynamic 'cognitive miser' model (based on a concept of 'bounded' rationality), similarly struggle to explain such near-term variation in outcomes. Rational actor theory generally assumes that rational states would prefer to find cheaper methods of diplomatic bargaining to resolve conflicts than fighting costly and uncertain wars. In the event of war, rationalist explanations have generally focused on the role of private knowledge, which can generate incentives for conflict.[81] However, Jack Snyder underscores that in this case:

> The basic facts about the military and economic capabilities of the powers, their likely war plans, and their domestic political constraints were more or less common knowledge. What would happen in the event of war was fraught with great uncertainty, but this largely shared unknown did not include huge asymmetries of private knowledge.[82]

Alternatively, William Wohlforth has argued that the near parity in power between the two alliances created the possibility that both sides might rationally imagine their own victory. 'Perceptions', he writes, 'help to explain the bellicosity of the major powers in 1914'.[83] However, given that this situation also held true in 1912–1913 (indeed, Table 3.1 shows that power relationships were fairly stable throughout the pre-war period), Wohlforth merely adduces a permissive condition: he does not explain why these perceptions, which are independent variables that merit examination in their own right, were magnified in 1914, as compared with the year or two prior to the actual outbreak of war.[84]

[81] James Fearon, 'Rationalist Explanations for War', *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995).

[82] Jack Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later: The Paradox of 1914 as Everyone's Favored Year for War', *International Security* 39, no. 1 (2014): 71.

[83] William Wohlforth, 'The Perception of Power: Russia in the Pre-1914 Balance', *World Politics* 39, no. 3 (1987): 354.

[84] Ibid.

Table 3.1 Capabilities of the Great Powers as a Percentage of World Power*

	1900	1905	1910	1913
Russia	15	16	18	18
France	10	9	9	9
Great Britain	20	15	14	14
Germany	16	16	17	18
Austria-Hungary	6	6	6	6
Italy	5	4	4	4
United States	22	25	26	26
Japan	5	10	6	6

* World power is defined here by a Correlates of War composite index combining the following indicators with equal weights: total population, urban population, energy consumption, steel production, military expenditures and military personnel.[85]

Finally, some rational actor explanations have relied on power transition theory to conclude that 'rational calculations' concerning Germany and Austria-Hungary's rapidly waning military advantage prompted the outbreak of war in 1914. According to this view, the Central Powers perceived that there was a 'window of opportunity' in which to initiate war, before Russia's burgeoning military power eclipsed their military advantage on the continent. From 1905 onwards, as Russia began to recover from her defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, the German General Staff became increasingly concerned about the pace of Russian railway construction and military reforms – a fear that would only grow more acute with time, as faster Russian mobilisation schedules eventually rendered the Schlieffen Plan moot.[86]

However, such an explanation raises more questions than it answers. The first question is why were the leaders of the Central Powers – and Germany in particular – convinced that a preventive war to forestall Russian growth before this advantageous window expired was necessary at all? As Ned Lebow has observed, 'history indicates that wars rarely start because one side believes it has a military advantage. Rather, they occur when leaders become convinced that force is necessary to achieve

[85] Table 3.1 is adapted from James Lee Ray, *Global Politics* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 106.

[86] The Schlieffen Plan was the name given to the German deployment strategy first devised by Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen, Chief of the Imperial German General Staff from 1891 to 1906, and later refined by Helmuth von Moltke, the Younger. The blueprint called for a military offensive predicated upon transforming a two-front war against France and Russia into a one-front war by first rapidly invading France in the west before subduing Russia in the east. In 1905, the Schlieffen Plan assumed that Russian mobilisation would take six weeks, but by the end of 1913 the first Russian troops could be transported to the front within 15 days. Michael Waterhouse, *Edwardian Requiem: A Life of Sir Edward Grey* (London: Biteback Publishing Ltd., 2013), 302. For an overview of scholarly debates surrounding the Schlieffen Plan see Annika Mombauer, 'Of War Plans and War Guilt: The Debate Surrounding the Schlieffen Plan', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, no. 5 (2005); L. C. F. Turner, 'The Significance of the Schlieffen Plan', in *The War Plans of the Great Powers, 1880–1914*, ed. Paul M. Kennedy (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979).

important goals.'[87] To the extent that German calculations concerning military advantage were important to decision-makers, they were in the service of the larger goal of determining when Russia would eventually enjoy such an unchallengeable superiority that it would, in their view, permit the latter to select the timing of any future war. However, this assumption about the aims of Russian power, and the fears to which it gave rise, was 'an unverified psychological projection, born of … paranoia and pessimism' that itself begs an explanation.[88]

The second question rational actor explanations raise is why, even if so-called 'rational' estimates of the balance of military power were the only relevant drivers of decision-making, Germany waited until her window of opportunity had nearly expired before acting. Historian Paul Kennedy points out that 'if ever there was a favourable time for Germany to strike westward [via the Schlieffen Plan], it probably would have been in the summer of 1905', when the Russian military was still reeling from the country's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War.[89] Figure 3.1 below, which summarises European defence expenditures for the pre-war period, bears out this observation.[90] By his own admission, the Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff, Yuri Danilov, labelled the immediate years after Russia's loss to Japan a time of 'complete [Russian] military helplessness'.[91] There is historical evidence that the Germans were themselves aware of these dynamics: as late as July 1914, Bethmann Hollweg remarked to a friend that 1905 had been Germany's best opportunity to win a European war.[92] Viewed from this perspective of rational choice theory, what is most surprising is 'not that Germany stumbled into a European war in 1914 but that it consciously rejected such a war on three previous and more favourable occasions'.[93]

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[87] Richard Ned Lebow, 'Windows of Opportunity: Do States Jump Through Them?', *International Security* 9, no. 1 (1984): 149.

[88] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 327.

[89] Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Fontana, 1989), 325.

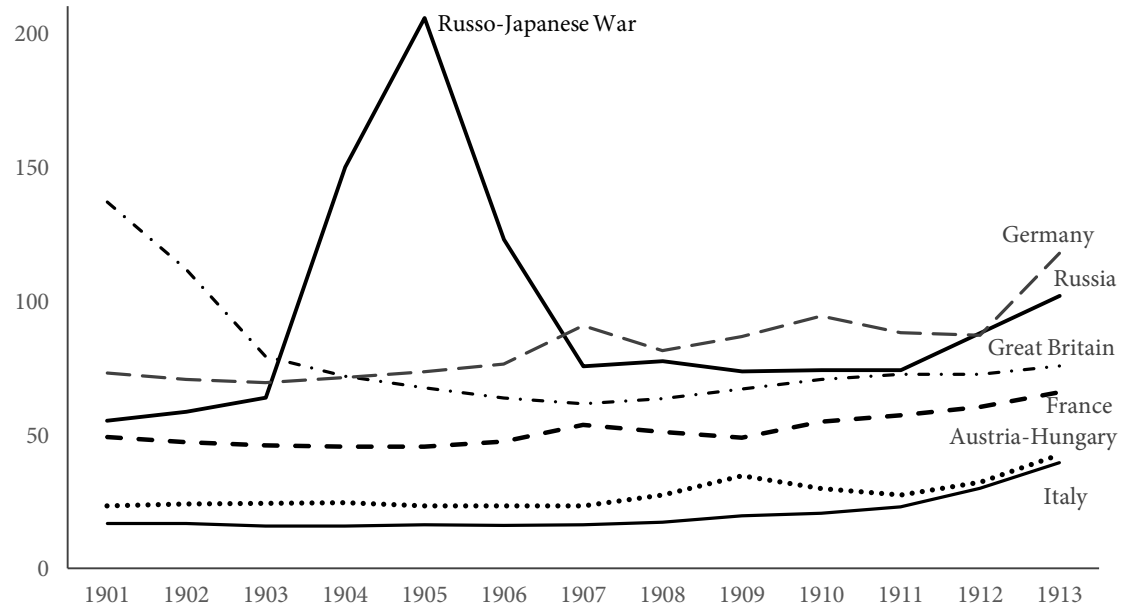
[90] Figure 3.1 is adapted from David Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War: Europe, 1904–1914* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 4.

[91] Quoted in Bruce Menning, 'The Russian Threat Calculation, 1910–1914', in *The Wars Before the Great War: Conflict and International Politics before the Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan, and Andreas Rose (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 152.

[92] Mulligan, 'Restraints on Preventive War Before 1914', 128.

[93] Lebow, 'Windows of Opportunity', 151.

Figure 3.1 Defence Expenditure of the Great Powers, 1901–1913 (£ millions, constant prices)



The third question rational actor explanations raise is why the Entente powers, presumably suffering from a mirror-image 'window of vulnerability', did not attempt to delay conflict until at least 1916 or 1917, when Russia was expected to complete her Great Programme of rearmament.[94] Of all the Great Powers, Russia had materially very little to lose and the most to gain by waiting, so much so that military historian Sir Michael Howard argues that 'Russia's entry into the war can be categorised as the least calculated, the most unwise, and ultimately of course the most disastrous'.[95] Similarly, although France's three-year military service law of 1913 was meant to increase French military strength, it led to an interim period of disorganisation and upheaval that temporarily reduced French military readiness in 1914. French War Minister Adolphe Messimy broadcasted the country's military weakness in this regard by announcing that its shortcomings would be addressed by 1917, with one senior officer commenting to the President of the French Senate that '*l'armée est un malade*'.[96] Indeed, the great irony of the war's outbreak is that 1914 was not a propitious time to

[94] Marc Trachtenberg raises the point that this kind of 'window thinking' should have had opposite effects on the two sides: 'Germany's "window of opportunity" was the Entente's "window of vulnerability"'. Marc Trachtenberg, *History and Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 70. The Duma (the Russian Parliament) had approved the funding for Russia's Great Programme just a few weeks before July 1914, and so implementation of the Programme had not yet begun. Hamilton and Herwig, *Decisions for War*, 104.

[95] Michael Howard, 'Europe on the Eve of the First World War', in *The Coming of the First World War*, eds. R. J. W. Evans and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 8.

[96] John Keiger, 'France's Unreadiness for War in 1914 and its Implications for French Decision-Making in the July Crisis', in *The Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 261.

initiate war for any of the individual continental European powers, let alone all of them.[97] For supposedly 'rational actors', such self-defeating behaviour is puzzling, to say the least.

Psychological explanations following the 'bounded' rationality model based on the traditional cognitive miser approach equally struggle to explain the timing paradox and the short-term variation in foreign policy outcomes. This is because explanations that focus exclusively on psychological distortions affecting the principal decision-makers in 1914 fail to account for their absence, or otherwise their inability to tip the scales in favour of war, during prior crises. Snyder's glib assertion that 'not everyone could rise to the level of Germany's famed Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck' leaves unanswered the question of why the rest of Europe's leaders, flawed and misguided as they often were, had collectively managed to avoid a general continental war prior to 1914.[98] And although most, if not all, of the men of 1914 have been retrospectively pilloried as reckless individuals who plunged the world into the most appalling suffering, the leaders of the various countries and their senior advisors 'were for the most part neither fools nor rogues'.[99]

For example, optimism biases that led to overconfidence on the part of European general staffs, or other perceptual biases, such as the fundamental attribution error, that affected diplomatic attributions of motives during this period, or the general cognitive misperceptions of individual leaders during the July Crisis, such as Kaiser Wilhelm, Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, or Count Leopold von Berchtold, might credibly account for the puzzle of war in 1914, but they cannot account for the puzzle of peace in 1912–1913 – that is, they struggle to explain why the same individuals were either not as susceptible to these sorts of biases during equally tense moments of crisis in the pre-war period or, alternatively, why these biases, although operating, were less likely to influence policy.[100] The Rubicon theory of war also falls short in this regard. The theory's authors suggest that the switch to implemental mindsets on all sides as war appeared imminent in July 1914 decreased the odds that the belligerent states would pay any price for peace.[101] However, the only explanation provided for why this switch in mindset did not occur during prior European crises is

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[97] Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later', 76.

[98] Ibid. 88.

[99] Michael Nicholson, *Rationality and the Analysis of International Conflict* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 120.

[100] For examples in this genre see Dominic Johnson, *Overconfidence and War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 101–147; Stephen Van Evera, 'The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War', in *Military Strategy and the Origins of the First World War*, eds. Steven E. Miller, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Stephen Van Evera (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[101] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'The Rubicon Theory of War: How the Path to Conflict Reaches the Point of No Return', *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011).

that war did not appear imminent – an ahistorical conclusion, particularly in the case of the Balkan Wars, as the following chapter aims to show.

The Remaining Puzzles

The historian Samuel Williamson Jr. has pointed out that 'nearly a century after Sarajevo historians know a great deal about what happened, when it happened, and who made it happen. We still, however, know far less of *why* things happened, and what prompted some of the decisions'.[103] The staggeringly large literature on the First World War can tell us, with a high degree of accuracy, the precise sequence of events that unfolded in July of 1914. However, scholars still struggle to fully comprehend why the crowned heads of Europe and their respective governments collectively reached a moment that summer when, after 43 years of uninterrupted peace on the continent, the decision for war seemed not only logical, but inevitable. 'What were they thinking?' is a common refrain that has not lost its novelty among historians and political scientists. Scholars like James Joll posed the question with a view to uncovering the ideas and 'unspoken assumptions' – the truths taken for granted, without need for formal expression – that shaped their world view and governed their beliefs.[104]

There is no question that these assumptions formed an important part of the context that made a general European war a distinct possibility. For the intellectual and political elites of Europe, the continent was 'changing rapidly and not always in ways they liked', and this sense of flux produced a general climate of extreme uncertainty.[105] However, many of these assumptions, particularly those that preached the virtues of nationalism, militarism and masculinity, were long-time fixtures of the pre-war ideological landscape, often stretching back years – and, in some cases, decades. To the extent that unspoken assumptions contributed to the outbreak of war, why were they magnified in the minds of the men of 1914 compared with previous years?

Moreover, uncertainty should, in theory, produce mutual pessimism about victory, and thus peace, just as often as it produces mutual optimism and war.[106] As Jack Snyder observes: 'uncertainty per se helps to explain how random variations in expectations might sometimes cause war, but not why

[103] Williamson Jr., 'July 1914 Revisited and Revised', 58.

[104] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 230.

[105] Ibid. 231.

[106] Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later', 26.

universal optimism and war will occur at any particular time'.[107] Instead, to explain the puzzle of war in 1914, Snyder argues that all sides, notably Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia, were pessimistic about their future capability to thwart their respective enemies, optimistic about their prospects in a war prosecuted in 1914, and heavily influenced by 'better-now-than-later' thinking.[108] Snyder relies on a modified version of the standard rationalist bargaining model of war to explain this confluence of psychological phenomena on both sides, which he blames on differing baseline perceptions among the Great Powers of their military prowess, stemming from national and domestic constraints. 'Despite sharing a great deal of common knowledge of strategic matters', he writes, 'enemies could not reach a diplomatic compromise because they were hindered by domestic or intra-alliance bargains that were rationalized by strategic fictions tied to nationalism and the cult of the offensive'.[109]

Unfortunately, Snyder does not examine any of the pre-war crises in his analysis of the causes of the war's outbreak. He therefore does not account for why these structural constraints and 'strategic fictions' (some of which stretched back years, if not decades) were not an insurmountable barrier to diplomatic negotiations in 1912–1913. For this reason, Snyder's modified bargaining model is incomplete. However, he is nevertheless correct in his observation that the majority of the Great Powers, and certainly Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia, exhibited a trifecta of pessimism, optimism and better-now-than-later thinking in the summer of 1914. Ned Lebow concurs that, by 1914, each of these countries had undergone 'independent *gestalt* shifts … that prompted dramatic reversals in their foreign policy preferences'.[110]

Dual mindset theory, this thesis argues, may help to explain the mental mechanisms behind these respective shifts: rather than situating this confluence of psychological factors within the 'perceptual, organisational and domestic spinoffs' of bargaining problems, as Snyder does, these variables are arguably better understood within the context of the dual mindset framework and, by extension, the mind's dual systems.[111] James Fearon the principal author of the rationalist bargaining theory of war, has acknowledged that theories premised on bounded rationality are 'entirely plausible'.[112] 'Leaders or military analysts with the same information', he admits, 'might reason to different conclusions

[107] Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later', 73.

[108] Jack S. Levy and Jack Snyder, 'Everyone's Favored Year for War—or Not?', ibid., no. 4 (2015): 208.

[109] Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later', 43.

[110] Lebow, 'Contingency, Catalysts and Nonlinear Change', 93.

[111] Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later', 42.

[112] Fearon, 'Rationalist Explanations for War', 393.

about the likely course of a war because of differential ability to cope with [the] complexity of the [decision] problem'.[113] Regrettably, Fearon sets aside this explanation without further examination because it does not fit within the confines of his strictly rationalist theory-building exercise.

As the following empirical chapters will argue, the predominance of a reflective frame of mind among decision-makers during the Balkan crises of 1912–1913 may help to account for the absence of these crucial variables (pessimism, optimism and 'better-now-than-later' thinking) during key decision-making moments, and, as a result, the maintenance of the peace. By contrast, the transition to a predominantly reflexive frame of mind among the principal decision-makers in 1914, with its correspondingly higher levels of threat sensitivity, risk propensity and temporal discounting, may help to account for the presence of the three psychological variables Snyder identifies, and their respective causal connections to the outbreak of war. This is because the changes wrought by the Balkan Wars, and the intensive efforts of what remained of the Concert of Europe to prevent them from igniting a general conflagration, proved a chronic source of stress that encouraged widespread ego depletion on the part of European decision-makers in general, and on the part of three central participants in particular: Leopold von Berchtold of Austria-Hungary, Bethmann Hollweg of Germany and Sergei Sazonov of Russia. Such depletion, it will be argued, lowered their respective 'reflective defences' – their capacity for reflective thought – when tasked with responding to the acute crisis prompted by the Sarajevo assassinations so soon after the conclusion of the previous episodes of instability.

Such an explanation of the timing paradox of 1914 does not deny the permissive influence of the suite of complex and interacting structural and contingent factors already identified in abundance by other scholars – it simply suggests that independent changes in the strategic context, which were precipitated both by the onset of the Balkan Wars and the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, are not enough to explain the difference in outcomes.[114] Instead, any comprehensive explanation of the timing of the war's outbreak in the summer of 1914 must account for the way these multiple factors were filtered through the intervening variable of the mindsets of the handful of individuals tasked with interpreting events and responding to them. What, indeed, were they thinking, and why did that thinking change so dramatically from one year to the next?

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[113] Ibid.

[114] This author agrees with Paul Schroeder's assertion that the attempt to identify a single cause of the First World War is an exercise in futility: 'It is like looking for *the* driving force behind the French or Russian Revolutions, or the Reformation, or the American Civil War. Immediately, one encounters a plethora of "causes" far more than sufficient to account for the phenomenon one wishes to explain … and yet not "sufficient" in the sense that any set of them logically implies what occurred.' Paul Schroeder, 'World War I as Galloping Gertie: A Reply to Joachim Remak', *The Journal of Modern History* 44, no. 3 (1972): 320.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the puzzle of the timing paradox of the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Although most scholarly accounts of the outbreak of the First World War emphasise either its long-term origins or its short-term catalysts, few specifically examine the question of why the war broke out when it did in the summer of 1914 and not in response to Europe's earlier pre-war crises. However, in addition to accounting for the war itself, any theory that purports to explain the timing paradox of 1914 must be able to convincingly account for the peaceful resolution of Europe's pre-war crises prior to the outbreak of war. Structural explanations aptly describe the conditions that were permissive to a general war breaking out; however, none of these factors can conversely explain the lack of a preventive war on the European continent from 1871 to 1914. As Gordon Martel observes:

> The existence of alliances, mass conscript armies, huge navies, unprecedented armaments, imperial rivalries, nationalist discontents were all factors in the outbreak of war. But they, like the underlying assumptions formed by Europeans in the age before the war, had been present for decades. While such factors may explain why wars break out, they do not explain why this one broke out at this time, in this way, with the opposing sides arrayed as they were.[115]

Contingent accounts present the outbreak of war as either a calculated crime on the part of specific belligerents, or as an accident of tragic proportions – in the more charitable interpretation offered by the latter, the war represents an 'inadvertent' conflict in which error-prone statesmen quite simply lost control of events in the great historical sputtering of mobilisation engines and the 'clutching and gearing and releasing of brakes and gathering momentum'.[116] What, then, prevented them from losing this control in 1912–1913? Such questions have been largely overlooked in the decades-long scholarly post-mortem that has sought to divine the relative importance of the underlying and the immediate causes of the war in 1914.

The two dominant and opposing models of the individual decision-maker in international relations, the rational actor or 'optimiser' model and the psychological or 'cognitive miser' model, similarly struggle to explain such near-term variation in outcomes. As described in the introductory chapter, rationalism struggles to adequately account for the puzzle of war, while traditional psychological

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[115] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 431.

[116] Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 221.

explanations conversely find it difficult to explain the puzzle of peace. According to Snyder, all sides in 1914, but notably Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia, were pessimistic about their future capability to thwart their respective enemies, optimistic about their prospects in a war and heavily influenced by 'better-now-than-later' thinking in a way they were not just one year previously.[117]

As the following two empirical chapters will argue, the onset of the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913 was no less an international crisis, particularly for Austria-Hungary, than the assassination of the heir to the Hapsburg throne in 1914. However, the predominance of a reflective frame of mind among decision-makers during the Balkan crises of 1912–1913 may help to account for the absence of these crucial variables (pessimism, optimism and 'better-now-than-later' thinking) during key decision-making moments, and, as a result, the maintenance of the peace. By contrast, the transition to a predominantly reflexive frame of mind among the principal decision-makers in 1914, with its correspondingly higher levels of threat sensitivity, risk propensity and temporal discounting, may help to account for the presence of the three psychological variables Snyder identifies, and their respective causal connections to the outbreak of war.

[117] Levy and Snyder, 'Everyone's Favored Year for War—or Not?', 208.

CHAPTER 4

EUROPE'S BALKAN CRISES, 1912–1913

'The Dogs That Didn't Bark'

Gregory (Scotland Yard detective): 'Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?'
Holmes: 'To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.'
Gregory: 'The dog did nothing in the night-time.'
Holmes: 'That was the curious incident.'

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1892)

'All pointed to serious disorders in the near future and the only hope was that the gravity of the danger might lead to its being averted.'

JULES CAMBON, French Ambassador to Germany, 1912

The fictional detective Sherlock Holmes once suggested that the 'dogs that don't bark' may reveal as much information as those that do. The complex and obscure Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, and the Great Power crises they precipitated, were among the most serious flashpoints of the pre-war decade – not least because they sparked a series of highly militarised diplomatic crises and, in this respect, most closely prefigured the events of 1914.[1] Above all, this cascade of wars engendered what became known as the 'Balkans inception scenario' – the increasingly widespread axiom among European statesmen that any great war would begin in the Balkans due to the increasingly close connections between latent hostilities in the region and the tensions of the wider European political sphere.[2] European leaders feared that the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire would unleash nationalist ambitions that, in turn, would fatally position the alliance blocs against each other.

[1] According to David Stevenson, the Balkan Winter Crisis of 1912–1913 was the most highly militarised pre-war crisis in the decade before the First World War, more so than the Bosnian annexation crisis: 'Excluding the combatant armies, up to 750,000 men were called out (three times as many as in 1908-1909); and, far more than in the Bosnian crisis, Eastern European friction led the Western European states to take military precautions. Unlike in the annexation crisis, moreover, two great power players were now in the militarisation game, the Habsburg monarchy reacting while Russia set the pace'. David Stevenson, 'Militarization and Diplomacy in Europe before 1914', *International Security* 22, no. 1 (1997): 140.

[2] Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan and Andreas Rose, eds., *The Wars Before the Great War: Conflict and International Politics before the Outbreak of the First World War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 4.

To the extent that the Balkan Wars, and the Italo-Turkish War which preceded them, accelerated this historical process, contemporaries at the time were quick to note the high probability of a general European war as a result: German Foreign Minister Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter believed that it would 'set fire to the whole of the Orient' and culminate in a 'general war', while French Foreign Minister Stephen Pichon expressed his conviction after the outbreak of the First World War that 'everything unfolded fatally' after the Balkan states 'raised their standards' under the protection of Russia.[3] Nevertheless, through a revivified Concert of Europe, European statesmen managed to peaceably contain the spread of any Balkan conflagration and, in so doing, reduce the likelihood that the greatest source of instability in the international system at that time – the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire – would risk a general conflict. As several historians have noted, their 'desire to avoid the catastrophe of a general European war was central to the diplomatic mediations of 1912 and 1913' that were instrumental in helping to shape the resolution and settlement of the Balkan Wars.[4]

Nevertheless, at a moment when European leaders feared and, in some cases, prepared for the worst, why didn't a conflict break out? This chapter applies the dual mindset framework to this question with an examination of Great Power crisis management during the period of the Balkan Wars, with a specific focus on Austro-Russian brinksmanship during the First Balkan War. The chapter comprises three parts: the first part will provide necessary historical background to the Balkan crises of 1912–1913 and the efforts of the Concert of Europe to resolve them. The second part of the chapter will apply the dual mindset framework to the decision-making of both the Central Powers and the Triple Entente during the period of the Balkan Wars – when, more than once in David Lloyd George's oft-quoted phrase, European leaders risked slithering 'over the brink into the boiling cauldron of war'.[5] That they did not do so, it will be argued, may be due in no small part to the reflective frame of mind in which key decision-makers approached critical moments of heightened tension. The third part will consider the contribution of mindsets to the outcome, firstly by exploring the null hypothesis of rational choice theory and secondly by examining the extent to which the dual mindset theory may potentially provide answers to puzzles left unresolved by the former.

[3] Ibid. 2.

[4] Ibid. 12; Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912–1913: Prelude to the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2000), ix.

[5] David Lloyd George, quoted in Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig, eds., *The Origins of World War I* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 38.

Background to the First and Second Balkan Wars

The First World War was, by some accounts, the Third Balkan War. In the 1970s the historian Joachim Remak was virtually alone in arguing that the First World War reflected the extension of latent Balkan hostilities into the European political sphere.[6] The 'sheer scale of the First World War' had encouraged historians to search instead for long-term causes – from the structural dictates of imperial expansion to arms races – as well as to debate and apportion guilt for the specific decisions taken during the July Crisis of 1914. In the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, however, the historiographical winds shifted in favour of what historian Christopher Clark has popularly called the 'Balkans inception scenario': the notion that the conflicts of the Balkan theatre 'became tightly intertwined with the geopolitics of the European system, creating a set of escalatory mechanisms that would enable a conflict of Balkan inception to engulf the continent within five weeks in the summer of 1914'.[7] Mark Mazower, writing just after NATO's intervention in Kosovo at the turn of the twenty-first century, remarked that 'in 1914, not for the last time in Balkan relations with the Powers, the tail ended up wagging the dog'.[8]

Nevertheless, if the cascade of Balkan wars constituted a historical bridge linking a long period of relative European peace to total war, these conflicts also represented a significant rupture with what came after – the coda to a European system that hitherto had accommodated the numerous conflicts and crises abutting Europe's south-eastern periphery without endangering the peace of the continent as a whole. In the First Balkan War, which began in October 1912, a Balkan League, comprised of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro, defeated the remnants of the Ottoman Empire in Europe; in the Second Balkan War, which commenced at the end of June 1913, the erstwhile Balkan allies turned on one another, with Serbia, Greece and Romania handily defeating their common adversary, Bulgaria.[9] The First Balkan War witnessed two distinct periods of heightened tension when Great Power war was a distinct possibility: from the start of the war in October 1912 to the formal cessation of hostilities in December 1912; and from January to March 1912, 'when Austria and Russia stood eye-to-eye in states of partial mobilisation'.[10] A third, more

[6] Joachim Remak, '1914 – The Third Balkan War: Origins Reconsidered', *The Journal of Modern History* 43, no. 3 (1971).

[7] Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 242.

[8] Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: From the End of Byzantium to the Present Day* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000), 111.

[9] It is a striking coincidence that the Second Balkan War, which lasted from 29 June to 10 August 1913, very nearly matched the timeframe, precisely one year later, during which Europe descended into war. Geppert, Mulligan and Rose, eds., *The Wars Before the Great War*, 1.

[10] Dale Copeland, 'International Relations Theory and the Three Great Puzzles of the First World War', in *The Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 178.

protracted, crisis arose among the Great Powers as a complication of the Second Balkan War, when Austria-Hungary seriously contemplated war against Serbia on more than one occasion between July and October 1913, in response to territorial advances the latter had made against her Balkan enemies, and which culminated in an ultimatum to Serbia in October of that year to remove her troops from occupied territory.[11] For the principal actors within the Concert of Europe, 'managing the consequences of these wars was the most pressing preoccupation in international politics before the war', and the creation of new territorial settlements for the region consumed their respective governments' energies until just before the Sarajevo assassinations.[12]

The First Balkan War

The dramatic growth of Balkan nationalism and the decline of the Ottoman Empire acted as twin propellants of change in the region, which led to the First Balkan War. Having achieved independence from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, many Balkan states sought to incorporate their fellow Slavic peoples still living under Ottoman rule into their own national entities and, in so doing, to emulate the nationalist successes of Germany and Italy. Italy's own invasion of Libya in 1911– then a North African outpost of the Ottoman Empire – had helped encourage the Balkan tiger to leap out of its cage.[13] An alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria, sponsored and supported by Russia, which was still smarting from Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia in 1908, was formalised in March 1912. Around this alliance 'a secret Balkan League now coalesced whose purpose was to expel the Turks from the peninsula'.[14] Although each of the Balkan League states began mobilising for a general Balkan War in the autumn of 1912, Montenegro formally commenced hostilities with an attack on Ottoman positions in October 1912. Christopher Clark writes that:

> The war that broke out in the Balkans in October 1912 had been foreseen by nearly everyone. What astonished contemporary observers was the swiftness and scope of the victories secured by the Balkan League states. Battles flared up across the peninsula as Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek and Montenegrin armies advanced on Ottoman strongholds.[15]

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[11] Ibid. 180.

[12] Geppert, Mulligan and Rose, eds., *The Wars Before the Great War*, 11.

[13] Clark writes that 'it was the Italian attack on Libya in 1911 that flashed the green light for the all-out Balkan assault on the Ottoman periphery'. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 244.

[14] Ibid. 252.

[15] Ibid.

The Ottomans signed an armistice with the governments of Bulgaria, Montenegro and Serbia on 3 December 1912, while the Greeks continued their military operations. Although the Ottomans held the line at Constantinople – largely due to the exhaustion of Bulgarian troops – over the course of six short weeks they had lost almost half of their European territory.[16] As a result of the Ottoman collapse, the Albanians declared their independence in November 1912, with the support of the Great Powers, namely Austria-Hungary and Italy, and a Conference of Ambassadors began meeting in London to mediate between the warring factions and to discuss the parameters of a settlement between the Balkan allies and the Ottoman government. Although fighting recommenced in January 1913, with the return of the nationalistic Young Turks to power in Constantinople, the Balkan League and the Ottoman Empire eventually signed the Treaty of London at the end of May 1913, formally ceasing hostilities.[17]

The Second Balkan War

Although the end of the First Balkan War saw the formal cessation of hostilities with the Ottoman Empire, territorial squabbles among the Balkan League members throughout the spring of 1913 over the Ottoman spoils virtually ensured that the first war contained the seeds of the next. In what became known as the 'Interallied War', Serbia, Greece, Turkey and Romania joined forces to 'tear chunks of territory out of the flanks' of Bulgaria.[18] In the treaty founding their alliance in March 1912, Serbia and Bulgaria had agreed to a clear plan of partition: Bulgaria would be allocated the southern portion of Macedonia and Serbia would be given Kosovo and the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, with northern Macedonia assigned to a disputed zone whose ownership would be referred to Russia for arbitration. The Serbians quickly came to regret the terms of the alliance, fearing that they had conceded too much territory. Even before the start of the First Balkan War, the nationalist Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pašić declared that 'we abandoned some Serbian areas which we should never have dared to abandon, even if we were left without an agreement'.[19] Once the Great Powers, particularly Austria-Hungary, stepped in to allocate Kosovo to an independent Albania, Serbia and Bulgaria quickly fell out over the territorial boundaries of Macedonia. On 30 June 1913, without a formal declaration of war, Bulgarian forces attacked Serbian positions in the contested areas of Macedonia, and thus ignited the Second Balkan War.

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[16] By the time an armistice was signed on 3 December 1912, all that remained of the Ottoman Empire in Europe were the three besieged cities of Adrianople, Janina and Scutari, the Gallipoli Peninsula and parts of eastern Thrace. Ibid. 255.

[17] Hall, *The Balkan Wars*, 101–102.

[18] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 258.

[19] Ibid. 256.

Having initiated the war, the Bulgarians were, in many ways, the authors of their own demise. Bulgarian obstinacy in relation to pre-existing territorial disputes with both Greece and Romania incentivised these other regional powers to ally with Serbia in that country's attempt to revise the terms of the earlier settlement enshrined in the Treaty of London.[20] Although the Bulgarians successfully repelled Serbian and Greek invasions of their homeland, the additional Romanian assault on Bulgaria's eastern border, which brought Romanian troops to within seven miles of Bulgaria's capital, Sofia, forced the Bulgarian government to sue for peace. In the Treaty of Bucharest, signed in the Romanian capital on 10 August 1913, Bulgaria lost most of the territories, mainly in Macedonia, that it had acquired after the First Balkan War. By contrast, the Ottomans recovered crucial territory during the Second Balkan War that would later have a strategic impact on their ability to prevail during the Gallipoli campaign in 1915. Above all, Serbia came out the clear territorial winner, having nearly doubled its territory and increased its population by a third during the wars.[21]

Photograph 4.1 Delegates to the Bucharest Peace Treaty Conference, 10 August 1913



Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Creative Commons.

[20] Hall, *The Balkan Wars*, 127.

[21] Ibid. 129; Dominic Lieven, *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), 276.

The Concert of Europe During the Balkan Wars

The Balkan Wars commanded the attention and energies of Europe's Great Powers. Although they failed to prevent the outbreak of war among the Balkan states in October 1912, and again in June 1913, the principal European actors managed to cooperate in important ways, both diplomatically and militarily, to minimise their effects and to contain the spread of their violence. 'In their efforts to limit the outcome of the Balkan Wars', observes historian Richard Hall, 'the Great Powers enacted the final efforts of a Concert of Europe, which had functioned more or less to maintain the balance on the continent since 1648'.[22] Historian Robert Massie concurs that 'for Europe, the significance of the … Balkan Wars lay less in the backstabbing between allies or the subsequent shifts of territory than in the Great Power decision that little wars should not be allowed to spread'.[23]

The epicentre of these efforts was the London Conference of Ambassadors, which lasted from December 1912 until August 1913, under the chairmanship of British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey. Over the course of 10 months, the London Conference comprised 63 separate, largely informal sessions, at which each of the six Great Powers were represented.[24] Although occasionally heated, the meetings were more often than not exceedingly wearisome – when asked about the progress of the conclave a few weeks after it commenced, Paul Cambon, France's ambassador to Great Britain, quipped that it would continue 'until there were six skeletons sitting around the table'.[25] Nevertheless, the seemingly interminable sessions had been useful. Grey's recollections of the conclusion of the London Conference at the end of the Second Balkan War emphasised its utility:

> There was no formal finish; we were not photographed in a group; we had no votes of thanks; no valedictory speeches; we just left off meeting. We had not settled anything, not even all the details of Albanian boundaries; but we had served a useful purpose. We had been something to which point after point could be referred; we had been a means of keeping all the six Powers in direct and friendly

[22] Hall, *The Balkan Wars*, 142.

[23] Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany and the Coming of the Great War* (London: Vintage Books, 2007), x.

[24] David Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer: Why the World Went to War in 1914* (London: Vintage, 2005), 85. In his memoirs Sir Edward Grey describes these sessions as follows: 'There were six of us: Lichnowsky, Mensdorff, and Imperiali, the Ambassadors respectively of Germany, Austria, and Italy; Cambon and Benckendorff, the Ambassadors of France and Russia; and myself for Britain. Such responsibility as there was of presiding fell to me, but we made the proceedings as informal as those of a committee of friends, which in fact we were. We met in the afternoons, generally about four o'clock, and, with a short adjournment to an adjoining room for tea, we continued till six or seven o'clock.' Sir Edward Grey, *Twenty-Five Years: 1892–1916*, People's Library ed., 3 vols., vol. 2 (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1928), 94–95.

[25] Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, vol. 2, 95.

> touch. The mere fact that we were in existence, and that we should have to be broken up before peace was broken, was in itself an appreciable barrier against war.[26]

Separate peace conferences adjoining the meetings in London were held at St. Petersburg and Constantinople. Historian Luigi Albertini writes that the delegates 'passed through stormy scenes, but in the end settled all the problems raised by the Balkan Wars'.[27] Nevertheless, 'it several times appeared as if war were at the gates'.[28] This was indeed the case, for the territorial realignments produced by the Balkan Wars upset the region's fragile equilibrium, bringing the Great Powers into constant friction with one another.

Nowhere were these tensions more evident than between Russia and Austria-Hungary, the 'centre of the diplomatic storm', which, of all the Great Powers, had the most vital interests at stake in Europe's south-eastern periphery.[29] As they would again in 1914, simmering tensions over their respective interests in the Balkans in 1912, and again in 1913, threatened to boil over into a general continental war. From the outbreak of the First Balkan War to the end of the Second, Russia and Austria-Hungary would come close to conflict on several occasions.[30] Although the two powers had historically cooperated in maintaining the status quo in the Balkans, the erosion of Ottoman power in the region had unleashed national fears, as well as temptations, as each country struggled to extend its sphere of influence into the vacuum left by the Turkish retreat.[31]

Dispute over the existence and future boundaries of an independent Albania, commonly referred to as the 'Albanian Question', early in the First Balkan War, nearly ignited a broader European conflict.[32] The Serbs demanded the annexation of the former Turkish province of Albania, with its port access to the Adriatic Sea, while the Montenegrins occupied the largely Albanian city of Scutari. The Austrians, fearing the growth of South Slav power as an extension of Russia's influence, and

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[26] Ibid. 103–104.

[27] Luigi Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, ed. Isabella M. Massey, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 423. Albertini overstates the success of the Conference of Ambassadors in resolving the full gamut of the differences across the alliance blocs: the boundaries of an independent Albania remained a subject of dispute, as Sir Edward Grey himself admitted in his memoir of the period.

[28] Ibid. 432.

[29] David Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War: Europe, 1904–1914* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 260.

[30] Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War* (London: Profile Books, 2013), 467.

[31] In 1897, Russia and Austria-Hungary formally agreed to respect the territorial status quo in the Balkans and to oppose any agitation that could jeopardise that agreement. Ibid.

[32] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 283.

sensing that an independent Albania could serve as a useful counterbalance to irredentist Slav nationalism, refused to grant Serbia's occupation of Albania's coastline and demanded the removal, upon the threat of military force, of the occupying forces. This created a dangerous deadlock between Russia and Austria-Hungary, since if Serb actions towards Albania prompted Austro-Hungarian intervention, there was the very real risk that Russia might respond in kind.[33] 'Tension between St. Petersburg, Belgrade and Vienna,' observes historian Samuel Williamson Jr., 'reached new heights'.[34]

Russia and Austria's separate 'trial' mobilisations along their shared border that autumn added an additional element of fuel to a potential continental conflagration.[35] These trial mobilisations introduced a military dimension to the diplomatic wrangling and, during what became known as the Balkan Winter Crisis of 1912–1913, the war seemed doomed to spread.[36] 'That a strong party exists in Vienna and Budapest that wants to create a situation in which the guns will go off by themselves is quite certain,' wrote Leon Trotsky in one of his dispatches from Belgrade at the height of the crisis, '… in this regard, danger signs are multiplying'.[37] Another correspondent, writing for the *Times*, in Vienna, commented that 'the conflict … is approaching the stage when European Governments will need perspicacity and prudence if it is to be prevented from becoming a European conflict'.[38]

Although neither Russia nor Austria would demobilise until March the following year, the tensions were defused by a combination of the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph and his Foreign Minister, Count Leopold von Berchtold, who overrode the calls for war among the more strident constituencies of the Austrian government (even sending a peace envoy, in the form of Prince Gottfried Hohenlohe, to St. Petersburg early in 1913); by the top civilian leaders of Germany,

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[33] Christopher Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II: A Life in Power* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), 260.

[34] Samuel R. Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1991), 123.

[35] The Austrian general staff, alarmed by Russia's trial mobilisations in the country's Warsaw and Kiev districts during the autumn of 1912, responded in kind with partial Austrian mobilisations in Bosnia and Galicia. Geoffrey Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Hapsburg Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 76.

[36] Tensions were running so high that Austria-Hungary ordered its diplomats in Belgrade, Cetinje and St. Petersburg to pack up their papers and to be ready to leave in case of war (the same order to which Austrian diplomats were referred when war broke out in 1914). In Silesia, near the Russian border, German families made plans to escape the coming invasion by moving westward, and several senior officials in Berlin began squirreling away their money into Swiss banks for safety. Greg Cashman and Leonard Robinson, *An Introduction to the Causes of War: Patterns of Interstate Conflict from World War I to Iraq* (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 47–50. Admiral von Müller confirms in his diary a conversation with the Kaiser in November 1912, in which the latter admitted that a number of senior officers in the German military had begun transferring large sums to neutral Switzerland. Walter Görlitz, ed., *The Kaiser and His Court: The First World War Diaries of Admiral Georg von Müller* (London: Macdonald, 1961), xxvi.

[37] Leon Trotsky, *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky: The Balkan Wars 1912–1913*, trans. Brian Pearce (New York: Monad Press, 1980), 70,72.

[38] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 457.

including the mercurial Kaiser and Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg who refused to mobilise and pushed for a diplomatic solution; and by Russian leaders, led by Vladimir Kokovtsov, the Russian Prime Minister, and the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, who eventually acquiesced to the creation of an independent Albania and belatedly pressed the country's Balkan allies to remove their troops from disputed areas.[39]

Tensions were to be inflamed again in October 1913, when it became clear that Serbia was not only refusing to evacuate her troops from certain areas on the Albanian side of the internationally agreed border, but was reinforcing them under the guise of 'protecting' her fellow Serbs.[40] Austria issued an eight-day ultimatum to Serbia to vacate all Albanian territory. Once again, the threat of war loomed – only to be dissipated with an agreed recognition among the Great Powers that Serbia's demands were illegitimate. At this point, even Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov privately confided to Britain's Embassy Counsellor in St. Petersburg, Hugh O'Beirne, that 'Serbia had been more to blame … in the events which led up to the recent ultimatum', and urged Belgrade to yield.[41] Serbia, which had lost 91,000 men in the two Balkan Wars, evacuated the territory one week later.[42]

Although Russia and Austria-Hungary had used preparations for war – including, for the first time, trial mobilisation measures – to place pressure on each other, and, in Austria-Hungary's case, on Serbia and Montenegro, neither had been fully prepared to call the bluffs of the others and to escalate to full mobilisation at any stage of the Balkan crises. Moreover, the period had coincided with a renewed era of good feelings between Britain and Germany, neither of which had vital interests in the Balkans and both of which cooperated out of a shared concern that Austro-Russian antagonism might endanger the peace of Europe.[43] Thus, 'in the end,' writes historian Margaret MacMillan, 'the voices for maintaining the peace were stronger than those for war'.[44]

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[39] The dispute centred upon the small but symbolically important town of Scutari, which Austria-Hungary insisted be part of Albania, and to which the Serbs and Montenegrins had been laying siege for months. Montenegro eventually ceded control of Scutari after an Austrian ultimatum in early May, heading off another potential confrontation with Russia and resulting in the Treaty of London, which formalised Albania's independence. Ibid. 461–462. Contrary to his general reputation as the 'Prince of Peace', Franz Ferdinand initially supported military action against Serbia in the autumn of 1912. Alma Hannig, 'Austro-Hungary and the Balkan Wars', in *The Wars Before the Great War*, eds. Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan, and Andreas Rose (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 237.

[40] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 463.

[41] 'Mr. Hugh O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey', St. Petersburg, 28 October 1913, in *British Documents on the Origins of the War: 1898–1914*, (London: H.M Stationery Office, 1926-1938), F.O. 49820/30271/13/44, doc. 56, 49. Quoted in Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 287.

[42] Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*, 93.

[43] According to British Minister of War Richard Haldane, Anglo–German cooperation amounted to a 'détente rather than an entente'. Hannig, 'Austro-Hungary and the Balkan Wars', 237–238.

[44] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 467.

Mindsets of the Central Powers and Triple Entente During the Balkan Crises

Given what we now know occurred less than 12 months later, we can return to the two central questions introduced at the beginning of this chapter: not just 'why did war occur in 1914?', but also 'why did it *not* occur in 1912–1913'? This latter question appears even more puzzling when we consider that the danger of conflict appeared to contemporaries to be eminently greater in the years immediately preceding the First World War than in the months leading up to the actual event. The remainder of this chapter applies the dual mindset theory of international relations introduced in the previous two chapters to this historical puzzle, beginning with an examination of the mindsets of the principal decision-makers within the Central Powers and those of the Triple Entente during the period of the two Balkan Wars.

Particular attention will be paid to the Balkan Winter Crisis of 1912–1913, and to the actions and reactions of leaders in Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia. If the hypotheses presented hold true, we should expect to see, first, greater evidence of reflectivity over reflexivity at crucial decision-making moments during the Balkan crises of 1912–1913, as indicated by lower levels of threat sensitivity, risk propensity and temporal discounting in the mindsets of the principal actors involved. Second, we should expect to see a corresponding decrease in the likelihood of war – assuming, of course, that peace was not already foreordained at the time that crucial decisions were being made.

It should be stated that this focus on Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia in no way diminishes the essential role of Great Britain, France and Italy in the complex geopolitics of the pre-war European system. Nevertheless, historians are in agreement that the 'conflict of Balkan inception' that was averted in the years 1912–1913, and that engulfed the European continent in the summer of 1914, centred upon decisions made in Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburg.[45] For this reason, and in spite of the unusual degree of controversy that surrounds the origins of the war, a preponderance of

[45] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 242. Although French Prime Minister Raymond Poincaré was the first to suggest a conference of the Great Powers to settle the Balkans question in 1912, French diplomacy played only a minor role in European crisis management during the period of the Balkan Wars, leaving the main task of mediation to Great Britain and Germany. Similarly, Eugenia Kiesling writes that, excepting French indications of support for Russia that made war in 1914 more rather than less likely, 'French diplomatic decisions mattered rather little in July 1914'. Britain, although heavily involved in the Balkan Crises as host to the ambassadorial conferences, had few strategic interests in the Balkans and tended to view developments there through the prism of its balance of power politics. Friedrich Kießling, 'Anglo-French Relations and the Wars Before the War', in *The Wars Before the Great War: Conflict and International Politics Before the Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan, and Andreas Rose (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Eugenia C. Kiesling, 'France', in *The Origins of World War I*, eds. Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 264.

historical attention has been directed towards these three countries as regards setting in motion the chain of events that culminated in war.[46] This thesis is, therefore, in keeping with this scholarly consensus.

The Central Powers

Threat Sensitivity

Of the Great Powers, Austria-Hungary, a multi-ethnic state with a slight Slav majority, was the most vulnerable to the advance of the Balkan states into Ottoman Europe.[47] Austro-Hungarian officials were alarmed by developments on the Balkan periphery and sensitive to the implications of any changes in the regional status quo for their strategic interests. 'Let's let this thing explode into war,' observed one Austrian general in Sarajevo upon the outbreak of the First Balkan War, '… we need to smash the Serbs once and for all'.[48] Similarly, General Blasius Schemua, Conrad von Hötzendorf's predecessor as Chief of the General Staff, urged a preventive strike on Serbia the moment it attacked Turkey.[49] However, the historical record reveals that while Austria-Hungary often resorted to a militant style of diplomacy that fell short of war during the period of Europe's Balkan crises, the country's most senior leadership never seriously contemplated a preventive war against Serbia.

Much of this relatively subdued reaction can be attributed to the restraint imposed by Emperor Franz Joseph, his Foreign Minister Count Leopold von Berchtold, the heir-apparent Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and the Hungarian Prime Minister, István Tisza. Their more pacific views on how to deal with the Serbian problem clashed with those of the more belligerent members of the government who sought a preventive war, such as Conrad von Hötzendorf, the Governor-General of Bosnia Oskar Potiorek, and Austrian Prime Minister Karl von Stürgkh. The men who collectively governed the Austro-Hungarian empire were members of the gentry and products of the same conservative intellectual culture. What separated them were their conceptions of how threatened

[46] Richard Ned Lebow, 'Contingency, Catalysts and Nonlinear Change: The Origins of World War One', in *Explaining War and Peace: Case Studies and Necessary Condition Counterfactuals*, eds. Gary Goertz and Jack S. Levy (New York: Routledge, 2007), 89.

[47] Hannig, 'Austro-Hungary and the Balkan Wars', 235.

[48] Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*, 74–76.

[49] William Jannen Jr., 'The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914', in *Essays on World War I: Origins and Prisoners of War*, eds. Samuel Williamson Jr. and Peter Pastor (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1983), 57.

they perceived the Dual Monarchy to be:

> Those who had some confidence in the dualist status quo, like Berchtold and the emperor, or who felt no great urgency about reform, like [former Ambassador to Rome] Lützow, or who retained confidence in internal measures and consolidation as a way out of the monarchy's difficulties, like Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Tisza, or the political diarist Baernreither, were much less likely to see themselves facing a fateful either/or. Those, on the other hand, who felt that the empire was tottering towards dissolution, who urgently felt the need for radical reform … were far more likely to be exasperated by the faltering pace of reform and were almost always more threatened by Serb irredentism.[50]

As the Emperor was the final arbiter of Hapsburg policy, the picture that emerges of Austria-Hungary during its *annus horribilis* in the Balkans is of a monarchy that, despite its stated preference for the status quo, was, in fact, willing to compromise over the territorial changes in the region and even abandon the notion of its own territorial expansion, provided that certain vital interests, such as the integrity of the newly established Albanian state and the prevention of Serbian access to a port on the Adriatic, could be assured.[51]

Aside from the Emperor, the one man in the Habsburg government most responsible for successfully advocating on behalf of this point of view was Foreign Minister Leopold von Berchtold. At the outbreak of the First Balkan War, Berchtold's aims, which centred on limiting Austria's losses and minimising public embarrassment, were fairly modest and ruled out any notion of a preventive war.[52] Historian Samuel Williamson Jr. observes that:

> Whatever weaknesses Berchtold displayed as a leader – such as occasional passivity and sometimes patience to a fault – must be contrasted with his repeated resistance to the siren songs of the Austrian military between September 1912 and July 1914. Indeed, it was his conversion to their viewpoint in July 1914 that became a major variable in the monarchy's decision for war. Until then he had stubbornly refused to abandon peace for war to resolve the Serbian issue.[53]

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[50] Ibid. 67.

[51] Hannig, 'Austro-Hungary and the Balkan Wars', 235.

[52] Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*, 77.

[53] Samuel R. Williamson Jr., 'Leopold Count Berchtold: The Man Who Could Have Prevented the Great War', in *From Empire to Republic: Post-World War I Austria*, eds. Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, and Peter Berger (Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2010), 28.

In December 1912, as Austro-Russian tensions mounted and as the Habsburg monarchy approached its first major 'war or peace' crisis with regard to Serbia, Berchtold was adamant that Austria-Hungary should take no military action lest it remind the powers of its 'aggressive' role in 1908.[54] The Foreign Minister was conscious of the bitterness with which Russia and France retrospectively viewed Austria-Hungary's earlier annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and cautioned that any threat posed by Serbia had to be carefully weighed against concern about German resistance to a unilateral Austrian move, and, moreover, to the possibility of reprisals from the Triple Entente.[55] Rather than preparing for a war with Serbia, Berchtold convinced the Emperor that the Hapsburg monarchy's interests would be better served by a Great Power conference to settle outstanding territorial disputes.[56] When, in early February 1913, the discussions in the Conference of Ambassadors between Austria-Hungary and Russia stalled over prospective Albanian frontiers, Emperor Franz Joseph, acting on his own initiative – but with the support of Berchtold and Franz Ferdinand – to achieve some form of understanding with Russia, sent Austrian Prince Hohenlohe on a secret mission to St. Petersburg.[57]

Prince Gottfried von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, described as one of the 'most illustrious blooms on the Monarchy's aristocratic bough', was a former Austro-Hungarian military attaché at St. Petersburg and a close personal friend of Tsar Nicholas II. He was sent as an envoy to the Russian capital at the behest of the ageing Emperor, who was 'depressed and not wishing to die in the midst of blood-letting', with instructions to reassure Russian statesmen that Austria-Hungary's intentions were benign and to negotiate a path towards troop reductions on both sides of their shared border.[58] The aim was clear: to reduce Russian threat perceptions and to encourage the Russian moderates 'clustered around [Prime Minister] Kokovtsov and [Foreign Minister] Sazonov'.[59]

Although Hohenlohe was forbidden from negotiating specifics regarding either troop demobilisations or the thorny question of Albania's territorial borders, his mission to soothe jangled Russian nerves and the warm reception he received in St. Petersburg represented 'a real gesture of

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[54] Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 129; Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*, 76.

[55] Berchtold's understanding of his adversary's position is perhaps less surprising given the fact that he was a former Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Russia, whose eight years in St. Petersburg 'had exposed him to Tsar Nicholas II, the Russian court and the leading Russian political figures'. Williamson Jr., 'Leopold Count Berchtold', 27.

[56] Hannig, 'Austro-Hungary and the Balkan Wars', 237.

[57] Ernst C. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars 1912–1913* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1938), 278.

[58] Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 134. Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War*, 263.

[59] Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 134.

friendliness on both sides'.[60] Moreover, there is evidence that Germany supported the Habsburg attempt at détente with Russia. In the same month as the Hohenlohe mission took place, Kaiser Wilhelm wrote a letter to Archduke Franz Ferdinand urging a negotiated de-escalation of tensions with Russia and underlining that 'the matters at issue were not important enough to justify a continuation of the current armed stand-off'.[61]

Although German recklessness, in the form of Kaiser Wilhelm's notorious 'blank cheque' to Austria-Hungary during the July Crisis of 1914, has been the hobbyhorse of generations of historians, Germany initially adopted a policy of strict neutrality upon the commencement of the Balkan Wars.[62] Far from viewing the encroachment of the Balkan states into former Ottoman territory as a direct and existential threat to ally Austria-Hungary, Wilhelm's initial reaction was to take a balanced, and even positive, view of the changes unleashed by the eruption of the Balkan Wars. In part this reflected an attempt by the Kaiser to reconcile the competing interest of Germany's desire to draw closer to the Ottoman Empire with his belief that the status quo could not last much longer in the Balkans.[63] The Kaiser held, according to historian Luigi Albertini, 'a soft spot for the Balkan states', whose ejection of the Ottoman Empire from Europe, he believed, represented a 'world-historical evolution'.[64] Wilhelm, albeit unrealistically, hoped that a 'United States of the Balkans' might serve as a pro-Austrian buffer between Austria-Hungary and Russia, whose antagonisms in the region posed a serious threat to continental peace. To that end, at the outset of the Balkan Wars the Kaiser expressly forbade German diplomats from participating in any action that would 'hinder the Bulgars, Serbs and Greeks in their legitimate quest for victory'.[65]

The Kaiser's views in this regard were far less negative and pessimistic than those of the more belligerent members of the German government, chief among them the head of his General Staff, Helmuth von Moltke. Moltke was obsessed by the notion of a coming racial struggle 'between Germans and Slavs', and spoke of Serbia as an 'abscess' that poisoned the European body politic and which required 'cauterisation with a red-hot iron'.[66] By contrast, with the exception of a few fiery

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[60] Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars 1912–1913*, 284.

[61] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 289.

[62] L. C. F. Turner, 'The Russian Mobilisation in 1914', in *The War Plans of the Great Powers, 1880–1914*, ed. Paul M. Kennedy, Routledge Library Editions: The First World War (New York: Routledge, 2014).

[63] For more on the Kaiser's attempt to woo the Ottoman Empire throughout his reign see Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power, 1898–1918* (London: Penguin Books, 2011).

[64] Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, vol. 1, 399.

[65] Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 262.

[66] Holger H. Herwig, *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary 1914–1918*, ed. Hew Strachan, 2nd ed., Modern Wars (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 22.

outbursts in support of Vienna that were usually quickly doused by some combination of Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg or Foreign Minister Kiderlen-Wächter, Kaiser Wilhelm consistently prescribed pacific solutions to the Austro-Serbian problem prior to the Sarajevo assassinations.[67] At the outbreak of the First Balkan War the Kaiser expressed the rather sanguine view that 'if they [the Balkan states] made good their claims through war, much as Prussia had solved the question of German nationality, they should be worthy of recognition'.[68]

Even after the conclusion of the Second Balkan War, when Serbia had surfaced as the undisputed territorial winner, Wilhelm argued that 'in my view [Austrian Foreign Minister] Count Berchtold could secure a solid foothold [in Belgrade] if he blithely sacrificed a few millions [to alleviate Serbia's financial crisis], opened wide the Theresianum [the Habsburg monarchy's foremost military academy] as well as the Academies and Institutes [to Serbian candidates], and offered various other advantages that would help to prepare for the future'.[69] As late as the first of July 1914, three days after the assassinations in Sarajevo, the Hungarian Prime Minister István Tisza urged Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph to exploit a planned (though subsequently aborted) visit by the Kaiser to Vienna 'to combat the pro-Serbian prejudice of that sovereign Gentleman'.[70] (Indeed, Austria's suspicion of the alternating hot and cold nature of Germany's support for her endeavours in the Balkans endured even throughout the July Crisis, with Vienna, and Berchtold in particular, reluctant to share information with Berlin for fear that the latter might apply the diplomatic brakes and seek a last-minute resolution to the crisis.)[71]

Thus, far from emphasising any consistency in Germany's resolution for a preventive war on the European continent, the Balkan Wars illustrated that the Kaiser's commitment to Austrian policy in the region was 'not uncritical, and his willingness to proffer German support fluctuated according to his perception of the rectitude of Austrian demands and his assessment of the risks involved'.[72] This contrasts with the assessment of certain historians that the First Balkan War inaugurated a

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[67] So patchy was Germany's historical record of unconditional support for Austria in its dealings in the Balkans that in 1908 the Austrian government had neglected to inform Berlin of its controversial annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in a clandestine exchange with the Russians.[67] When the German Kaiser upbraided Austria's then-Foreign Minister Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal for not having informed him of the deal, the Minister gamely replied that 'he had not done so because he had proceeded from the assumption that the Kaiser … would have advised against the project'. Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 258–259.

[68] T. G. Otte, *July Crisis: The World's Descent Into War, Summer 1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 516; Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 250.

[69] Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 278.

[70] Ibid. 279.

[71] Herwig, *The First World War*, 20.

[72] Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 257.

'reign of Mars in the Kaiser's thinking', and that 'he now grasped … the initiative in directly orienting himself towards warlike activity'.[73] Much scholarly emphasis has been placed on the legendary 'War Council' of 8 December 1912.[74] However, the outcome of Kaiser Wilhelm's controversial meeting with his top military leaders was ultimately the rejection of the kind of preventive war favoured by men like Chief of the German General Staff Helmuth von Moltke. Far from setting in motion a preventive conflict on the European continent, Germany saw little increase in its near-term military readiness until the July Crisis.[75] Holger Herwig gives support to such a view, noting that no long-term military or economic plans have yet come to light to confirm that Germany planned a war prior to July 1914. If anything, 'the Prussian Army's refusal to expand its peacetime force of 800,000 men by three army corps in 1912–1913 for fear that this would undermine the social cohesion of its officer corps alone argues against the thesis of a long-planned war of aggression'.[76]

Similar interpretations of martial intent have been attributed to the Austro-German military consultations that took place between Generals Blasius Schemua and Helmuth von Moltke, and, separately, between Kaiser Wilhelm and Archduke Franz Ferdinand, in November 1912, during the First Balkan War. However, while the generals glibly spoke of war, as generals are wont to do, the consensus view among historians appears to be that the consultations were not relied upon by either side 'as an extension or interpretation of the treaty of alliance'.[77] Indeed, the Austrians continued to feel deeply uncertain of Germany's support throughout the Balkan Winter Crisis and 'each time Vienna wanted to be decisive, Berlin had objected and Vienna had demurred'.[78]

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[73] Ibid. 264.

[74] The so-called 'War Council' of December 1912 was a hastily convened conclave of senior military and naval officers arranged at the Kaiser's behest in response to an alarming telegram from his ambassador in London, Karl Max, Prince von Lichnowsky. Lichnowsky relayed a conversation with Lord Richard Haldane, in which Haldane indicated that Britain would fight on the side of France if Germany's support for Austria-Hungary should entangle it in a war with Russia. The significance of the meeting has been hotly debated by historians and remains one of the most controversial episodes of the Kaiser's reign. No minutes were kept of the meeting, although Admiral Müller recorded in his diary that the result of the conference 'amounted to almost 0'. Historians such as Wolfgang Mommsen, Dieter Groh and Klaus Hildebrand have, rightly in this author's opinion, viewed the meeting as a 'reflex response to an international crisis' whose potentially inflammatory effects were quickly doused by the level-headed ministrations of Bethmann Hollweg. Clark writes that 'the War Council of 8 December remained an episode: by the beginning of January, the sense of crisis in Berlin had dissipated and Wilhelm had regained his calm'. Ibid. 264–265, 269. Historian Gordon Martel agrees that the meeting 'was only one of dozens, hundreds of such meetings between heads of state or government and their military advisers in the decades before 1914'. 'More often than not the military and naval men present would argue that they needed more men, more guns, more ships before they could embark on war. There was nothing new or surprising in this.' Gordon Martel, *The Month That Changed the World: July 1914* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 21.

[75] Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War*, 253.

[76] Herwig, *The First World War*, 21.

[77] Ernst C. Helmreich, 'An Unpublished Report on Austro-German Military Conversations of November 1912', *The Journal of Modern History* 5, no. 2 (1933): 205.

[78] Ibid.

This uncertainty on the part of Austria-Hungary was partly due to the separate actions of Bethmann Hollweg and, in particular, Germany's Foreign Minister, Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter. In late November 1912 the latter sought to rebalance the Kaiser's more enthusiastic private stance in support of Vienna with a sober public one that was supportive of a negotiated settlement in the Balkans on the part of the Great Powers. On 26 November 1912, Kiderlen-Wächter cabled his ambassador in London, Karl Max, Prince von Lichnowsky, that 'Germany and Austria-Hungary had kept their heads' during Russia's trial mobilisation and that he 'refused to see aggressive intentions in Russia's later moves':

> We could not criticise Austria-Hungary if it took certain purely defensive countermeasures. We ourselves, however, in spite of the possible threat to our security, should abstain from such measures, in order not to seem to exacerbate the situation. But the danger exists that further Russian military measures would lead to further Austrian ones and thereby a state of tension be created that would lead to a discharge, without there being serious and irreconcilable interests on the two sides that would make such a development only too understandable.[79]

This reflected a calculated effort on the part of the Foreign Minister and the Chancellor to withstand the martial importunings of the German General Staff in response to Russian, and later French, military armament programmes.[80] 'It would be regrettable,' Kiderlen-Wächter concluded to Lichnowsky, 'if merely because of reciprocal military measures … there should arise a serious threat to European peace'.[81]

Germany, in other words, would extend unconditional support to her ally Austria-Hungary if the latter's survival as a Great Power were in danger, but not necessarily over specific Balkan interests, such as the issue of Serbian Adriatic Sea access. As Kaiser Wilhelm himself would state to Kiderlen-Wächter during a discussion on 9 November 1912: 'The German Army and people could not be placed at the direct service of the whims of another State's foreign policy. The alliance did not pledge Germany to support Austria unconditionally in cases of friction over the possessions of others'.[82] This interpretation was significant, not only because it made continental war over the Balkan realignments less likely at the time, but because the Kaiser would disown this more circumscribed interpretation of the treaty obligations to Austria-Hungary in July 1914, with fatal consequences.[83]

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[79] Quoted in Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War*, 250.

[80] Ibid. 251.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, vol. 1, 399–400.

[83] Ibid. 400.

Risk Propensity

The same Austro-Hungarian leaders who were less sensitive to the threat posed by Slav irredentism were simultaneously more risk averse in managing the problem than those who were more concerned about Serbia. Unlike in 1914, when concern about Russia virtually disappeared, during the Balkan upheavals the advantages of waging a war to crush Serbia were consistently weighed against the risks of drawing in Russia, and the clear advantage in troop numbers that country presented. In this regard, 'fears that a European conflict would destroy the monarchy led Emperor Franz Joseph and Foreign Minister Leopold Berchtold to caution against a preventive war'.[84]

For example, when the Austro-Hungarian leadership received intelligence in the early autumn of 1912 that the Balkan states were preparing to attack Turkey, Chief of the General Staff Schemua urged an attack on Serbia the moment it commenced hostilities. However, Berchtold, Ferdinand and the Emperor rejected Schemua's proposal because they could not guarantee against Russian, or even Italian, intervention.[85] In this regard, Berchtold did not publicly protest the Russian trial mobilisation that coincided with the outbreak of the First Balkan War, and, in a Crown Council meeting of 8-9 October 1912, he opposed extra military precautions in Galicia 'because he well knew that one step in this direction from Austria-Hungary's side would lead to the same on the other side and then the ball would start rolling'.[86]

Thus, while Austria's military generals pleaded for war, Franz Joseph, Berchtold and his foreign ministry at the Ballhausplatz, Tisza and Franz Ferdinand continued to search for peaceful solutions, even as they tolerated certain mobilisation readiness measures. Alma Hannig notes that, at least until the end of the Second Balkan War, the extreme risk associated with a declaration of war on Serbia held them back from advocating any harsher measures:

> They were clear on the dangers connected with a war: they were unsure of the loyalty of their own allies; the integrity of the state and military were doubtful in the case of a war against a Slavic country; the danger of revolution; the high financial costs and the unpredictable reaction of the other Great Powers were all grave arguments against war [with Serbia] … According to Ferdinand, all that would

[84] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'The Rubicon Theory of War: How the Path to Conflict Reaches the Point of No Return', *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 26.

[85] Jannen Jr., 'The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914', 57.

[86] Stevenson, 'Militarization and Diplomacy in Europe before 1914', 143.

> be acquired in such a costly endeavour was no more than "a pack of thieves and a few more murderers and rascals and a few plum trees".[87]

After his brief, three-week flirtation with a more militant posture during Austria's first major war–peace Balkans crisis, Franz Ferdinand quickly reverted to his usual anti-war stance, concerned about the risks inherent in fighting a two-front, and possibly four-front, war with Serbia, Russia, Italy and even Romania. This was another reason that German vacillation with regard to Austria's policy in the Balkans was so critical to Austria-Hungary's overall calculations of risk: Austria-Hungary's own military weaknesses meant that the country could not possibly hope to stave off a Russian onslaught without German support.[88] Such doubtfulness contrasted sharply with the views of men like Chief of the General Staff Conrad von Hötzendorf, who disdainfully and optimistically 'dismissed the Russian threat and argued for an attack on Serbia and Montenegro before the opportunity passed', and whose re-emergence in decision-making circles 'stirred fears in St. Petersburg and in Berlin that the Austro-Russian crisis might grow nasty'.[89]

Although Austria-Hungary's leaders, Berchtold prominent among them, would become increasingly exasperated by the slow pace of the Concert's response to Serbian infractions, the Habsburg monarchy's overall risk aversion remained in evidence during the two successive Balkan crises of 1913: the first over Montenegro's occupation of Scutari and the second over Serbia's expansion into Albanian territory. Although both crises resulted in the issuing of Austro-Hungarian ultimatums, first to Montenegro in May and later to Serbia in October, the risk of an escalation into a continental conflict remained relatively low, and Austria's decision-makers, Berchtold chief among them, knew it.

On both occasions, Austria-Hungary acted with an implicit, if not always explicit, mandate from the Great Powers – including Russia – who, after an exhaustive series of ambassadorial conferences, had collectively agreed on the principle of international coercion to end Montenegro's siege of Scutari and on the need for Serbia to respect the international borders of a newly independent Albania. In the case of the ultimatum issued to Montenegro, Berchtold acquiesced largely because Serbia, whose troops had already evacuated Scutari, had been removed from the strategic risk calculus, and because he felt that he could keep the military option – and Conrad von Hötzendorf – under tight

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[87] Hannig, 'Austro-Hungary and the Balkan Wars', 247.

[88] The Austrian war plan in case of a continental conflict was based on the so-called 'War Plan R + B': forces for Russia (R) and the Balkans (B), with a floating reserve between them. However, the supposed 'suppleness' of these plans masked 'glaring shortages of the coin of modern warfare: transport, artillery and trained infantry'. Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*, 77.

[89] Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 133.

restrictions.[90] At a critical Common Ministerial Council Meeting of senior Austrian officials at the Ballhausplatz on 2 May 1913, careful attention was devoted to Russia's views on the matter. This attention was significant, for, as Samuel Williamson Jr. observes, 'in the 1914 discussions the emphasis would be exactly and more dangerously reversed'.[91]

In contrast to the crisis over Scutari, Austria-Hungary's response to Serbia's invasion of Albanian territory in October 1913 became increasingly strident. However, even then, the Habsburg monarchy's response was similarly divided between those who wanted to immediately punish Serbia and initiate military action against the country and those, like Berchtold, who favoured a phased approach to military escalation that involved first issuing a warning to Belgrade and then an ultimatum if Serbian leaders did not yield. Franz Ferdinand, expressing even more pacific views than Berchtold, opposed any form of confrontation.[92] Over the objections of Conrad, who was obsessed with initiating an immediate war against Serbia, István Burián, Hungary's emissary to the Austrian government, who wanted to seize Serbian territory for ransom, and Leon von Biliński, Austria-Hungary's Common Finance Minister, who wanted to otherwise humiliate Serbia in some way, Berchtold pursued the phased approach.[93]

However, even when Serbian intransigence prompted Vienna to issue its ultimatum to Belgrade, Berchtold understood that he was most likely not acting alone. A few months earlier, the London Conference of Ambassadors, coordinated by Sir Edward Grey, presented a collective demand from the Great Powers for Serbian evacuation and, when this failed to have any appreciable effect on Belgrade, it was followed by individual protests from Great Britain and Germany.[94] Thus, even though France and Russia responded more reluctantly than the other European powers, 'in the autumn of 1913 the Great Powers were in agreement that Serbia's demands for a chunk of Albanian territory were illegitimate'.[95]

Leaders in Germany exhibited a similar aversion to taking any decisions that might risk a continental war. Much historical emphasis has been placed on the Kaiser's longstanding commitment to Austria-Hungary through the terms of the Triple Alliance, and his supposed corollary embrace of

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[90] Ibid. 139.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Samuel R. Williamson Jr., 'Aggressive and Defensive Aims of Political Elites? Austro-Hungarian Policy in 1914', in *An Improbable War?*, eds. Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 65.

[93] Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 152–153.

[94] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 286.

[95] Ibid. 287.

the risk of war in the months and years leading up to 1914.[96] However, many of the verbal assurances given to Vienna throughout the first major Balkan crisis in the autumn and winter of 1912, and in particular during the 22 November visit of Franz Ferdinand and his Chief of General Staff Blasius Schemua, were offered 'at a very low cost in risk', in terms of the likelihood of French and British support for a Russian intervention in defence of Serbian claims 'that were widely seen as outrageous, overblown and untenable'.[97] Moreover, any positive assurances of support conveyed by the Kaiser to Archduke Franz Ferdinand for the Habsburg position 'should Russian countermeasures or demands follow which might force Franz Joseph to declare war' were 'cancelled out', as it were, by official warnings by both Bethmann Hollweg and by then-German Foreign Minister Kiderlen-Wächter.

In the now-famous 'cold douche' episode of 25 November 1912 both officials made it publicly clear that Berlin favoured a settlement of the Balkans crisis by the Great Powers, and Wilhelm, by all accounts, 'accepted this policy adjustment'.[98] In particular, the two men pressured Austria-Hungary to negotiate with Russia over the territorial boundaries of Albania, encouraging an exchange whereby Diaková and Dibra, two towns in the Albanian-Serbian hinterlands, would be given to Serbia, in exchange for Scutari, which would be given to Albania.[99] The Austrians eventually conceded the issue on 19 March 1913, at the urging of Bethmann Hollweg, who wrote to Count Berchtold that if the Ambassador's Conference broke down the result would almost certainly be a continental war in which Germany would face the unsavoury prospect of the combined forces of the Triple Entente.[100] As Bethmann Hollweg warned the Reichstag in April 1913, just after Russia and Austria-Hungary had climbed down from their brinksmanship crisis after the First Balkan War, 'no person can imagine the dimensions of a world conflagration, of the misery and destruction, which it would bring to nations'.[101]

The German government's generally cautious approach to the region was evident throughout the year of Balkan troubles and repeatedly acted as a brake on the more militant voices in Vienna. Much of this caution revolved around the idea that the Russian threat to the Balkans could be strategically

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[96] See, for example, Lamar Cecil, *Wilhelm II*, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989–1996).

[97] Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 266.

[98] Ibid.

[99] The Russians initially demanded that the towns of Prizren Peć, Dibra, Diaková and Scutari be incorporated by their Serbo-Montenegrin clients, while Austria-Hungary insisted they be incorporated into the newly autonomous Albania. Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 284.

[100] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 262.

[101] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 505.

neutralised without resorting to force if Austria-Hungary was prepared to join forces with Romania and Italy to 'form a solid bloc within central Europe'.[102] Serbia, too, they believed, could be enticed to join the Triple Alliance 'if the right incentives were provided and if the Dual Monarchy made appropriate friendly overtures'.[103] Just after the outbreak of the First Balkan War, for example, Wilhelm instructed the German Foreign Office that Albania should be established as a quasi-independent principality under one of the Serbian princes. Despite Austrian howls of protest, he wrote to his then-Foreign Minister Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter that 'I see absolutely no danger for Austria's existence, or prestige, in a Serbian harbour on the Adriatic', and stated that he [Wilhelm] would not go to war 'for a few Albanian goat-pastures'.[104] Just a few weeks before the infamous War Council, Bethmann Hollweg recalled that 'the Kaiser was very cautious throughout the Balkan Wars and remarked to me in November [1912] that "I shall not march against Paris or Moscow for the sake of Albania and Durazzo"'.[105]

When tensions between Russia and Austria-Hungary reached a peak in January 1913, Count Friedrich von Szápáry, one of Berchtold's most trusted advisers, who had been sent to sound out the thinking in Berlin, reported back that neither Wilhelm nor Bethmann Hollweg 'had any desire for a showdown with the Russians over a Balkan issue'.[106] At this stage, even the typically bellicose General Helmuth von Moltke [the Younger], Chief of the German General Staff, warned Gottlieb von Jagow, the Foreign Secretary who had replaced Kiderlen-Wächter upon the latter's death, to 'prevent Austrian foolishness, no agreeable and easy task'.[107] Another German turn of the screw for prospective Austro-Hungarian ambitions in the Balkans came at the end of the Second Balkan War: already conspicuous by their absence at the Peace of Bucharest, which terminated the war, the Germans went a step further towards undercutting their Austrian ally by affirming the terms of the peace, over Austrian objections, and agreeing to expanded borders for the victorious Balkan allies.[108] The haste with which the Germans had approved the Treaty of Bucharest deprived Austria-Hungary of the chance to improve the position of Bulgaria, 'which the Austrians, but not the Germans, viewed as a potential counterweight to Serbian power'.[109]

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[102] Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig, *Decisions for War, 1914–1917* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 58.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 262; Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*, 76.

[105] Massie, *Dreadnought*, 843.

[106] Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 133.

[107] Ibid. 134.

[108] Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*.

[109] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 290.

In October 1913, during the stand-off between Austria-Hungary and Serbia over the latter's occupation of Albania, Wilhelm adopted a much less cautious tone, fulsomely praising the former's ultimatum to Serbia, noting in the margins of a Foreign Office cable from Vienna his conviction that it was high time that 'order and peace' were established 'down there' in the Balkans.[110] However, the Kaiser made this excessively aggressive and unguarded remark at a time when he and other officials in Berlin knew there was little risk of Russian intervention: the Great Powers, including Serbia's protector Russia, were in full agreement that Serbian demands in regard to Albania were illegitimate, with St. Petersburg losing 'no time in urging the Serbs to yield'.[111] In a conversation with the Austrian ambassador in Berlin that same month, Wilhelm counselled prudence to his Austrian counterpart, conceding that Austria-Hungary would only be justified in employing violence against Serbia if other diplomatic and economic measures had been tried and had failed.[112]

This counsel accords with the Kaiser's general pattern of risk aversion in response to crises, which was observed by contemporaries: that is, his predilection for bluster and bombast aside, Wilhelm often exercised a restraining influence on German military and political leaders baying for war whenever an international crisis reached a tipping point. Gordon Martel observes that in this respect 'the volatile, contradictory and colourful character of Wilhelm II has distracted attention from the reality that he was essentially a man of peace'.[113] Although the Kaiser had a talent for mustering up 'sudden enthusiasms on a moment's notice', these usually passed just as quickly, and while men like General Moltke could easily impress his sense of urgency on the Kaiser as to the inevitability of the coming war, the latter rarely acted upon his threats and 'more than once retreated when things began to look serious'.[114]

This tendency was apparent not just in the Balkans but also during the two Moroccan crises of 1906 and 1911.[115] Admiral Tirpitz, State Secretary of the Imperial German Navy, observed that 'when the Emperor [Wilhelm] did not consider the peace to be threatened he liked to give full play to his reminiscences of his famous ancestors … [but] in moments which he realised to be critical he

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[110] Quoted in Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 273.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid. 277–278.

[113] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 26.

[114] Annika Mombauer, *Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 107; McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express*.

[115] Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 140.

proceeded with extraordinary caution'.[116] That the Kaiser had reigned in Germany for a quarter of a century without engaging the country in a major war of any kind was testament to this fundamental underlying strain of caution.

Temporal Discounting

During the Balkan crises, the leaders of Austria-Hungary who had counselled against escalatory measures exhibited a strong degree of scepticism regarding the 'better-now-than-later' thinking that dominated their respective military circles. During each of the critical moments, meetings or conferences when the principal decision-makers could have conceivably forced the pace of escalation, they instead chose to delay, with the hope of avoiding, or at least forestalling, the possibility of a larger clash, and any negative consequences that might result. When the Balkan League declared war on the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg monarchy initially followed a policy of caution and restraint – a position at the time supported by all three of the men who were most influential in the empire's foreign policy decision-making: Emperor Franz Joseph, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Foreign Minister Berchtold. This was partly because of deep uncertainty throughout Europe as to who would be the victor in any Balkan war and what the long-term consequences of such a conflict might be. Berchtold, in particular, was hesitant about invading Serbia because of the widespread uncertainty as to whether the Ottomans would ultimately prevail.[117]

Berchtold's caution matched that of his Emperor, Franz Joseph, who consistently resisted or otherwise delayed implementation of the ceaseless importuning on the part of the country's military leadership for mobilisation measures against Serbia between late September, when Russia commenced its trial mobilisation, and early December, when an armistice brought to an end the First Balkan War.[118] Although no Austrophile, Sir Arthur Nicolson, at the British Foreign Office, remarked to his ambassador in Vienna that he thought that amidst the Balkan upheavals Berchtold had 'throughout shown very great patience and forbearance'.[119] Likewise, Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza made no effort to plan for a war against Serbia during the period of the Balkan crises, preferring

[116] Ibid. 139–140.

[117] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 251.

[118] In one four-week period alone, the Governor-General of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Oskar Potiorek urged mobilisation options against Serbia on no fewer than 13 separate occasions. Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 126. Although the Emperor eventually assented to certain precautionary military measures throughout this period, at each of the crucial policy meetings he listened 'to the give and take' of his senior civilian and military advisers, and 'for the one person in the monarchy who alone could tilt the balance for peace or war, the future course remained that of peace'. Ibid. 131.

[119] Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars 1912–1913*, 324.

instead to diplomatically isolate Austria-Hungary's expansionist neighbour. He repeatedly urged calm among his more belligerent colleagues and advised them to 'keep cold blood' by preserving the peace instead of preparing for war.[120]

The view that impulsive action might lead to unforeseen future consequences, and that waiting to see how events played out would better serve Austria-Hungary's strategic interests, could not have contrasted more with the bleak certitude of those who favoured decisive and immediate military intervention to forestall an even worse future. During a Crown Council meeting on 23 December 1912, Governor-General of Bosnia-Herzegovina Oskar Potiorek expressed his fear that time for the monarchy was running out and that acting immediately was vital to the nation's self-interest. He argued that the nation's civilian leaders were forfeiting their last chance to 'reckon with' Serbia without Russian intervention.[121] Franz Ferdinand, who had temporarily come around to the hawkish view in late 1912, parroted this line of argumentation, noting that 'nothing would be gained by waiting'. [122] At a climactic meeting with Emperor Franz Joseph at Schönbrunn Palace on 11 December 1912, Ferdinand urged his uncle to launch an immediate assault against both Serbia and Montenegro.

Without doubt the member of the Austrian government who was most insistent about the value of immediate action was Chief of the Austrian General Staff Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf. Had he attended the 11 December meeting, he would surely have encouraged the Emperor to reopen the question of war with Serbia with his usual ferocity. Conrad was dogged in his prediction that, if the country did not commence a war against Serbia, conditions could only worsen for the Habsburgs. To delay acting, he believed, was to risk surrendering the country's status as a great power, and, quite possibly, her survival. In particular, he lamented that Austria had forfeited the chance to crush Serbia during the Bosnian annexation affair in 1908–1909, consistently believing that 'war offered a chance to infuse the aging Monarchy with a new vigour, resolve the South Slav menace and protect Habsburg interests as a Great Power'.[123]

In a very real sense, time was also running out for Conrad, who faced the prospect of an ageing and decrepit Emperor who would soon be replaced by the more vigorous Ferdinand and his 'shadow'

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[120] Hannig, 'Austro-Hungary and the Balkan Wars', 243.

[121] Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War*, 260.

[122] Samuel R. Williamson Jr., 'Military Dimensions of Habsburg-Romanov Relations During the Era of the Balkan Wars', in *East Central European Society and the Balkan Wars*, eds. Béla K. Király and Dimitrije Djordjevic (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 323.

[123] Williamson Jr., 'Aggressive and Defensive Aims of Political Elites?', 64.

government at the Belvedere Palace.[124] After the Archduke's brief flirtation with a militant posture in late 1912, Conrad fell out of favour with the more peace-loving Franz Ferdinand during the Balkan crises that buffeted the Dual Monarchy in 1913, 'with the general almost certainly scheduled for replacement after the 1914 manoeuvres'.[125] Ferdinand, who was always intrigued by the possibility of a conservative Austro-Russian entente, swung decisively back in favour of the peace policy of Berchtold and Franz Joseph after the Emperor's decision to reject a war with Serbia during the First Balkan War. Although Conrad was generally supported by Austrian Minister of War General Alexander Krobatin, his tendency to discount the value of waiting to initiate war found scant support among most of Austria-Hungary's civilian leadership – least of all Hungarian Prime Minister István Tisza – until the double assassinations in Sarajevo.[126]

In Germany, the Kaiser remained largely unimpressed by military arguments for seizing the 'present favourable moment' to embark on a preventive war.[127] When the German Ambassador in Vienna, Heinrich von Tschirschky, cabled Berlin on 21 November 1912 the Austrian military's view that the Habsburg monarchy would 'fall to pieces' unless Vienna now had a 'free hand against Serbia', Wilhelm appended the comment that 'this could bring a European War and for us a life-or-death struggle with three Great Powers; it depends upon our quickly getting a clear picture concerning London and Paris'.[128] Such reflective hesitation about the potential consequences of unleashing a European conflict in which Great Britain and France might be drawn in occasionally led to ructions on the part of the Kaiser's close military advisers: as late as March 1914 General Moriz Baron von Lyncker, Chief of the Kaiser's Military Cabinet, lamented that Wilhelm did not see a need to precipitate a war and embark upon what Lyncker was convinced was the 'inevitable conflict'.[129] When Conrad von Hötzendorf mentioned to Tschirschky the possibility of launching an early war with Russia that same month, the latter reminded the General that 'two important people are against it, your Archduke Franz Ferdinand and my Kaiser'.[130]

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[124] The Belvedere Palace was Franz Ferdinand's imperial residence. Although he shared many of his uncle's views on foreign policy, the circle around Ferdinand had become something of a competing power centre within the Habsburg monarchy. Samuel Williamson Jr. writes that 'the heir apparent had become His Majesty's most loyal opposition, often necessitating a delicate ministerial egg dance between Schönbrunn (Franz Joseph's favourite Vienna residence) and the Belvedere (Franz Ferdinand's residence)'. Samuel R. Williamson Jr., 'Influence, Power, and the Policy Process: The Case of Franz Ferdinand, 1906-1914', *The Historical Journal* 17, no. 2 (1974): 418.

[125] Williamson Jr., 'Aggressive and Defensive Aims of Political Elites?', 65.

[126] Ibid. 64.

[127] Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 279.

[128] Ibid. 264.

[129] Ibid. 279.

[130] Ibid. 280.

Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg also adopted a cautious 'wait-and-see' approach, in large part because thawing relations between Britain and Germany, due to their joint efforts to defuse the various Balkans crises, had given the Chancellor (erroneously, as it turned out) reason to hope that the possibility that Britain would remain neutral in any future war was growing ever more likely. In the Chancellor's view, it would be 'a mistake of immense dimensions' to bring on a war with the Triple Entente before British neutrality could be more assured.[131] This scepticism was not universally shared. The Balkan Wars convinced German Chief of the General Staff Helmuth von Moltke that 'war is inevitable, and the sooner the better', and that British neutrality, which he viewed as highly unlikely in any case, was largely irrelevant.[132] Wedded as he was to the updates that he had made to the Schlieffen Plan concerning a future invasion of France, Moltke became increasingly obsessed with preventing a situation in which Germany would not be able to successfully attack her enemies. His biographer, Annika Mombauer, observes that:

> A picture thus emerges in these crucial [pre-war] years of Moltke as an advocate of war as soon as possible, before it became impossible to wage a war successfully. At the same time, however, the longer 'the great fight' was postponed, the less certain the Chief of the General Staff became that victory could be assured … As time ran out for the Schlieffen/Moltke Plan, rather than develop alternative plans, Moltke began to push for war while he still felt reasonably confident of the recipe for victory. His sense of urgency was only heighted by the fact that the Ministry of War was unwilling to grant him the army increases he deemed necessary to safeguard Germany in future.[133]

However, this discounting of the future stemmed not just from the dictates of German military doctrine owing to the Schlieffen Plan (which, in his capacity as Chief of the General Staff, he could in theory have altered or dispensed with altogether), but also from Moltke's generally heightened levels of threat sensitivity. Moltke was resolutely convinced by the notion of *Weltbild*, the idea that Germany was encircled by hostile racial (particularly Slavic) powers, and that her enemies would always attempt to use this capacity for encirclement to their advantage in a future war, whose eventuality he did not doubt. That Germany may have contributed to the situation the country found itself in seems not to have crossed his mind. In a memorandum of 21 December 1912, Moltke wrote to Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg that, 'owing to Germany's central geographic position, she would

[131] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 262.

[132] Immanuel Geiss, ed., *July 1914 The Outbreak of the First World War: Selected Documents* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1967), 42.

[133] Mombauer, *Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War*, 108–109.

always have to fight on several fronts, and would therefore have to be defensive on one side and offensive on the other'.[134]

Moreover, these twin psychologies of threat sensitivity and temporal discounting in the mindsets of men like Moltke were logically interlocked. 'If one concluded that Russia really was *looking for a war* with Germany, then the arguments for avoiding one now by means of costly political concessions appeared much weaker.'[135] This, of course, fed into a third psychology, that of risk propensity, for if one follows such thinking to its logical conclusion, the risk of a costly but theoretically easier war now was worth undertaking over that of a potentially even costlier one in the future. Thus, the dynamics of temporal discounting may help to explain why Moltke preferred the psychological certainty associated with taking decisive action in the present to the inconclusiveness and potential cost associated with waiting on an uncertain future. Nevertheless, as politically influential as Moltke was in German decision-making circles, particularly in comparison with his predecessor, Alfred von Schlieffen, he still had to answer to the Kaiser, who remained unconvinced by the 'better-now-than-later' arguments for war at each of the crucial moments during Europe's pre-war crises.

The Triple Entente

Threat Sensitivity

Many Russians, just like their Austrian counterparts, perceived the great danger that the Balkan Wars could present, not only to the status quo that had previously kept the European continent from exploding into war but also to their own national interest in keeping the Ottoman Empire, and in particular the Turkish Straits, free from foreign interference. Although Russian policymakers were the progenitors of the very Serbian–Bulgarian alliance that had caused the Balkan tiger to leap out of its cage, they were, like their Austrian counterparts, acutely aware of the dangers that the Balkan upheavals could precipitate – particularly if Austria-Hungary seized the opportunity to invade Serbia and drag Russia into a continental war. For this reason, and 'with increasing desperation', St. Petersburg warned both Sofia and Belgrade in the autumn of 1912 that it 'would not intervene to rescue them if they went to war and were defeated'.[136]

[134] Ibid. 157.

[135] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 358.

[136] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 250.

Moreover, like Germany, the principal policymakers in Russia were balancing competing interests in the region, playing a double game as protector of Russia's Balkan brethren while at the same time attempting to maintain the status quo of weak Ottoman custodianship over the Turkish Straits, a maritime conduit upon whose commercial traffic Russia heavily depended.[137] The Russian government, particularly Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, severely disliked the prospect of the Balkan states – in particular the Bulgarian King (not for nothing known as 'Foxy' Ferdinand) – conquering Constantinople and potentially jeopardising such a crucial waterway.[138] After the Second Balkan War, 'Sazonov assumed Bulgaria matter-of-factly to be a hostile power, due both to Sofia's revanchist designs on territory lost in this treaty to Greece, Romania, and Serbia; and, more significant, her evident desire to conquer Constantinople without Russian help'.[139]

This engendered a certain degree of dissension within Russian government circles regarding the true nature of the threat: the general threat to the continental peace precipitated by the Balkan Wars, the specific threat that Austria-Hungary might seize the opportunity to make further inroads along Europe's south-eastern periphery, or the alternative that the Balkan states might outgrow their Russian protector and seize vital Ottoman territory, at the latter's expense. Alexander Izvolsky, Russia's Ambassador to France, who had been eased out of office as Foreign Minister and sent to Paris after the disastrous Bosnian annexation affair, comprehended the severity of the threat that a Balkan victory over the Ottoman Empire presented for the peace of Europe.[140] Knowing full well that the newly empowered Balkan states would focus their efforts on Austria, shortly after the First Balkan War Izvolsky articulated his fear (as opposed to his desire, it must be said) that Slav victory in the Balkans 'would bring forward, in its full historical development, the question of Slavdom not only with Islam but also with Germanism … In that case, one could scarcely hope for any palliative measures and must prepare for a great and decisive general European war'.[141]

Vladimir Kokovtsov, Finance Minister and Prime Minister, similarly warned the Tsar at the height of the Winter Crisis of the 'danger of war with Austria and Germany … at a time when … every effort should be made to avert this catastrophe'.[142] Russian Ambassador to London, Count

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[137] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 264.

[138] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 253; MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 397. The ambitious, self-styled 'Tsar' Ferdinand of Bulgaria was known to keep a full-scale Byzantine emperor's regalia in his closet for just such an occasion. Sean McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War* (London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 25.

[139] McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 27.

[140] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 407.

[141] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 252.

[142] Ronald P. Bobroff, 'War Accepted but Unsought: Russia's Growing Militancy and the July Crisis, 1914', in *The Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 236;

Alexander von Benckendorff, who was Russia's lead negotiator in the Conference of Ambassadors, echoed Kokovtsov and expressed concern that 'this policy of deterrent threats, backed by the encirclement of the Central Powers in the Entente's ever-tightening web, could cause German preventive aggression rather than deter it'.[143]

For men like Izvolsky, Benckendorff and Kokovtsov, fears of a general war, and an appreciation for the perspectives and constraints of their adversaries outweighed their sensitivity to any specific Austrian or German threat in the Balkans. Their views stand in contrast with the more aggressive and simplistic views held by others, such as Nikolai Hartwig, Russia's ambassador to Serbia. Hartwig was an unabashed Russian nationalist and 'rabid Pan-Slav diplomat bent on furthering his ideas even to the point of exceeding his instructions from St. Petersburg'.[144] He saw his role in Belgrade 'as being to secure the maximum possible Russo-Serb solidarity' to confront what he saw as 'the inevitable future conflict with Vienna'.[145] This perception of Hartwig was shared among Russia's leading diplomats of the period, including Alexander Izvolsky and Nikolai Shebeko, who

> … all in their time denounced the dangers of Hartwig's 'incurable Austrophobia' and of his disloyalty to overall Russian foreign policy. Benckendorff's complaints about Hartwig's actions in Tehran revealed many of the defects the latter was later to display in Belgrade. These included an exaggerated distrust of the machinations of Russia's rivals … coupled with an incautious and uncritical acceptance of the views of the … local elements by whom he surrounded himself. In Belgrade, Hartwig's interpretation of the Balkan crisis was entirely one-sided and the Russian Minister seems to have been blind to the risks entailed in the policies he supported or the incautious statements he so often made.[146]

Hartwig's unremitting and unequivocal stance in support of Serbia risked undermining attempts by Russia, above all by Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov, to reach an understanding with Austria-Hungary on a permanent settlement for the Balkans. Sazonov, for his part, telegraphed Hartwig in Belgrade on 9 November 1912 that Russia could not risk a continental war simply to gain an outlet

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Count Vladimir Nikolaevich Kokovtsov, *Out of My Past: The Memoirs of Count Kokovtsov*, trans. Laura Matveev, Hoover War Library Publications (London: Humphrey Milford, 1935), 345.

[143] Jack Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later: The Paradox of 1914 as Everyone's Favored Year for War', in *The Next Great War? The Roots of World War I and the Risk of U.S.-China Conflict*, eds. Richard N. Rosencrance and Steven E. Miller, Belfer Center Studies in International Security (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015), 35.

[144] Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, vol. 1, 364–365. It was Hartwig's endangering of the Anglo–Russian entente with his 'tooth-and-nail defence of Russian interests in Persia' that had resulted in his transfer to Belgrade in 1909, at which point he began promoting *pourparlers* between Serbia and Bulgaria that eventually led to their treaty of alliance in March 1912. Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 259.

[145] Dominic Lieven, *Russia and the Origins of the First World War* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983), 41.

[146] Ibid. 41–42.

to the Adriatic for Serbia. 'Tell [Serbian Prime Minister] Pašić,' he instructed, to Hartwig's dissatisfaction, 'that the Serbians must not make difficult for us the role we have assumed as their advocates'.[147]

Two days later, Sazonov wrote another insistent telegram to Belgrade, drawing the Serbs' attention to their rash actions against the Ottoman Empire and warning that, as the other Entente powers were not inclined to 'let the conflict with the Triple Alliance be envenomed on account of a Serbian harbour', any Serbian intransigence on the matter would risk the open repudiation of Russian solidarity with Belgrade.[148] Thus, in light of the shared threats in connection with the turmoil in the Balkans and the dissolution of Ottoman territorial integrity in Europe, hopes on both sides were raised that a lasting entente between Vienna and St. Petersburg might be achieved.[149] As the Winter Crisis reached a tipping point in November and December 1912, when 'the peace of Europe seemed to hang by a thread', it was a relief to men like Sazonov when the Serbians gave way on the Adriatic port issue, and when his Austrian counterpart, Leopold Berchtold, accepted the idea of a conference of ambassadors in London under the chairmanship of Sir Edward Grey.[150]

Risk Propensity

Like the Austrians and Germans, the Russians were similarly, although by no means exclusively, divided along civilian and military lines concerning the risks of initiating military action that might precipitate a continental war. As it happened, Russia 'blinked first' in the 1912 mobilisation scare: although the Russian military retained its senior conscript class of over 300,000 trained men until January 1913, Tsar Nicholas, at the urging of Kokovtsov and Sazonov, concluded that the possible risks of prompting a war with both Germany and Austria-Hungary were simply not worth the prize of securing an Albanian port for Serbia.[151] (This logic would continue to steer Russian policy throughout 1913, when Sazonov would quietly accept two Austrian démarches to Serbia that denied the latter access to the Adriatic.)[152]

[147] Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, vol. 1, 403.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 251.

[150] Ibid. 261.

[151] Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*, 81.

[152] McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 27.

During the Winter Crisis, and in particular during a 'cliff-hanging exchange' between Tsar Nicholas and his ministers on 23 November 1912 at the imperial residence of Tsarskoe Selo, Minister of War Vladimir Sukhomlinov and members of the military command nearly succeeded in persuading the Tsar to order a partial mobilisation against Austria-Hungary.[153] They were encouraged in this endeavour by French military experts, who had earlier expressed their 'great optimism' regarding the Triple Entente's chances of victory in any Balkans inception scenario of war, in which Austria-Hungary's troops would presumably be tied up in a Balkan intervention and unable to exert pressure on Russia.[154]

Only the intervention of the more risk averse Kokovtsov and Sazonov helped to avert an impending escalation of the Winter Crisis into a general continental war.[155] On 21 November 1912 Russian commanders in the western districts of the country urged the Tsar to activate more troops, particularly in the Odessa district, to raise the level of military preparedness for an impending conflict with the Habsburg monarchy.[156] On 22 November, Sukhomlinov secured the Tsar's notional agreement to a raft of partial mobilisation measures, including full mobilisation of the Kiev military district along the Austrian border, partial mobilisation of the Warsaw district and the preparation of the Odessa district for mobilisation.[157] Historian Leonard Turner concludes that 'there seems little doubt that a Russian partial mobilisation on the scale envisaged by Sukhomlinov would infallibly have produced Austrian counter-measures on a very large scale and would probably have led to Austrian general mobilisation'.[158] Annika Mombauer agrees, noting that 'if implemented, this [partial mobilisation] decision would almost certainly have led in turn to an Austro-Hungarian general mobilisation, and … a European war [at that time] would have been difficult to avoid'.[159]

Although Foreign Minister Sazonov had initially backed Serbia's claim to a port on the Adriatic, he quickly changed tack when he realised not only that the British and the French would not

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[153] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 267–268; Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War*, 238.

[154] Turner, 'The Russian Mobilisation in 1914', 256.

[155] Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 133.

[156] Military 'districts' were territorial entities, 'the functions of which included the recruitment, training and deployment of troops'. There were eight such districts in Imperial Russia on the eve of the First World War, 'of which the four "frontier" districts (Vilnius, Warsaw, Kiev and Odessa) retained important defensive missions'. Bruce Menning, 'The Russian Threat Calculation, 1910–1914', in *The Wars Before the Great War: Conflict and International Politics before the Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan, and Andreas Rose (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 159.

[157] Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War*, 238.

[158] Turner, 'The Russian Mobilisation in 1914', 255.

[159] Annika Mombauer, ed., *The Origins of the First World War: Diplomatic and Military Documents*, *Documents in Modern History* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2013), 38.

unconditionally back Serbian claims in the Balkans, but also that the countries of the Triple Alliance were united in their opposition to Serbian attempts at territorial expansion. During the 23 November Tsarskoe Selo conference, Sazonov and Kokovtsov expressed their joint view that it would be foolish to push unnecessarily hard on the Serbian port issue, and risk in the process 'sharpening the dispute to a degree that creates a danger of a European war'.[160] According to Kokovtsov's account of the meeting:

> I stated frankly [to the Tsar] that the Minister of War and the two commanders apparently did not perceive what danger they were preparing for Russia in planning this mobilisation – a danger of war with Austria and Germany … Moreover, in such a mobilisation we assumed a great responsibility not only for Russia but also for France, since under the terms of our military agreement with our ally we had no right to undertake any such measures without coming to an understanding with her. This evidently had been overlooked by the Tsar's advisers, who in adopting this course of action would have destroyed the military covenant and thus permitted France to repudiate her obligations to us.[161]

In the end, Tsar Nicholas II heeded the advice of Sazonov and Kokovtsov and opted for caution by revoking the mobilisation orders that were ready to be sent out and agreeing to postpone the calling up of infantry reservists.[162] As a result, the Russian Crown Council ultimately vetoed Sukhomlinov's plan and averted what might have been the Great War of 1912.[163] The aftermath of the meeting confirmed Sazonov's risk aversion during this period: he remarked privately at the close of the First Balkan War that 'almost everyone [in Russia] behaves in a way that they create the impression that a European war is inevitable … That is foolish and dangerous'.[164] Thus, while the aim of Russian policy was to satisfy its Balkan clients, chiefly Serbia, and to relieve Austrian pressure on them at the London Conference of Ambassadors, many of the country's key leaders were still risk averse enough to want to avoid the prospect of war.

Temporal Discounting

Just as they were in Germany and Austria-Hungary, opinions within Russia were divided over the direction of the country's foreign policy during the period of the Balkan Wars. This disunity

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[160] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 257. Although the two civilian ministers proposed that the Tsar extend the third-year troops on duty by another six months, they heavily cautioned against any further moves toward mobilisation. Williamson Jr., 'Military Dimensions of Habsburg-Romanov Relations During the Era of the Balkan Wars', 321.

[161] Kokovtsov, *Out of My Past*, 345–346.

[162] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 269.

[163] McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 25.

[164] Bobroff, 'War Accepted but Unsought', 234.

extended to the realm of temporal discounting, in the sense that during this period 'the weakly led collectivity of civilian ministers and military dignitaries who made Russian strategy could not deliberate coherently to produce consistent strategic priorities, including when would be the favourable moment for a war'.[165] Some individuals, such as Minister of War Sukhomlinov and the powerful and dynamic Minister of Agriculture Krivoshein, advocated a more aggressive policy against Austria-Hungary in the present, in the belief that the empire was crumbling and in light of the immediately tempting prospect of annexing the plum spoils of Austrian Galicia, which Russian generals considered essential in order to shore up the country's defences against the feared 'German steamroller'. Sazonov recalled that the lust for Austrian Galicia in 'court and military centres' sprang from 'a rooted conviction that a favourable moment was approaching for settling with Austria-Hungary'.[166] Krivoshein also favoured a firm Russian policy of military deterrence during the period of the Balkan Wars to counter the impression among many nationalist members of the Duma that Russian diplomacy was growing inexorably weaker by the year.

Others, such as Kokovtsov and, to varying degrees, Sazonov, contrarily advocated restraint, out of a conviction that Russia would only benefit from avoiding, or at least delaying, a European war. According to Kokovtsov, a continental war, because of its incalculable consequences, would be 'the greatest misfortune that could befall Russia'.[167] Although Kokovtsov was, no doubt, at least partly motivated by the military's high-handedness and bureaucratic undermining of him at various points throughout the autumn of 1912, his insistence on delay, and on the need to consult with Russia's ally France before implementing a raft of hasty partial mobilisation measures against Austria-Hungary, helped to avert a continental war during the First Balkan War. Sukhomlinov had initially convinced the Tsar that by mobilising only against Austria-Hungary he would minimise the risk of German involvement, and Kokovtsov successfully pressed the Tsar not to impetuously discount the future risks of such a set of manoeuvres. 'I felt compelled to point out,' Kokovtsov recalled, 'that since Austria and Germany were bound by a treaty, which amounted to a subordination of the former to the latter, these two countries could not be considered separately'.[168]

Kokovtsov's views echoed those of Peter Stolypin, the former Chairman of Russia's Council of Ministers, who had famously remarked in 1909 that Russia needed 'twenty years of peace' to complete her economic modernisation before considering engagement in a European war on the

[165] Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later', 40.

[166] McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 22.

[167] Ibid. 32.

[168] Mombauer, ed., *The Origins of the First World War*, 82.

country's vulnerable western borders.[169] Historians Richard Hamilton and Holger Herwig observe that such fissiparous attitudes among Russia's leadership over whether it was better for Russia to act now or to delay stood in stark contrast to the 'remarkable agreement' they exhibited in favour of a 'tough stand' in July 1914.[170]

Did Mindsets Contribute?

The leading decision paradigm of international relations is that of rational choice theory (also known as 'rational actor' or 'expected utility' theory) and this serves as the null hypothesis of this study. The null hypothesis of rational choice theory assumes that there is no connection between the mindsets of decision-makers and decision-making outcomes in international relations. Individuals, acting alone or in groups, are assumed to make decisions in an unbiased, uniform and 'rational' manner – meaning that they only respond to incoming information and subsequently re-calibrate the statistical probabilities and utilities of the range of available options to maximise the expected gains of policy choices. In this way, rational actors compute changes in the international system and automatically respond accordingly. Rational actor models should therefore either predict no variation in assessments across individual actors in a group (because decision-makers have access to the same information and are perfect Bayesians, or 'belief updaters'), or predict random variation (if decision-makers do not have uniform access to relevant information) – but not the same patterns of variation predicted by the dual mindset framework.

In this regard, political scientist Chaim Kaufmann suggests a straightforward initial method of testing alternative psychological theories, such as the dual mindset theory, against the null hypothesis of rational choice theory: predicting patterns within groups. Kaufmann's methodology is to focus on groups of elite decision-makers who have identical or very similar access to the same information. If the political actors involved face the same decision at the same time, and if each possesses either all, or nearly all, of the relevant information available to anyone involved in the decision, then a rational choice approach predicts that they should adopt the same beliefs or future estimates; moreover, provided they have similar levels of access to relevant information, any changes in response to new information should occur in unison across all members of the decision-making group.[173] However, if decision-makers adopt different beliefs or future estimates in response to the

[169] McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 19.

[170] Hamilton and Herwig, *Decisions for War*, 93.

[173] Chaim Kaufmann, 'Out of the Lab and Into the Archives: A Method for Testing Psychological Explanations of Political Decision Making', *International Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1994): 561.

same information, this casts doubt on the rational choice paradigm as a sufficient explanation for decision-making and suggests that psychological explanations may instead be important. 'If we can predict assessments on other bases', Kaufmann observes, 'we have discovered divergences from rational processing'.[174]

According to Kaufmann's methodology, rational choice theory would predict uniformity of assessments across decision-makers – at least within each of the Great Powers involved in the Balkan crises. However, as this chapter has elaborated in some detail, none of the elite decision-making groups, particularly in Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia, exhibited a strong degree of cohesion or uniformity during the successive crises that punctuated the year of Balkan troubles.[175] The rational choice argument that this lack of uniformity resulted from varying levels of access to relevant information is unconvincing. Many of the most important decisions taken by the Great Powers during the Balkan crises of 1912–1913 were made during, or in the immediate aftermath of, group meetings of a small coterie of high-level political and military advisers surrounding the respective sovereigns of each country (such as the Common Ministerial Councils in Austria-Hungary and the Crown Council meetings in Russia).

During such moments, individual opinions were exchanged and relevant information, if it was not already common knowledge, was shared. Even in the case of Kaiser Wilhelm's so-called War Council of 1912, which excluded key civilian figures, such as Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg and Foreign Minister Kiderlen-Wächter, the outcome of the meeting was not a secret, such that these individuals were successfully able to reverse, or to otherwise temper, many of the Kaiser's more extreme pronouncements.[176] The historical evidence suggests that uneven access to relevant information therefore cannot explain the lack of uniformity in the assessments and opinions of Europe's decision-makers during the Balkan crises. At the very least, rational choice theory proves to be insufficient in explaining why such estimates varied despite the availability of relevant information.

Nevertheless, while sceptics might concede that reflexive biases might plausibly explain the thinking of those individuals, like General Conrad von Hötzendorf in Austria, who pushed for a preventive war, they could still argue that rational choice theory provides a sufficient explanation of the decision-making of those who favoured the maintenance of the peace. Were the individuals who sought a peaceful resolution to the various Balkan crises animated by thought processes that more

[174] Ibid.

[175] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 40–41.

[176] Clark, *Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 271–272.

or less approximate the rationality of rational choice theory? Do the differences between individual decision-makers in response to the Balkan crises reflect the familiar dichotomy between rational optimisers and cognitive misers? For example, historian Alma Hannig writes that Austro-Hungarian plans for war against Serbia before July 1914 'could only be prevented by the rational calculation of the German Foreign Secretary and the commitment of Berchtold and Franz Joseph to the peace'.[177]

There is no question that those who urged caution in the face of mounting tensions, including, at various points, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter, Leopold von Berchtold, Franz Ferdinand, Sergei Sazonov and Vladimir Kokovtsov, were more inclined to weigh the risks and possible contingencies of decisive action against any positive benefits. And yet, even for those more irenic leaders who were inclined to favour peace, there is no indication in the historical record that they made decisions according to the expected utility cost-calculus of rational choice theory – that is to say, according to the continuous and methodical updating of probabilities that would suggest evidence of Bayesian thinking.

In fact, sometimes the methodical logic of Bayesian updating operated in reverse to the outcome that would be predicted by rational choice theory, with certain individuals, such as Kaiser Wilhelm II and Franz Ferdinand, impulsively favouring belligerent action in response to new information that portended unsettling future developments – be it intimations that Great Britain would not remain neutral in a continental contest or the unexpected advance of Serbian armies into Ottoman territory. Others, such as Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg and Foreign Minister Berchtold, discouraged these respective leaders from significantly revising their strategic stance on the basis of such information. This exposes the ambiguity inherent in one of the fundamental assumptions of the rational actor model: what constitutes 'updating', and by what percentage must previous estimates be revised in the face of new information in order to meet the threshold of rationality as defined by rational choice theory? Instead of probabilistic processes of Bayesian updating, what most often separated those individuals who opposed war (or actions that risked escalation into war) from their more belligerent colleagues was *doubt* – the hallmark of our reflective System 2 at work.

For example, Berchtold's rejection on 23 December 1912 of the demands presented by the trio of Conrad, Krobatin and Biliński for more mobilisation measures aimed at Serbia – a decision that ensured that the objective danger of an Austro-Serbian war had passed – was based on scepticism

[177] Hannig, 'Austro-Hungary and the Balkan Wars', 237.

that new information had come to light to justify enhanced defensive measures. Historian Samuel Williamson Jr. describes the confrontation thus:

> On 23 December Conrad and Krobatin, with Biliński's support, confronted Berchtold; the trio pressed the foreign minister to permit new military measures in the south. War, the generals insisted, offered the only solution to the South Slav problem. In the meantime they wanted still another 48,000 men stationed in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Biliński, as the civilian minister responsible for the two 'colonial provinces', advocated instituting emergency rule there to check any civilian unrest. The Habsburg foreign minister refused. Why, he countered, were the measures needed? What had changed? The generals had no answers to these questions.[178]

Similarly, it was Kokovtsov's doubt that Germany and Austria-Hungary would perceive partial Russian mobilisation during the Winter Crisis to be a 'simple measure of precaution' that animated the case against escalation he brought before the Tsar during their fateful meeting at Tsarskoe Selo.[179] Kokovtsov forcefully argued that 'no matter what we chose to call the projected measures, a mobilisation remained a mobilisation, to be countered by our adversaries with actual war'.[180] Additional examples abound in Germany. The Kaiser's initial doubt that the new Balkan states presented an existential threat to ally Austria-Hungary prevented Berlin from supplying the kind of early, unconditional assurances to Vienna the latter would receive during the July Crisis. Similarly, it was Foreign Minister Kiderlen-Wächter's scepticism that German public opinion would accept a war with Russia over the issue of Serbian access to the Adriatic that prompted a *démarche* from the Wilhelmstrasse to the foreign ministries of Britain and France suggesting a multilateral conference to resolve the issue – a proposal that later developed into the London Conference of Ambassadors.[181]

The dual mindset framework, and the dual systems theory upon which it is based, supplies an alternative explanation for these differing reactions concerning the possibility of avoiding war: individual responses to the onset of acute stress. Chapter 2 explored the difference between a 'challenge' and a 'threat' state of stress: the former represents the activation of System 2, what is often labelled a 'challenge' state of stimulation and motivation, while the latter represents the activation of System 1, what is typically considered a 'threat' state of defensive coping mechanisms and a reversion to simple heuristics.[187] According to this biopsychosocial model of stress reactivity, a

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[178] Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 131.

[179] Mombauer, ed., *The Origins of the First World War*, 82.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War*, 250–251.

[187] Margaret Kemeny, 'The Psychobiology of Stress', *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 12, no. 4 (2003).

challenge state of stress occurs 'when evaluated resources meet or exceed demands' and a threat state of stress occurs 'when demands exceed resources'.[188]

Nowhere was this challenge state of motivation to prevent a continental war more evident than in the consensus among the Great Powers to establish the London Conference of Ambassadors. The London Conference ran from the end of the First Balkan War through to the conclusion of the Second Balkan War, during which time the participating governments agreed to let their respective ambassadors stationed in London represent them in negotiations over the future of the Balkans. Sir Edward Grey, who, by all contemporary accounts, chaired the 'protracted and sometimes intolerably wearisome' meetings with remarkable patience and forbearance, saw his main task as 'preventing a clash between Russia and Austria', and believed that 'in agreeing to a Conference, and forming one in 1912, it was as if we all put out anchors to prevent ourselves from being swept away'.[189]

Although none of the representatives of the Great Powers in London knew for a fact if Russia and Austria would go to war over the Balkans, they were keenly aware of the imminent danger of this happening and that, were this to occur, a continental war would shortly follow. As Grey remarked to his colleague, German Ambassador Prince Lichnowsky, in London on 27 November 1912, just as the Balkan Winter Crisis was reaching a fever pitch: 'We realised that if Russia and Austria did go to war … in fact if any two Great Powers went to war, there was not one of us who might not be drawn in. That was why we were so anxious to keep the peace'.[190]

However, even apart from the establishment of the Conference of Ambassadors, this heightened awareness on the part of European statesmen, particularly in Austria-Hungary, of the dangers of the possibility of an imminent war with Russia over the Balkans encouraged active problem-solving. This awareness was epitomised by Emperor Franz Joseph's mission to send Prince Hohenlohe to St. Petersburg in early February 1913 to reassure Russian statesmen of Austria's intentions. 'Hohenlohe's chilling prediction that war might come within six to eight weeks if nothing were done,' Williamson Jr. writes, 'added urgency to a resolution of the tension'.[191] Similarly, Russian Foreign Minister Sazonov became sufficiently alarmed by the prospect of war with Austria to reverse

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[188] Mark Seery, 'Challenge or Threat? Cardiovascular Indexes of Resilience and Vulnerability to Potential Stress in Humans', *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 35, no. 7 (2011): 1603.

[189] Michael Waterhouse, *Edwardian Requiem: A Life of Sir Edward Grey* (London: Biteback Publishing Ltd., 2013), 292; Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, vol. 2, 110.

[190] G.P. Gooch, *Before the War: Studies in Diplomacy*, vol. 2 The Coming of the Storm (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), 100–101.

[191] Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 134.

his position on the issue of Serbian sea port access, and to privately attempt to keep Belgrade under control. He ordered the disgusted Ambassador to Belgrade, Nikolai Hartwig, to 'make it crystal clear to the Serbs that Russia would never give them the right to decide whether … there was to be a European war'.[192]

Conclusion

This chapter applied the dual mindset framework to the first of two comparative case studies: an examination of crisis management during the period of the Balkan Wars, with a concentration on Austro-Russian brinksmanship during the First Balkan War. It was argued that the predominance of a reflective frame of mind among key decision-makers during crucial decision-making moments in the years 1912–1913 may help to account for the maintenance of the peace by the mitigation of Snyder's identified psychological variables: pessimism (threat sensitivity), optimism (risk propensity) and 'better-now-than-later' thinking (temporal discounting). 'Austrian and German swords remained sheathed', writes Ned Lebow, 'because political leaders in Vienna and Berlin saw war as politically and militarily risky and did not feel threatened enough to assume these risks'.[193]

This also held true for political leaders in St. Petersburg, who, in the winter of 1912, were in a position to plunge Europe into war but instead chose to abort a plan for Russian mobilisation that might have precipitated a general conflict.[194] The following chapter continues the case comparison with an examination of the July Crisis in 1914, which resulted in the outbreak of the First World War. It will be argued that the switch to a predominantly reflexive frame of mind among the leaders of the Central Powers and the Triple Entente may help to account for the presence of the aforementioned three variables and the dissolution of the European peace in the summer of 1914.

[192] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 258.

[193] Richard Ned Lebow, *Archduke Franz Ferdinand Lives! A World Without World War I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). iBooks, 60.

[194] McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 24–25.

CHAPTER 5

THE JULY CRISIS AND THE OUTBREAK OF WAR, 1914

'The Coming of Armageddon'

'We are within measurable, or imaginable, distance of a real Armageddon.'
HERBERT HENRY ASQUITH, British Prime Minister, 1914

'The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.'
SIR EDWARD GREY, British Foreign Secretary, 1914

As daylight dawned on the morning of Sunday 28 June 1914, the European continent, which had just begun settling in to the drowsy somnolence of summer, was at peace. 'Throughout the days and nights,' recalled the Austrian novelist Stefan Zweig, 'the heavens were a silky blue, the air soft yet not sultry, the meadows fragrant and warm'.[1] Winston Churchill similarly observed that 'the world on the verge of its catastrophe was very brilliant'.[2] 'Nations and Empires crowned with princes and potentates rose majestically on every side, lapped in the accumulated treasures of the long peace … The two mighty European systems faced each other glittering and clanking in their panoply, but with a tranquil gaze.'[3] Even in the Balkans, that simmering cauldron of European discontent, the Bosnian Nobel laureate Ivo Andrić remembered that 'the summer of 1914 did in fact begin well, better than so many earlier summers … After ten years or so of troubles and commotion, the people hoped at least for a lull.'[4]

Thirty-seven days later, a world war of unprecedented immensity would engulf both sides. The ensuing conflagration would eventually mobilise 65 million troops, claim the three empires that were the closest to the nerve centres of decision-making that unleashed the war, and cause the death of over 20 million people. It was, according to the historian Fritz Stern, 'the first calamity of the

[1] Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday: An Autobiography by Stefan Zweig* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1943), 23.

[2] Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911–1918* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 91.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ivo Andrić, *The Bridge on the Drina* (London: Harvill, 1994), 266.

twentieth century, the calamity from which all other calamities sprang'.[7] In retrospect, none of the individual prizes the belligerents sought was worth the price of the enormities that followed. So why did Europe's leaders plunge ahead, seemingly heedless and headlong, on the road to Armageddon in the weeks that followed the Sarajevo assassinations? 'Almost one might think the world wished to suffer', Churchill recounted in his memoir of the period. 'Certainly men were everywhere eager to dare'.[8] Was the outbreak of conflict a collective form of madness that spread across the continent in the summer of 1914 like an uncontrollable contagion? Annika Mombauer has cautioned against this view:

> Even in July 1914 a European war was not inevitable. Right until the last moment, some were desperately trying to avoid the outbreak of war and to resolve the crisis at the conference table, while others did everything in their power to make it happen. That war finally broke out was less the product of fate or bad fortune than the result of intention.[9]

If war was 'the result of intention', what separated those individuals who wished to avoid war from those who welcomed it, or, at the very least, from those who fatalistically accepted the prospect? Of even greater consequence for posterity: why did the latter group of individuals successfully tilt the balance of decision-making in favour of war in the summer of 1914 when many of the same European leaders had, on multiple recent occasions involving the Balkans, pulled themselves back from the brink from similarly fraught circumstances?

This chapter continues the case study comparison begun in the previous chapter of the decision-making outcomes of the Balkan crises of 1912–1913 and those of the July Crisis of 1914. The principal argument presented is that radical changes in the pre-war European strategic context, specifically in the Balkans, are not independently sufficient to explain the difference in crisis outcomes: both sets of crises were precipitated by the advance of Balkan nationalism and the retreat of Ottoman power on Europe's periphery. Instead, how those changes were filtered and interpreted by the decision-makers in each case – that is, the intervening mindset(s) with which they approached objective adjustments in the balance of power in the Balkans – may contribute to an explanation of the timing paradox of 1914. Specifically, it is argued that the switch in 1914 from a predominantly

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[7] Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), xxi. Fritz Stern quote also cited in David Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer: Why the World Went to War in 1914* (London: Vintage, 2005), 6.

[8] Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 92.

[9] Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus* (London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2002), 13.

reflective mindset to a predominantly reflexive mindset on all sides led to heightened levels of threat sensitivity ('pessimism'), risk propensity ('optimism') and temporal discounting ('better-now-than-later' thinking) on the part of European decision-makers, which contributed to the dissolution of peace in the summer of 1914.

Moreover, it will be argued that the two historical episodes examined in this comparative case study are related, in that the successful (if not fully resolved) conclusion of the Balkan crises in 1912–1913 paradoxically helped to ensure the switch to reflexivity and the disastrous clash that followed one year later. This is because the uncertain changes wrought by the Balkan Wars, and the intensive, albeit uneven, efforts of what remained of the Concert of Europe to prevent them from igniting a general conflagration, imposed a state of chronic stress upon their participants, and nowhere more so than on Austria-Hungary. Both the frequency and unpredictability with which repeated crises buffeted the continent during these years encouraged ego depletion on the part of European decision-makers, most of whom had navigated this earlier succession of flashpoints.

Such depletion, it is argued, lowered their respective 'reflective defences' – their capacity for reflective thought – when tasked with responding to the Sarajevo assassinations so soon after the conclusion of the previous round of crises. Specifically, three crucial hold-overs from the previous Balkan crises – Foreign Minister Leopold von Berchtold of Austria-Hungary, Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg of Germany and Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov of Russia – experienced a shift in mindset that pushed Europe farther along the road to war in 1914. In this regard, the chapter argues that the Balkan Wars were not simply a dress rehearsal for July 1914 – they also made their own explosive contribution 'to the final catastrophe'.[10]

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part provides necessary background to the July Crisis and the sequence of decisions leading up to the war; the second examines the changes in European dynamics brought about as a result of the Balkan Wars, and, more specifically, the ways the experience of managing these geopolitical shifts prompted an increase in the sustained stress load and a corresponding decrease in the capacity for mindware (or reflective thought) on the part of the decision-makers of 1914; the third part applies the dual mindset theory to the decision-making of both the Central Powers and the Triple Entente during the July Crisis; and the fourth part considers the null hypothesis of rational choice theory and the extent to which the dual mindset theory may provide answers to puzzles left unresolved by the former.

[10] L. C. F. Turner, 'The Russian Mobilisation in 1914', in *The War Plans of the Great Powers, 1880–1914*, ed. Paul M. Kennedy, Routledge Library Editions: The First World War (New York: Routledge, 2014), 252.

Background to the July Crisis

The murder of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife by a young Bosnian assassin – a sickly, nineteen-year-old consumptive named Gavrilo Princip – on the morning of 28 June 1914 is often described as the spark that ignited an entire continent. The Sarajevo assassinations triggered 37 days of diplomatic crisis that endured throughout the month of July and that culminated in declarations of war by five of the six Great Powers of Europe at the beginning of August.[11] Although each of these five countries has shouldered varying degrees of blame for the outcome, Ned Lebow observes that 'historians from Luigi Albertini to the present agree that the most striking feature about 1914 was the unreflective, ill-considered and emotional nature of decisions for mobilisation and war in Austria-Hungary, Berlin and St. Petersburg'.[12] Three decisions in particular have attracted a preponderance of scholarly interest and historical censure for driving the pace of the July Crisis, and for transforming what might have been a localised war into a continental one: Germany's 'blank cheque' to her ally Austria-Hungary on 5-6 July, Austria-Hungary's aggressive ultimatum to Serbia on 23 July and subsequent declaration of war on 28 July, and Russia's decision to proceed with general mobilisation in defence of Serbia on 30 July.[13]

To a lesser extent, France and Britain have been blamed for their own short-sighted policies – France for unconditionally tying her foreign policy to Russia and Britain for not intervening sooner to halt the crisis.[14] If the retrospective indictment of history is that most of the principal players were guilty of sins of commission in the march to war, Britain – and in particular her Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey – stands out as accused of sins of omission in failing to do more to achieve a diplomatic resolution to the crisis.[15]

Although neither Franz Ferdinand nor his morganatic spouse were much beloved in their home country of Austria-Hungary, the double assassinations caused the Dual Monarchy to decide almost immediately on war with Serbia. Concerned about the empire's survival as a great power, and

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[11] Gordon Martel, *The Month That Changed the World: July 1914* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), x.

[12] Richard Ned Lebow, 'What Can International Relations Theory Learn from the Origins of World War I?', *International Relations* 28, no. 4 (2014): 403.

[13] Richard Ned Lebow, 'Contingency, Catalysts and Nonlinear Change: The Origins of World War One', in *Explaining War and Peace: Case Studies and Necessary Condition Counterfactuals*, eds. Gary Goertz and Jack S. Levy (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[14] James Joll and Gordon Martel, *Origins of the First World War* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman, 2013), 299–300.

[15] On this point see Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: 1914–1918* (London: Penguin Books, 1998).

knowing the assassinations provided the best justification they might ever have, Austria-Hungary's leaders seized the opportunity to resolve the country's differences with their mortally troublesome Slavic neighbour once and for all. In the wake of the murders, Austrian leaders came to believe that they must not just teach Serbia a lesson but also crush the country if they were to withstand the international threat to their empire from South Slav nationalism.[16] Almost at the same moment, Germany's leaders came to believe that their country's ally Austria-Hungary must be supported at all costs or it would risk losing the only friend and buffer that existed between Germany and encirclement by the country's Triple Entente adversaries – Russia, France and Great Britain. When Austrian Foreign Minister Leopold Berchtold's envoy Count Alexander von Hoyos arrived in Berlin on 5 July to ascertain Germany's position on the crisis, he received assurances from Kaiser Wilhelm (seconded the following day by Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg) that Germany would unconditionally support Austria-Hungary, even if such support prompted a European war.

The Kaiser, profoundly shaken by the death of his friend, urged Austria to 'make use of the present moment' by seizing the opportunity to take action against Serbia and to proceed without delay – it was this 'blank cheque' that later became a mainstay of the case for German responsibility for the First World War.[17] Armed with such assurances, and led by Austrian Foreign Minister Berchtold, a man 'often scorned by his peers as a ditherer' but who displayed untimely resolution on this occasion, the Austro-Hungarian Ministerial Council decided on 7 July to issue an ultimatum to Serbia that was deliberately designed to be rejected.[18] Everyone but Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza supported the idea of a war with Serbia, whose anticipated rejection of Austria-Hungary's ultimatum would give Vienna the legal pretext for war.[19] By mid-July, Berchtold had convinced Tisza that a war was inevitable, and the final details of the text were approved at a secret meeting of the Council of Ministers on 19 July. The contents of the ultimatum were withheld until 23 July, when the state visit to Russia of the French President Raymond Poincaré and Prime Minister René Viviani had concluded, to prevent collusion between the two allies on a response.[20]

Austria's ultimatum presented Belgrade with a stiff set of demands and a tight 48-hour deadline by which to comply, prompting a stupefied Sir Edward Grey to remark to his British Cabinet colleagues that the Austrian proposals represented 'the most formidable document ever addressed by one state

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[16] Max Hastings, *Catastrophe: Europe Goes To War 1914* (London: William Collins, 2014), 42–43.

[17] Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War*, 14.

[18] Hastings, *Catastrophe*, 42.

[19] Samuel R. Williamson Jr. and Russel Van Wyk, *July 1914: Soldiers, Statesmen, and the Coming of the Great War – A Brief Documentary History* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2003), 11.

[20] Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War*, 15.

to another'.[21] Once news of the ultimatum reached St. Petersburg, Russian leaders, who initially urged Belgrade to remain as conciliatory as possible in its reply, simultaneously decided that the 1914 crisis was the right moment to support her ally Serbia, compounded by the belief that failure in this regard would lead to a complete loss of Russian credibility and influence in the Balkans. Russia's general mobilisation order on 30 July in response to Austria-Hungary's rejection of Serbia's conditional response and declaration of hostilities triggered Germany's own declaration of war and invasion of neutral Belgium and France a few days later. Germany's violation of neutral Belgium, whose neutrality was guaranteed by a treaty with Britain, subsequently prompted Britain's entry into the war on the side of the Triple Entente. Thus, in tangled harness and over the span of a few weeks, Europe's leaders brought their respective countries to the brink of catastrophe and then watched them unceremoniously collapse over the edge.

Photograph 5.1 Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo, 28 July 1914



Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Creative Commons.

The Strategic Imperative in 1914: What Had Changed?

Conventional wisdom holds that if Franz Ferdinand, one of Austria-Hungary's most powerful advocates of restraint, had survived the assassination attempt, a European war would most likely

[21] Michael Waterhouse, *Edwardian Requiem: A Life of Sir Edward Grey* (London: Biteback Publishing Ltd., 2013), 333.

have been averted.[22] Given the Archduke's generally pacifist views regarding Serbia and his fears of unleashing a self-destructive war with Russia, there is considerable merit to this historical counterfactual. However, Ferdinand's conspicuous absence notwithstanding, what is striking about the July Crisis is just how many of the other participants remained the same between one set of Balkan crises in 1912–1913, which had been kept localised and more or less peaceably resolved, and the next, which rapidly culminated in a general conflict.[23] Moreover, unlike previous Balkan crises, whose developments had dragged on for months, the majority of the most important and fateful decisions steering Europe on the road to war in July 1914 were made over the course of a single week. 'The pace of events,' writes Hew Strachan, 'was such that there was no time to clarify the distinction between warning and intent'.[24]

This presents a puzzle for scholars of international relations, since neither the fundamental balance of military power within the Concert of Europe, nor the basic groupings of alliances, nor the domestic political systems of the countries involved, nor, indeed, many of the critical decision-making personalities (with a few notable exceptions that will be addressed in this chapter), had radically altered in the brief period between the end of the Second Balkan War and the archducal assassination. Furthermore, the assassinations occurred during an uncharacteristically calm period of European politics, after the tensions and war scares of previous years.[25] What changed to prompt Europe's leaders to move with such speed towards war after the Sarajevo murders?

Above and beyond the confluence of well-known factors that already made Europe conflict-prone at the turn of the twentieth century, the series of earlier Balkan crises had left unexploded ordnance in their wake. As A. J. P. Taylor writes: 'Men's minds seem to have been on edge in the last two or three years before the war in a way they had not been before, as though they had become unconsciously weary of peace and security'.[26] Dual mindset theory, and the dual systems of the brain upon which it is predicated, suggest that the experience of these earlier crises played a non-trivial role in simultaneously increasing the sustained stress load on Europe's decision-makers and in decreasing their mental capacity, or 'mindware', for reflective thought. In other words, the chronic stress exposure brought on by the Balkan Wars, and the ego depletion produced by the collective efforts of Europe's statesmen to avert a catastrophe, arguably affected many of the participants' pre-

[22] Simon Winder, 'If Franz Ferdinand Had Lived', *The New York Times*, 27 June 2014; Richard Ned Lebow, *Archduke Franz Ferdinand Lives! A World Without World War I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). iBooks.

[23] See Appendix Table A of this study.

[24] Hew Strachan, *The First World War: A New Illustrated History* (London: Pocket Books, 2006), 19.

[25] Williamson Jr. and Van Wyk, *July 1914*, 10.

[26] A. J. P. Taylor, *Englishmen and Others* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1956), 121.

existing levels of mindware (i.e. the shape of their inverted-U curves) just prior to the Sarajevo assassinations.

Sustained Stress Exposure

We learned in Chapter 2 that exposure to stress, particularly if it is very acute or prolonged, affects the cognitive load placed upon individuals. Depending upon the degree and duration of this load, it can either prompt in the mind a 'challenge' state of motivation (reflective System 2) or a 'threat' state of stress (reflexive System 1) in response to external stressors. Psychologists have found that individuals in a threat state of stress (caused by acute or chronic exposure to stress) typically experience severely reduced mental capacity or mindware: by disproportionately capturing one's limited share of attention and mental resources (an effect popularly known as 'tunnel vision') and increasing sensitivity to further losses, a state of threat induces severe ego depletion in the brain.[28] Continued depletion will eventually produce all of the predicted effects that result when individuals switch from a more reflective to a reflexive frame of mind, including reduced insight, foresight, cognitive complexity and self-control.[29] If stress levels remain chronically elevated, experiments show that most (although not all) individuals will no longer be capable of avoiding or coping with future external stressors in a measured way, producing a state that some psychologists call 'learned helplessness'.[30]

What caused this sustained stress exposure and how did it overwhelm the reflective defences of many of Europe's decision-makers in such a relatively short period of time? Firstly, the speed and unpredictability of change in the Balkans took all major European powers by surprise: governments were consumed with coping with these changes and the astonishingly rapid disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in Europe.[34] Although the objective balance of power within the Concert of Europe was not very different in 1914 to what it had been in 1912 or in 1913, the instability unleashed by

[28] The notion that scarcity can prompt 'attentional capture' and reduced mental 'band-with' (to include reduced reasoning ability, cognitive complexity, executive control, control of attention and conflict monitoring), has been widely documented within a growing body of psychological research on the effects of scarcity. For examples see William Lauder et al., 'A Comparison of Health Behaviours in Lonely and Non-Lonely Populations', *Psychology, Health & Medicine* 11, no. 2 (2006); Richard M. Piech, Michael T. Pastorino and David H. Zaid, 'All I Saw Was the Cake. Hunger Effects on Attentional Capture by Visual Food Cues', *Appetite* 54, no. 3 (2010); Roy F. Baumeister et al., 'Social Exclusion Impairs Self-Regulation', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 88, no. 4 (2005).

[29] Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir, *Scarcity: The True Cost of Not Having Enough* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 13. For example, psychologists have found that being poor reduces a person's cognitive capacity more than going a full night without sleep. Anandi Mani et al., 'Poverty Impedes Cognitive Function', *Science* 341, no. 6149 (2013).

[30] Stephen Peter Rosen, *War and Human Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 114-126.

[34] Dominic Lieven, *Towards the Flame: Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia* (London: Allen Lane, 2015), 253.

the rapid geopolitical realignments in Europe's Balkan periphery enhanced the Great Powers' respective perceptions that they were responding to an increasingly uncontrollable environment. Numerous psychological studies show that individuals who are exposed to (or are perceived to be exposed to) uncontrollable environments display elevated levels of the stress hormone cortisol that, as we know from Chapter 2, facilitates System 1 and reflexive thinking.[35] Moreover, such studies show that uncertainty over when stressors might occur and a perception of their uncontrollability produces even greater stress reactions in most individuals than the objective frequency of such stressors. Secondly, the perception that the time with which to influence realignments in the Balkans before they were overtaken by events was extremely limited produced a profound sense of insecurity among Europe's decision-makers.

Nowhere was this insecurity more acutely felt than in the three eastern monarchies of Germany, Russia and, above all, Austria-Hungary. Great Britain and France, status quo powers whose imperial appetites were largely sated, had comparatively few strategic interests in the Balkans. Nor were their overseas territorial possessions particularly implicated in the so-called 'Eastern Question' – the struggle to manage what the Great Powers believed to be the impending collapse of the Ottoman Empire and commonly viewed as the most explosive long-range issue in international politics.[36] By contrast, the sprawling, multi-ethnic imperial empires of Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary were 'heavily invested in the Eastern Question and knee-deep in the Balkans (even if, in the case of Germany and the Balkans, mostly at a second remove via Austria-Hungary)'.[37]

Despite the considerable controversy that continues to surround the question of responsibility for the First World War, historians are generally in agreement that Austria-Hungary's strident and uncompromising response to the assassinations, its 'unequivocal commitment to dealing with Serbia without any distraction', was instrumental in leading Europe on the road to war.[38] Although the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in Europe had been peaceably managed by the European Concert of Powers, the vacuum left by the Turks, and subsequently filled by a squabbling variety of Balkan states, placed considerable pressure on the one European state most directly threatened by the disorder: Austria-Hungary. For the Austro-Hungarian empire, notes the historian Christopher Clark, 'the Balkan Wars changed everything'.[39] Austria's traditional policy of reliance on Turkey as

[35] Rosen, *War and Human Nature*, 114.

[36] Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer*, 49.

[37] Sean McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War* (London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 12.

[38] D. W. Spring, 'Russia and the Coming of War', in *The Coming of the First World War*, eds. R. J. W. Evans and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 62.

[39] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 288.

both a buffer and an ordering force in the region was radically upended, leaving the leaders of the Hapsburg Empire scrambling to improvise an acceptable solution.[40]

Although the Habsburg monarchy had achieved its basic diplomatic and strategic aims in the Balkan crises of 1912–1913 by preventing Serbian access to the Adriatic Sea and preserving Scutari's place within the boundaries of a newly independent Albania, the relative momentum that appeared to be shifting in favour of Austria-Hungary's perceived adversaries was hard to ignore. Historian Paul Schroeder aptly sums up the dire view of the geopolitical situation after the Second Balkan War as seen by many decision-makers in Vienna:

> The Peace of Bucharest in August 1913 left Austria-Hungary with no reliable partner in the last region, the Balkans, where it still counted as a great power and had its most vital interests. The Ottoman Empire was virtually expelled from Europe, while Bulgaria, which the Austrians counted on to check Serbia, was defeated and exhausted, Romania alienated, the new Kingdom of Albania a basket case and albatross around Austria-Hungary's neck, and Italy an active rival in Albania and the Adriatic with irredentist claims on Austrian territory. Even Germany had not given its ally steady support during the prolonged crisis, but had held Austria-Hungary back in order to preserve general peace and pursue its own particular aims. Meanwhile Austria-Hungary's worst rivals and enemies, Russia, Serbia, and Montenegro, had emerged from the Balkan Wars stronger, more confident, and more hostile.[41]

Serbia's sizeable and unexpected territorial gains as a result of the upheaval in the Balkans (see Table 5.1) convinced many Austrian policymakers that their empire was the next 'Sick Man of Europe' (after the Ottoman Empire, to which the epithet was commonly applied).[42] William Mulligan writes that 'Habsburg foreign policy-makers saw in the decline of the Ottoman empire a premonition of their own fate … let down by an international system more interested in hacking it to pieces than in preserving it as a mainstay of the European system'.[43] Serbia's stunning military successes saw its territory and population nearly double after the Second Balkan War, and elevated the prestige of its military leadership.[44] The view that Austria-Hungary's survival was threatened by its triumphant

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[40] Ibid. 272–281.

[41] Paul Schroeder, 'Necessary Conditions and World War I As An Unavoidable War', in *Explaining War and Peace: Case Studies and Necessary Condition Counterfactuals*, eds. Gary Goertz and Jack S. Levy (London: Routledge, 2007), 156.

[42] Geoffrey Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe: The Outbreak of World War I and the Collapse of the Hapsburg Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 15.

[43] William Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War*, eds. William Beik, T. C. W. Blanning, and Brendan Simms, New Approaches to European History (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 233.

[44] Williamson Jr. and Van Wyk, *July 1914*, 15.

Slavic neighbour was increasingly seconded outside of Vienna: at the conclusion of the Second Balkan War, for example, Sir Eyre Crowe, Undersecretary of the British Foreign Office, acknowledged to a fellow diplomat that the 'forces of disintegration' were gaining in strength against 'that ancient sand-castle, the Dual Monarchy', and that '[s]tartling changes … are evidently certain to come'.[45]

For more than nine months, Austria-Hungary's leadership had lived under a darkening cloud, with the stress attached to the possibility of a limited war – to say nothing of that of an even wider war – perpetually on the horizon. Foreign Minister Berchtold complained in his diary of headaches, nightmares and sleepless nights, in which 'the peace bells of Bucharest … sound like funeral bells'.[46] Berchtold had grown increasingly exasperated by the Concert's dilatoriness in responding to Serbian and Montenegrin transgressions, and the arduous sequence of 'cat-and-mouse encounters' between Vienna and Belgrade had diminished the former's confidence in the efficacy of the Concert of Europe in dealing with its continuing security concerns.[47] Vienna perceived that each time it sought to reach an agreement with the Serbian government, 'it received promises of respect for certain understandings only to see Belgrade immediately renege'.[48]

William Jannen observes that for Austrian policymakers '[t]his intense and growing desire to settle with Serbia was frustrated by an almost equal dread of war with Russia. The pressure to escape the stress of such un-palatable alternatives could and did lead to a tendency to seek an illusory way out, for example, to destroy Serbia without war with Russia'.[49] It is no accident that the Black Hand, the covert Serbian terrorist organisation responsible for conspiring to kill Franz Ferdinand, targeted the one man in the Habsburg monarchy who, by offering greater autonomy to the polyglot nationalities co-existing within the empire, believed that he had found a way out of the impending dilemma that would not involve war.[50] For much of the rest of the conservative ruling class of the Habsburg

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[45] T. G. Otte, 'Entente Diplomacy v. Détente, 1911–1914', in *The Wars Before the Great War: Conflict and International Politics Before the Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan, and Andreas Rose (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 275.

[46] William Jannen Jr., 'The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914', in *Essays on World War I: Origins and Prisoners of War*, eds. Samuel Williamson Jr. and Peter Pastor (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1983), 71.

[47] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 286.

[48] Samuel R. Williamson Jr., 'Leopold Count Berchtold: The Man Who Could Have Prevented the Great War', in *From Empire to Republic: Post-World War I Austria*, eds. Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, and Peter Berger (Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2010), 42.

[49] Jannen Jr., 'The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914', 66.

[50] Franz Ferdinand's 'trialist' scheme of reorganising the Austro-Hungarian empire as a federal state, in which the Southern Slavs would be granted an autonomous kingdom, threatened to blunt the appeal of pan-Serbianism. Gavrilo Princip confirmed as much in testimony given during his trial, admitting that Franz Ferdinand 'would have prevented, as a future

Empire, a preventive war to crush the 'dangerous little viper' Serbia appeared a far quicker and easier, if illusory in retrospect, fix than the protracted negotiations and potentially painful compromises required to transform a disintegrating empire.[51] Those feelings would be compounded after the assassinations, which gave rise to the impression that Austria-Hungary had a limited time to act before the anger and international sympathy over the assassinations waned.[52]

Table 5.1 Area and Population of the Balkan States Before and After the Balkan Wars

	Area in Square Miles		Estimated Population	
	Before	**After**	**Before**	**After**
Albania	—	11,317	—	850,000
Bulgaria	33,647	43,310	4,337,516	4,467,006
Greece	25,014	41,933	2,666,000	4,363,000
Montenegro	3,474	5,603	250,000	500,000
Romania	50,720	53,489	7,230,418	7,516,418
Serbia	18,650	33,891	2,911,701	4,527,992
Ottoman Turkey in Europe	65,350	10,882	6,130,200	1,891,000

To add to this sense of chronic stress, both Austria and Russia's tactical peacetime or 'trial' mobilisations during the Balkan Winter Crisis of 1912–1913 had proved to be an unsustainable bargaining tactic. The months-long Austro-Russian stalemate along their shared Galician border was politically and financially painful for both sides. In Vienna, the extended border mobilisation had nearly bankrupted the country and severely disrupted the Habsburg monarchy's economy, without visibly improving security (the extra military expenditures for 1912–1913 amounted to 390 million crowns – as much as the entire annual budget for the Austro-Hungarian army).[53] Austria-Hungary's financially ruinous partial mobilisation demonstrated how a flexible and nimble strategy of diplomatic bluff had hardened into an inflexible one of either backing down in a crisis or striking without waiting.[54] In St. Petersburg, doubts were raised about the reliability of the frontier units, where insubordination among reservists recalled for duty threatened to spread to the standing Russian peacetime army.[55] The experience reinforced each government's perception of its

ruler, our union by realising certain reforms which would evidently have been against our interests'. T. G. Otte, *July Crisis: The World's Descent Into War, Summer 1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 18.

[51] Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany and the Coming of the Great War* (London: Vintage Books, 2007), 856–857.

[52] Williamson Jr., 'Leopold Count Berchtold', 42.

[53] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 269.

[54] Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*, 81.

[55] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 269.

diminished flexibility in handling Balkan crises just before the war, and added to the pressure both Austrian and Russian decision-makers would feel to act decisively the next time a crisis occurred.[56]

Nevertheless, with the gains that her Slavic client had made in the Balkans, Russian policymakers should have felt a sense of relief in 1914. And yet, Russia's insecurity grew in step with that of her Austro-Hungarian adversary between the end of the Balkan Wars and the eve of the Sarajevo assassinations. The country's defeat by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War had prompted a gradual reorientation of Russian foreign policy from the Far East to the Balkan Peninsula.[57] However, Russia herself had gained nothing tangible in the Balkan Wars: Russia's dream of uniting the Balkan states into a loose confederation that would serve as a durable instrument of Russian policy on the Balkan Peninsula had foundered on the internecine territorial disputes that fractured the coalition after the First Balkan War and that prompted the Second Balkan War.

Moreover, the increasingly irreconcilable interests of her two principal Slavic proxies, Bulgaria and Serbia, meant that Russian policymakers were confronted with a strategic choice between supporting one or the other. As Bulgaria drifted farther into the orbit of the Central Powers, Russia came to openly view the country as a hostile power and to depend almost exclusively on Serbia as its salient in the Balkans. This created a dangerous dependency on Serbia as Russia's only acknowledged outpost in the Balkans.[58] Although bound by no treaty obligation to intervene on the country's behalf, such a dependency would have a significant impact on Russia's ability to remain neutral with respect to Serbia's fate during the July Crisis.[59]

However, Russia's interest in the Balkans went far beyond her public posturing as the protector of her Slavic brethren. The Balkan Wars had squarely reopened the question of Ottoman longevity and the Sublime Porte's continued ability to control Constantinople and the Turkish Straits – two longstanding obsessions of Russian policymakers, for reasons both historic (the Russians considered Constantinople the 'Second Rome' of Orthodox Christianity) and strategic (around half of Russia's burgeoning export trade on the eve of the First World War was routed to world markets through

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[56] Ibid. 292.

[57] Patrick Bormann, 'German Foreign Policy and the Balkan Wars, 1912–1914', in *The Wars Before the Great War: Conflict and International Politics Before the Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan, and Andreas Rose (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 257.

[58] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 272–281. During the July Crisis, one of the arguments made by Sazonov, who had a longstanding reputation as one of the least belligerent members of Russia's Council of Ministers, for coming to Serbia's defence was that if 'the Serbs were abandoned to their fate, Russian prestige in the Balkans would collapse utterly'. McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 58.

[59] G.P. Gooch, *Before the War: Studies in Diplomacy*, vol. 2 The Coming of the Storm (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), 369.

the Bosphorus and Dardanelles).[60] Already perpetually worried that Bulgaria's wily leader might try to pre-empt Russian control of the Straits, the Russians in late 1913 also had to contend with the Porte's appointment of a German officer, Liman von Sanders, to command the Turkish Straits defences. Russian fears that the growth of Turkish naval power might increasingly be in the service of the interests of Germany, Russia's most powerful potential adversary, induced no less panic in St. Petersburg than did German fears of the famous 'Russian steamroller' in Berlin.[61]

Although Russian and German decision-makers muddled through the Liman von Sanders crisis by reaching a compromise that pleased neither side but allowed both to claim some margin of victory, the stress placed upon Russia over the Straits question, including the possibility of a German stranglehold over this critical maritime chokepoint, continued to mount immediately prior to the Sarajevo assassinations. Sean McMeekin writes that:

> Just in the preceding eighteen months, Russia had seen Turkey close the Straits to her shipping during the Italian war; two Bulgarian offensives which, over Russian objections, had reached the shore of the Sea of Marmara, within sight of Constantinople; a major Turkish naval import drive, funded by (the Russians assumed) Berlin; and now a German mission to modernise the Ottoman army, including the Bosphorus shore defences.[62]

Austria-Hungary's ambassador in Constantinople, the Marquis Johann von Pallavicini, gave voice to Russian nightmares, judging that, in the newly 'shrunken but viable Turkey', the state would be in the hands of the army, which was increasingly falling under German control. Such a state would become the southern member of the Triple Alliance (Central Powers) and 'would be such a threat for the Balkan states that we [Austria-Hungary] would no longer have to fear the expansionist ambitions of Serbia and Romania'.[63] Thus, an increasingly widespread fear within St. Petersburg that Russia's window in which to seize the Straits from potentially hostile powers might be rapidly closing mirrored German fears concerning Germany's future ability to successfully wage a war against Russia. Due to these multiplying insecurities, Russia in 1914, writes Sean McMeekin, was 'a

[60] McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 28.

[61] German anxieties about the growth of Russian power were exemplified by the comments of Chancellor Bethmann von Hollweg early in 1914, as captured in Kurt Riezler's diaries: 'Russia grows and grows. She lies on us like a nightmare.' ibid. 6.

[62] Ibid. 31.

[63] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 285.

dangerous animal, ready to pounce at the first fright … whose rulers would not shrink from going to war to improve her precarious position in a hostile international environment'.[64]

If Russia's military defeat in the Far East precipitated a more intensive focus on the Balkan Peninsula and the Turkish Straits in St. Petersburg, then Germany's symbolic defeat at the hands of Great Britain in the Anglo–German naval race in the years just before the Great War prompted a similar redirection in Berlin. Patrick Bormann notes that a frequently underestimated point is that 'the Balkans Wars altered the focus of European and especially German politics'. [65] Until the Balkan Wars, Anglo–German antagonism dominated Berlin's foreign policy. However, as Anglo–German relations began to thaw with Germany's defeat in the naval competition between the two countries, the 'Slav Peril' and its Russian backers instead gradually came to dominate German threat perceptions – the Slav and Russian adversaries were considered even more dangerous than Britain because they directly threatened the locus of Germany's major imperial aims with respect to Asia Minor.[66]

In this regard, Bormann notes, the Balkan Peninsula was increasingly seen 'as a bridge to the orient and Austro-Hungarian influence in the area was supposed to pave the way for German dreams'.[67] Although Germany cooperated with Great Britain to contain the Balkan Wars, the latter's increasingly strong relationships with both France and Russia through the Triple Entente only increased the former's sense of isolation among the Great Powers and the country's dependence on Austria-Hungary in its effort to roll back the advance of the 'Slav Peril'. As a result, an earlier concept that had animated German foreign policy, that of *Weltpolitik* ('world policy'), was 'being scaled down, looking more and more like *Balkanpolitik*'.[68] Moreover, German military planners became convinced that, should war break out, they would only retain the upper hand for at most a few more years before the completion of France and Russia's combined armaments programmes would negate any potential German military advantage.[69]

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[64] McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 40.

[65] Bormann, 'German Foreign Policy and the Balkan Wars, 1912–1914', 253.

[66] Ibid. 255.

[67] Ibid. 256.

[68] Holger Herwig, 'Imperial Germany', in *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars*, ed. Ernest May (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 86.

[69] Annika Mombauer notes that the concept of a preventive war began to take formal shape in General Moltke's mind in October 1913, following the passage of a German army expansion bill. German planners estimated that Germany could only retain a temporary marginal advantage from the expansion until 1916 or 1917, when France and Russia's own expansion initiatives would be completed. Annika Mombauer, *Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 108.

The sense that 'time was running out' also began to weigh much more heavily on French policymakers. Prior to the outbreak of the Balkan Wars it was not at all clear that France would support her ally Russia in a future Balkan conflict, as evidenced by the former's lacklustre support for the latter during the 1908-1909 Bosnian annexation crisis. However, in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, this trend was 'was suddenly thrown into reverse', in what historian Christopher Clark writes 'would prove one of the most important policy adjustments' during the pre-war period.[70] French fears of another German invasion were a longstanding by-product of the country's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. However, the increasingly exuberant reports by the French military of the rise of the Russian 'colossus' equally gave rise to nagging fears that Russia might outgrow her dependence on French security guarantees, tilting the balance of power in the Triple Entente to France's disadvantage. While the extravagant overestimation of Russia's future military and economic strength might seem risible in retrospect, 'these false futures were real enough to the people who perceived them; together with other factors in a rapidly changing environment, they suggested that the instruments currently available to contain Germany might not be around for very much longer'.[71]

For the majority of these Great Powers, their overall conceptions of security were intimately linked to their perceptions of the controllability of their environment and to the availability of time, both of which were viewed as an increasingly scarce commodity. Indeed, the chronic stress exposure brought on by these dynamics goes some way towards explaining what has been one of the most perplexing historical puzzles of the July Crisis, which is that each of the Great Powers, possibly excepting Britain, were driven by a profound sense of weakness that nevertheless encouraged them to assume great risks as a defensive means of ensuring their survival (if not in the offensive methods used, then in the aims they hoped to achieve).[72] Historian David Fromkin observes that, while the aims of the belligerents evolved over the course of prosecuting the war, 'in the beginning, however, it was simply Great Powers fighting to stay where they were and to hold on to what they had'.[73]

[70] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 294.

[71] Ibid. 313.

[72] Otte, *July Crisis*, 508; Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War*, 232.

[73] Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer*, 281.

Ego Depletion of the Individual Participants

The previous section examined the strategic realignments that increased the chronic stress load on Europe's decision-makers on the eve of the Sarajevo assassinations, particularly on those in Austria-Hungary, Russia and Germany. However, according to the inverted-U curve theory of performance, the objective stress load is one half of the antecedent equation discussed in Chapter 2 that determines which system – and mindset – is most likely to dominate an individual's mentality in a crisis or 'threat' situation. The other half of that equation concerns the pre-existing level of individuals' reflective resources, or 'mindware'. As we learned in Chapter 2, System 2 is a limited resource, which, when used very often in a relatively short period of time, becomes, like a muscle, fatigued and depleted. In particular, such 'ego depletion' can occur because of previous decisions that draw down System 2's finite mental reserves that govern one's self-regulation abilities.

The fact that a majority of the men of 1914 had participated in the difficult task of managing the recent Balkan crises arguably had a non-negligible, corrosive effect on the level of mindware with which they approached the murder of the heir to the Hapsburg throne. As Christopher Clark observes, 'the mood continued to fluctuate as crises came and went, but there was a cumulative effect: at each point, more of the key policy-makers aligned themselves with aggressive positions.'[74] The succession of crises and the habits of diplomatic restraint that had kept the peace, often with great strain, had, quite literally, drained Europe's diplomats and politicians of the reflective willpower and self-control required to continue uncertain negotiations over uncertain solutions for keeping the peace.

In this way, dual mindset theory and its associated mechanism of ego depletion offers a novel behavioural perspective on a long-established historical phenomenon, which is that after such a series of severe crises in a relatively short span of time Europe experienced what Immanuel Geiss has called a *Kriegsreife*, or 'ripeness for war'.[75] T. G. Otte concurs, noting that 'it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, by the spring of 1914, the various intractable legacies of the Balkan and Italo-Turkish Wars … had sapped the energy of the Concert.'[76] European leaders, writes Margaret

[74] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 357.

[75] Friedrich Kießling, 'Anglo-French Relations and the Wars Before the War', in *The Wars Before the Great War: Conflict and International Politics Before the Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan, and Andreas Rose (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 293.

[76] Otte, *July Crisis*, 273.

MacMillan, had 'grown tired of the tensions and the crises and wanted a resolution'.[77] The extent to which a profound sense of fatigue had settled in was particularly apparent after the conclusion of the Second Balkan War:

> With the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest, a peace born of exhaustion settled over the Balkans, not to mention among Europe's weary diplomats … To some extent, great-power diplomacy had reason to feel satisfied. The extinction of the Ottoman Empire in Europe had taken place without a continental war. At key moments of crisis, London and even sometimes Paris had restrained the Russians. The German leadership had also restrained the Austrians. Nevertheless, no one could have any illusions that the post-war settlement in the Balkans would go unchallenged.[78]

The London Conference of Ambassadors, under Sir Edward Grey's stewardship, had successfully contained the great dangers of the Balkan Wars to the European peace from December 1912 to August 1913. However, while this informal diplomatic forum had warded off the imminent prospect of a Balkan conflict upsetting the European equilibrium, it had not created the basis for a lasting peace.[79] The lack of a permanent mechanism to adjudicate the residual security concerns left by the collapse of Turkish power in Europe meant that continuing irritations were likely to trigger new crises that would require fresh negotiations, and potentially painful concessions, at precisely the moment when European leaders were at their weariest.

Indeed, the multiple meetings of the London Conference of Ambassadors, while supremely useful, had left many of their participants, chief among them British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, depleted by the experience. Grey confessed that he was worn out by the incessant exertions of these *réunions*, as he called them.[80] Once the Balkan clouds appeared to recede at the conclusion of the Second Balkan War, he saw no need for the conferences to continue, fearing that 'a reconvened conference would become a dumping ground for all sorts of minor problems', and anxious to 'avoid the tedium and strain of the protracted negotiations' that had characterised their sessions.[81]

Fatigue on the part of Europe's leaders in regard to continuing the necessary but complex, and therefore mentally taxing, work of settling disputes and mitigating tensions as they arose made it

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[77] Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War* (London: Profile Books, 2013), 523.

[78] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 277.

[79] Otte, 'Entente Diplomacy v. Détente, 1911–1914', 273.

[80] Gooch, *Before the War*, vol. 2 The Coming of the Storm, 107.

[81] R. J. Crampton, 'The Decline of the Concert of Europe in the Balkans, 1913–1914', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 52, no. 128 (1974): 415.

much easier to conserve energy the next time around and yield to the temptation of falling back upon one's reflexive instincts during the next crisis – particularly one that came so swiftly and unpredictably after the last.[82] Germany's Chief of the General Staff, Helmuth von Moltke, emphasised that by 1913 the 'seemingly unending international tension' was 'completely unbearable', and that 'war would be preferable' to living in a state of suspended animation.[83] In retrospect, such statements might appear unfathomable – were it not for our understanding of the way ego depletion erodes the capacity of individual actors to maintain the reflective frame of mind necessary for foresight, long-term patience and self-control. William Jannen concurs that in this respect:

> The war was at least partially an escape from intolerable tension and anxiety, tension and anxiety that were not entirely due to the immediate foreign-policy problem at hand. If this is what happened in 1914, it would account for the immense and widespread exultation and relief that greeted the outbreak of war. It would also account for the apparently paradoxical juxtaposition of fear and the urgent readiness to risk decisive action or war which appears among the leaders of the European powers.[84]

Berchtold, Austria's formidable Foreign Minister, seemed to confirm as much in the days immediately following the assassination: speaking of the atmosphere during the first Cabinet meeting of the Austro-Hungarian government, he observed that 'one noted, yes, consternation and indignation but also a certain easing of mood'.[85]

Furthermore, the avoidance of war during previous crises paradoxically reinforced this reflexive mentality. As discussed in Chapter 2, individuals can sometimes overcome mental fatigue if they are highly motivated to do so (entering what is called a 'challenge state' of motivation on the inverted-U curve), but the ability of European leaders to 'muddle through' previous crises minimised the level of mental exertion and cooperative effort that appeared to be required to stave off future crises. As this chapter will elaborate, many, if not most, of the leaders during the July Crisis erroneously

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[82] Repeated laboratory experiments confirm that when individuals exercise high levels of self-control they are consequently more prone to conserve their energy by relying on their reflexive instincts and by yielding to temptation at the next decision point: 'Just as a muscle gets tired from exertion, acts of self-control cause short-term impairments (ego depletion) in subsequent self-control, even on unrelated tasks'. Roy F. Baumeister, Kathleen D. Vohs and Dianne M. Tice, 'The Strength Model of Self-Control', *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 16, no. 6 (2007): 351; Kathleen D. Vohs et al., 'Making Choices Impairs Subsequent Self-Control: A Limited-Resource Account of Decision Making, Self-Regulation, and Active Initiative', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 94, no. 5 (2008); Mark Muraven, Dianne M. Tice and Roy F. Baumeister, 'Self-Control as Limited Resource: Regulatory Depletion Patterns', ibid. 74, no. 3 (1998).

[83] Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 289.

[84] Jannen Jr., 'The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914', 73.

[85] Sean McMeekin, *July 1914: Countdown to War* (London: Icon Books Ltd., 2014), 30.

assumed that their adversaries would back down, as they had in the past. Past successes, and the pre-scripted narratives these produced, had blinded them to the ways in which the strategic calculus of their adversaries had changed.

The mechanisms of our System 1 shed light on why and how this may have occurred. We know that the corollary to the negative biases induced by our reflexive System 1 are the positive illusions it engenders. Once in this reflexive state of mind, 'people are drawn toward negative information about the external environment and other actors, but they are drawn toward positive information about themselves'.[86] Recent experiences of success are likely to enhance our susceptibility in this latter regard by confirming faith in our own judgments, and in our ability to control the outcome of events. Such overconfidence encourages the conservation of our finite System 2 resources.[87] In this way, the reassertion of System 1 encourages decision-makers both to 'exaggerate the severity of the threats they face, while simultaneously exhibiting overconfidence about their capacity to deal with those threats'.[88]

The leaders of both Russia and Austria-Hungary, for example, had been successful in defusing tension during the Balkan crises because their mutual anxiety over precipitating a general war had motivated both sides to make politically difficult, yet necessary, concessions during the Balkan crises of 1912–1913; however, given our reflexive System 1's bias towards action-orientation and susceptibility to positive illusions, it became much easier after the moment of danger had passed for both sides to reconstruct a coherent (if erroneous) narrative of events in which the other side had 'blinked first' (in the sense that one's actions had directly led the other to back down).

Effortful restraint, not necessarily sabre-rattling, had saved the peace on more than one occasion, but the repeated avoidance of disaster made it easier for both sides to ignore this politically inconvenient fact in favour of a simplistic interpretation of their adversaries as both inherently threatening and fundamentally weak. The Russian General Staff epitomised this view in their June 1913 assessment of Austria-Hungary after the successful resolution of the Balkan Winter Crisis: 'The Austrian Empire appeared to be a belligerent colossus, but a colossus with feet of clay'.[89] Conrad and the Austrian General Staff, meanwhile, convinced themselves that Russia had given way during the

[86] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'Bad World: Negativity Bias and the Cycle of War', paper presented at the Annual International Studies Association Convention, Toronto, Canada (2013): 6.

[87] Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 256.

[88] Johnson and Tierney, 'Bad World', 6.

[89] William C. Fuller, 'The Russian Empire', in *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars*, ed. Ernest May (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 113.

Balkan crises because of Austro-Hungarian counter-measures. Samuel Williamson Jr. writes that 'these two divergent conclusions would have disastrous consequences in the summer of 1914, as each power put these "lessons" into practice'.[90]

The ego depletion and diminished mindware the participants of the July Crisis displayed were thus attributable to two distinct factors: the replacement or demise of certain individuals who were a priori (by virtue of personality or other factors) more capable of adopting a reflective frame of mind with respect to European problems, and the mental switch from a reflective to a reflexive mindset made by other significant actors who had navigated previous crises. In the case of the former, the three most significant individuals in this regard were Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Austria-Hungary, whose assassination removed one of the most powerful advocates for peace in the Hapsburg Empire; Prime Minister Vladimir Kokovtsov in Russia, whose cautious counsel was increasingly repudiated by decision-makers in St. Petersburg, and who was replaced in January 1914 by the weak-willed Ivan Goremykin; and Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter in Germany, whose death in December 1912 prompted the elevation of Gottlieb von Jagow, a man known for his rabidly anti-Russian and anti-Slavic views, to the post of Foreign Minister. Although Kiderlen-Wächter had proved maladroit during the 1911 Moroccan crisis, he had been receptive to the various diplomatic initiatives suggested by Britain and France to prevent the Balkan Wars from metastasising into a general conflict. His death would encourage the redirection of German foreign policy from one focused on imperial aims to one shaped by fear of Russia.[91]

Just as importantly, however, this chapter argues that the experience of the Balkan crises changed the mindset of three of the most influential participants of the July Crisis of 1914: Austrian Foreign Minister Leopold von Berchtold, German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov. Each of these men had initially shared the caution of their deceased or departed colleagues mentioned above, and, as the following discussion of individual mindsets during the July Crisis aims to make clear, each of them would react in an opposite manner in response to the Sarajevo assassinations. All three men had arguably been worn down over the years by the stress brought on by criticism from their more belligerent colleagues that their characteristic caution and restraint during previous crises had weakened their respective countries' strategic positions.

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[90] Samuel R. Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1991), 135.

[91] Bormann, 'German Foreign Policy and the Balkan Wars, 1912–1914', 257.

As Europe's youngest Foreign Minister at the time of his appointment, Berchtold was routinely criticised by his subordinates and contemporaries as inexperienced, ineffective and not up to the task of directing the Dual Monarchy's foreign policy.[92] Fritz Stern has similarly concluded that Bethmann Hollweg's resolution during the July Crisis derived at least in part from 'a feeling that his policy of so-called conciliatoriness had yielded nothing, strengthened by the weariness of the civilian who had for so long been attacked by his tougher colleagues'.[93] In Russia, Kokovtsov's dismissal from the Tsar's Council of Ministers early in 1914 represented not only a professional defeat but a decisive rejection of the cautious and conservative policies that he represented. 'Without Kokovtsov as an exponent of caution, the balance of influence on the Council of Ministers shifted to more militant solutions', and Sazonov risked becoming increasingly isolated and impotent in the face of his Germanophobic colleagues unless he changed course.[94] He had also been pointedly criticised by France's President Raymond Poincaré for his supposedly 'submissive' attitude during the Balkan Wars.[95] During the July Crisis, Berchtold almost immediately resolved on a war against Serbia, Bethmann Hollweg approved the blank cheque to Austria-Hungary proffered by his volatile Kaiser to Count Alexander Hoyos (and continued to deflect attempts at international mediation while urging on his ally), and Sazonov counselled Tsar Nicholas that if, in this instance, Russia were to abandon Serbia to her fate, she would forfeit her position in the region to the domination of the Central Powers. Each of these decisions proved to be fateful milestones on the road to war.

Mindsets of the Central Powers and Triple Entente During the July Crisis

The previous chapter applied the dual mindset theory of international relations to the mindsets of the principal decision-makers within the Central Powers and the Triple Entente during the Balkan crises of 1912–1913. The following sections now examine in detail the mindsets of the key decision-makers within these same alliance blocs during the July Crisis of 1914, with a similar concentration on the crucial decisions made by Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia. If the hypotheses presented hold true, we should expect to see, first, greater evidence of reflexivity over reflectivity at crucial

[92] For example, in May 1914 Austria-Hungary's ambassador to Italy, Kajetan Mérey von Kapos-Mére, accused Berchtold of dilettantism. Williamson Jr., 'Leopold Count Berchtold', 24.

[93] Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 138–139. Margaret MacMillan writes that 'Bethmann used what was perhaps the most revealing phrase of all when he said that for Germany to back down in the face of its enemies would be an act of self-castration'. MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 529.

[94] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 346.

[95] Maurice Paléologue, a long-time Germanophobe and personal friend of President Poincaré, was appointed as ambassador at St. Petersburg in 1914 with the express purpose of pressing Sazonov into a harder anti-German stance. McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 52.

decision-making moments during the period, as indicated by higher levels of threat sensitivity, risk propensity and temporal discounting in the mindsets of the principal actors involved; second, we should expect to see a corresponding increase in the likelihood of war – assuming, of course, that conflict was not already foreordained at the time that crucial decisions were being made.

The Central Powers

Threat Sensitivity

Throughout the July Crisis, but particularly during its early, decisive stages, the leaders of Austria-Hungary exhibited much higher levels of threat sensitivity than they did at the outset of the Balkan crises a few years previously. William Jannen observes that, over the course of five tense weeks, Austrian decision-makers were preoccupied to the point of obsession with the perceived threat to themselves, rather 'than with the consequences of their actions'.[96] Indeed, the monomaniacal determination with which the Habsburg monarchy pursued war with Serbia, ostensibly in revenge for the death of a man who was, by all accounts, 'not much loved by anyone save his wife', and whose liberal views on empire and unorthodox marriage made him distinctly unpopular with the governing elites in his home country, continues to baffle historians.[97] Serbia was, furthermore, exhausted after two major wars in the Balkans and in no position to be spoiling for a fight. And yet the experience of the Balkan crises had so narrowed the Austro-Hungarian field of vision to one that exclusively concentrated on the specific threat emanating from Belgrade that it no longer encompassed other strategic considerations, such as that of Russia or the other Great Powers. In fact, the wider Great Power constellation of Europe appeared to play no significant role in Austro-Hungarian decision-making during the July Crisis. 'Hapsburg diplomacy', writes T. G. Otte, 'suffered from "tunnel vision" during the final years before 1914. Austro-Hungarian policy was essentially *Balkanpolitik*'.[98]

If Vienna set the direction and the pace of the July Crisis, then one man in particular established 'the tempo, defined the moves, and closed off the options in July 1914': that man was Foreign Minister Leopold von Berchtold, a temporiser who had previously shared Ferdinand's Balkan caution, but

[96] Jannen Jr., 'The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914', 60.

[97] Hastings, *Catastrophe*, xxxi.

[98] Otte, *July Crisis*, 43.

who was persuaded into a single-minded belligerence in response to the Sarajevo assassinations.[99] Berchtold had worked closely with the heir to the throne during the Balkan crises of 1912–1913 to prevent war, and in 1914 he would be the man most responsible for making it possible.[100] Variously lampooned by his colleagues as a dithering dilettante and a reluctant minister, Berchtold 'commanded and managed the process' of delivering to Serbia, in the aftermath of the assassinations, an ultimatum that was deliberately designed to be rejected.[101] Even after Austria-Hungary's disastrous defeat in the war, Berchtold remained staunchly unrepentant regarding his actions: 'The Sarajevo crime was simply one of the latest examples of the work of destruction organised against us, of the sapping and mining which was to blow up the home in which we dwelt.'[102]

This marked an important escalation in Berchtold's approach to Serbia, from militant diplomacy to all-out war; although he had orchestrated at least two previous ultimatums, one to Montenegro and another to Serbia during the Balkan crises, each had been designed as a means of forcing the Balkan states to back down rather than as a pretext to engage in war. The minutes of the 7 July Council of Ministers meeting attest to this crucial difference in aims:

> All those present, with one exception [Tisza], were of the opinion that a purely diplomatic victory, even if it ended with a striking humiliation of Serbia, was worthless; and that therefore such demands should be made upon Serbia as to secure their rejection so that the way for a radical solution along the lines of a military intervention could be opened up.[103]

Berchtold's wife recalled that 'poor Leopold could not sleep on the day when he wrote his ultimatum to the Serbs, as he was so worried that they might accept it … Several times during the night he got up and altered or added some clause, to reduce the risk [of acceptance]'.[104]

The switch in Berchtold's mentality is even more remarkable for the fact that, as late as four days before the Sarajevo assassinations, Berchtold and his foreign ministry at the Ballhausplatz assessed that the strategic situation was tense, but not altogether hopeless. In a policy review Berchtold

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[99] Holger H. Herwig, *The First World War: Germany and Austria-Hungary 1914–1918*, ed. Hew Strachan, 2nd ed., Modern Wars (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 20.

[100] Historian Samuel Williamson Jr. makes a persuasive case that Berchtold alone could have prevented war, in Williamson Jr., 'Leopold Count Berchtold'.

[101] Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig, *Decisions for War, 1914–1917* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 49.

[102] Gooch, *Before the War*, vol. 2 The Coming of the Storm, 446.

[103] Hamilton and Herwig, *Decisions for War*, 68.

[104] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 535.

commissioned for Franz Joseph, Franz Ferdinand and István Tisza, that later became known as the 'Matscheko memorandum', named for its author, Baron Franz von Matscheko, the memorandum concluded that an aggressive diplomatic containment of Serbia was the best strategy in the near term, but that if closer relations with her troublesome neighbour was the price that must be paid to wean Romania away from Russia and the Triple Entente, and thereby strengthen Austria's presence in the Balkans, the Dual Monarchy must be prepared to offer the former greater political and economic concessions.

The tone was shrill, particularly concerning Russia's role in the Balkans, but the substance of the forward-leaning policy realignment was squarely focused on diplomacy, not war. The memorandum made no mention of hostile military action against Serbia – indeed, Serbia only figured as one among a constellation of Austro-Hungarian concerns in the region, the more pressing of which appeared to be Austria-Hungary's mounting struggle with erstwhile ally Italy for control of the new Albanian state and Romania's apparent drift towards Russia and the orbit of the Triple Entente.[105] After the assassinations, Berchtold gave orders to revise the Matscheko memorandum in the light of what had occurred. The 'final and fundamental reckoning' that he believed could no longer be avoided with Serbia was reflected in the ultimatum he orchestrated that was deliberately designed to force a war on her Balkan neighbour, regardless of what the country said or did.[106] Unlike previous instances, the aim 'was not to punish Serbia but to destroy it; not to defeat Serbia, but to wipe it off the map'.[107]

However, there is no evidence in the historical record that this remarkable switch in Berchtold's mentality was the result of German pressure (if anything, Berchtold and his circle at the Ballhausplatz deliberately kept their colleagues in Berlin in the dark during the drafting of the ultimatum, so as to avoid the possibility that a German wrench might be thrown at the very last minute into the Austrian spokes of war), nor that he was swept along by the more belligerent cohort of the country's military apparatus (during their first meeting on 29 June, Conrad was both relieved and surprised to discover that Berchtold had already resolved upon the necessity of a war with Serbia, although the two differed somewhat over the most advantageous time to commence hostilities).[108] Rather, as Jannen aptly describes it:

[105] Jannen Jr., 'The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914', 70; Williamson Jr., 'Leopold Count Berchtold', 30.

[106] Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer*, 155.

[107] Ibid. 163.

[108] Williamson Jr. and Van Wyk, *July 1914*, 57.

> The assassination seems to have snapped Berchtold's ability to continue a policy of manoeuvre and restraint. From the time he learned that the assassins were Bosnian Serbs, he became the strong man of the government, grimly determined to attack Serbia. Nowhere is this more dramatically revealed than in the differences between the June 24 statement and the memorandum delivered to the Germans on July 5 … The new memorandum gave up all hope of reconciliation with Serbia, 'the monarchy's bitterest enemy in the Balkans'. The June 24 statement made no mention of action against Serbia; on the contrary, it had accepted the possibility of conciliation. The new memorandum declared the differences between Serbia and the monarchy to be 'unbridgeable', and concluded by declaring the 'imperative … need for the monarchy to sever with a firm hand the threads which its enemies seek to draw into a net over its head'.[109]

The extent to which many leaders in Vienna and Budapest became convinced after the Sarajevo murders that the monarchy was under siege and facing an existential threat in Serbia was evident in the language used to describe their predicament: 'a highly charged imagery of burial, imprisoning webs and engulfing seas combined with an ever more violent rhetoric of breaking out' from the circumstances that were steadily asphyxiating the empire became commonplace.[110] As a result, many officials maintained that they were left with no choice but to take military action – that war had been forced upon them. Were these simply convenient *ex post facto* justifications to avoid responsibility for the world war that resulted? Such motivations can certainly never be ruled out.

However, dual mindset theory suggests an alternative explanation, which is that these individuals really did believe what they professed at the time. The characteristics of our reflexive mind provide us with crucial insights as to why they did so. The broad negativity dominance associated with our reflexive System 1 already naturally makes it more sensitive to potential threats. This is compounded by its preference for certainty, its confirmatory bias, its desire to attribute intentional cause to events and its tendency to make intuitive leaps by concocting coherent explanations with the fragments of information at its disposal. Moreover, we know from our discussion in Chapter 2 that questioning one's intuitions is often unpleasant, but most particularly when individuals face the stress of a big decision.[111] More doubt and uncertainty is often the last thing many people wish for when they are already caught in the maw of an extremely stressful situation, which is precisely what yet another, potentially protracted, negotiation with Serbia would have entailed.[112]

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[109] Jannen Jr., 'The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914', 72.

[110] Ibid. 62.

[111] Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, 417.

[112] Furthermore, we know that once a decision has been made the appeal of System 1 is likely to be significantly magnified, as numerous psychological experiments demonstrate that the act of deciding is the most ego-depleting activity of all. Vohs et al., 'Making Choices Impairs Subsequent Self-Control'.

There is a certain irony in the fact that, prior to his death, Franz Ferdinand was convinced that the only people in Belgrade who genuinely wanted war with Austria-Hungary were the regicide war party, who, unbeknownst to him, would be responsible for assassinating him a few months later.[113] Nevertheless, Ferdinand was able to keep his threat sensitivity in relation to Serbia in check because he did not view the motivations behind Serbian actions as monolithic, nor was he convinced that they were indicative of an implacable desire for war. By contrast, for Berchtold, and for the majority of Austria-Hungary's leaders who favoured a military strike on Serbia in the wake of the Sarajevo murders, the extent to which the Serbian threat was assumed to be more than the work of a few rogue individuals, and instead a government-sanctioned conspiracy that proved the Habsburg monarchy was 'ceaselessly plummeted with challenges from Belgrade', is telling.[114] In fact, Vienna had significant background intelligence about a major power struggle underway between the civilian and military elements of the Serbian government, and it also knew about the broad activities of the Black Hand, even if the extent to which Vienna was officially forewarned of a specific plot to assassinate the Archduke remains unclear.[115]

However, at no point during the July Crisis did Austria-Hungary's leaders ever appear to use this information to denounce the terrorist group or its official mastermind, the Chief of Serbian military intelligence, Dragutin Dimitrijević ('Apis'), nor did they ever make any attempt to separate the actions of a conspiratorial, if increasingly influential, cadre of military officers from those directed by Pašić and his civilian government.[116] Not doing enough to prevent the Sarajevo crime, in other words, became conflated with complicity in planning it. That a Hapsburg denunciation aimed

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[113] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 291.

[114] Williamson Jr., 'Leopold Count Berchtold', 42.

[115] Between April and June of 1914, the Austrian military attaché in Belgrade, Otto Gellinek, provided Vienna with a very accurate assessment of the power rivalries within the Serbian government. He 'categorised the key issues, identified the key players, and noted the part played by Apis and the Black Hand in all the machinations'. It was, he observed, virtually impossible to keep any covert organisation secret in Serbia for long, 'because for every five conspirators, there is one informant'. Gellinek identified Apis as the dominant figure in the Black Hand network as early as 1911, whose aims, he relayed, were first to remove the 'inner enemies of Serbdom' and then to turn 'with unified force against its external foes'. Williamson Jr. and Van Wyk, *July 1914*, 30; Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 95–96. Pašić claimed after the war that he had discreetly attempted to warn Vienna of a possible attempt against the Archduke in early June. This is impossible to verify, since both Serbia and Austria-Hungary had incentives to deny any foreknowledge of the plot (the former for fear of looking to be complicit in it, the latter for fear of appearing grossly negligent). Otte concludes that 'there is no evidence to suggest that Pašic or Protić [the Serbian Minister of the Interior] had detailed knowledge of the plot against Franz Ferdinand. They nevertheless launched an investigation into the activities along the border [with Bosnia] with a view to preventing similar crossings [of armed Bosnian students] in the future. The two also understood the connection between the border guards and Apis and his underlings in Belgrade'. The most likely scenario remains that, since it was impossible to tell if an attempt on the Archduke's life would be made and, if made, if it would be successful, it was politically easier for Pašić to hope that such attempts came to nothing than to warn Vienna and risk setting off a diplomatic crisis of the kind that befell Serbia after the Sarajevo murders. McMeekin, *July 1914*, 51; Otte, *July Crisis*, 34, 38.

[116] Williamson Jr. and Van Wyk, *July 1914*, 30–31.

specifically at Apis and the Black Hand might have given Serbian Prime Minister Pašić more room for manoeuvre in dealing with the rogue elements of his military apparatus never seems to have occurred to Berchtold and the rest of the Austro-Hungarian leaders who favoured war, including Conrad von Hötzendorf, Finance Minister Leon von Biliński, Minister of War Alexander Krobatin and Austria's Minister-President Count Karl Stürgkh, who shepherded the Serbian ultimatum through the Council of Ministers. (This despite Pašić's promise three days after the assassinations to redouble his government's vigilance against 'ill-balanced' nationalists within Serbia's frontiers who, he well knew, were also plotting to overthrow him.)[117]

Instead, Berchtold was consumed with seeking incriminating evidence of Serbian complicity for incorporation in the text of his ultimatum, and was disappointed when one of his officials went to Sarajevo, sifted the evidence and reported back on 13 July that: 'There is nothing to prove or even to suppose that the Serbian government is accessory to the inducement for the crime, its preparation, or the furnishing of weapons. On the contrary, there are reasons to believe that this is altogether out of the question'.[118] All that could be found was that the assassins had been aided by certain individuals with ties to the government.[119]

Nevertheless, Berchtold moved ahead with his planned ultimatum even without hard evidence officially incriminating the Serbian government in the assassination of the Hapsburg heir, insisting to Heinrich von Tschirschky, Germany's ambassador in Vienna, that 'the threads of the conspiracy … come together in Belgrade' – a phrase he would repeat incessantly throughout the July Crisis.[120] The Foreign Minister similarly took it for granted that Russia must have had some prior knowledge of, and was therefore to some extent complicit in, the plot.[121] On 2 July, Berchtold drafted a note from Emperor Franz Joseph to Kaiser Wilhelm II that squarely placed the blame for the assassination

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[117] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 92.

[118] Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer*, 169.

[119] This semi-official complicity on the part of Apis in the Sarajevo murders would be confirmed by the Serbian government-in-exile during the war, which put Dimitrijević on trial in Salonika in 1917 and executed him after he openly confessed to the crime. McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 42.

[120] McMeekin, *July 1914*, 30.

[121] No evidence in the Russian archives has ever come to light linking the Sarajevo crime to Russian complicity in the event. However, there is a debate among historians over just how much advanced knowledge men like Viktor Artamonov, the Russian military attaché in Belgrade, and Nikolai Hartwig, Russia's highly influential Ambassador to Serbia, may have had concerning the assassination plot. Luigi Albertini, who interviewed Artamonov after the war, concluded that it would have been virtually impossible for him not to know something was afoot, as Artamonov himself admitted that he was 'in practically daily contact with Dimitrijević'. Others, such as Dominic Lieven, have asserted that 'it beggars belief that the Russian military attaché would have agreed to any foolhardy provocation of Vienna, let alone something so hugely dangerous as an attempt to assassinate the heir to the throne … the reality was that Apis had no need to tell Artamonov of the plot and many reasons not to do so'. Otte concurs, noting that Hartwig had thrown his considerable prestige behind Pašić in his earlier battle with the ultra-nationalists, and was no friend to radical groups like the Black Hand. Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 282–283; Gooch, *Before the War*, vol. 2 The Coming of the Storm, 369; Otte, *July Crisis*, 34.

on Russia and the 'criminal agitators in Belgrade'.[122] Not everyone, of course, agreed, and the most prominent of the dissenters was Hungary's Prime Minister Count István Tisza. Tisza was alarmed to learn that Berchtold sought to seize on the assassination to settle accounts with Serbia, and he cautioned Emperor Franz Joseph that 'we have no sufficient grounds for holding Serbia responsible [for the crime] and for provoking a war with her'.[123] Instead, Belgrade ought to be given time to demonstrate good behaviour.[124] Indeed, it was partly Tisza's doubt concerning the wisdom of an attack on Serbia that led to Austria-Hungary's weeks-long delay in delivering the ultimatum.

Although Germany was not the target of the Sarajevo attack, similar psychological dynamics appeared to be at work in Berlin. Margaret MacMillan writes that in the aftermath of Sarajevo 'what influenced them [Germany's leaders] and the subordinates who urged them on was that they tended to see threats rather than opportunities', and that, by 1914, 'their old fears of encirclement were more acute than ever'.[125] Moreover, 'it is curious in retrospect', she writes, 'how little attention the German leadership paid to the alternative of war as a way of breaking the encirclement'.[126]

As previously discussed, psychological experiments demonstrate that the stress load associated with a state of scarcity, particularly when it implicates (or is believed to implicate) one's survival, promotes attentional capture ('tunnel vision') and ego depletion, which, in turn, encourages the adoption of a reflexive mindset. Once in this reflexive mindset, individuals are more likely to be susceptible to overly negative biases concerning their external environment, including biases of attribution (in which the unchangeable dispositions of adversaries are privileged over changeable situational constraints in the interpretation of their behaviour), and to explanations that resonate with System 1's preference for coherent, simple, and decisive narratives over evidence-based analysis – each of which is believed to facilitate threat inflation.

This is precisely what appears to have occurred in the minds of many German leaders on the eve of, and just following, the Sarajevo assassinations. According to Holger Herwig:

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[122] Hamilton and Herwig, *Decisions for War*, 61.

[123] One possible explanation for Tisza's greater reflective capabilities (or 'mindware') in response to the Sarajevo crime was his view that Austria-Hungary should avoid deeper involvement in Serbian affairs altogether, and in the southern Balkans more generally. This was not least because any enlargement of the Dual Monarchy would dilute Hungary's privileged position within it. Tisza was, therefore, far more capable of viewing the Serbian threat with greater equanimity than his colleagues, who were instead more easily persuaded by the conventional belief that Austria-Hungary's longevity depended upon maintaining, if not enhancing, the country's presence in the Balkans. McMeekin, *July 1914*, 32.

[124] Otte, *July Crisis*, 63.

[125] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 523.

[126] Ibid. 525.

> By the eve of the Great War, the leaders of Germany, as well as their counterparts in the other European states, saw themselves as victims – virtuous, honourable and pure – while their adversaries were devious and evil. Diabolical images of the enemy were readily discernible among Wilhelm II, Tirpitz and Moltke. The statesmen and soldiers in Berlin not only expected the worst from their potential enemies in case of war, but they perceived their own alternatives always as restricted by necessity or 'fate'. Their opponents, on the other hand, were always depicted as being embarrassed by a plethora of open choices. This explains how at a time when leaders in the Entente camp were conscious chiefly of their weaknesses, German leaders could focus almost exclusively upon their opponents' signs of strength … Given such a *mentalité*, it is little wonder that these same German leaders failed to develop any empathy toward their potential enemies. Hardly anyone bothered to ask how a given situation might appear from the perspective of the 'other side'.[127]

Men like Helmuth von Moltke had long harboured paranoid visions of enemies who were encircling Germany; however, these fears took on a new, and more widespread, urgency during the July Crisis. German intelligence of Anglo-Russian naval talks in the summer of 1914, while they came to nothing, caused serious consternation in Berlin; Romania and Italy, both fickle partners, seemed to be drifting away from the Central Powers; and Austria-Hungary, that 'crumbling constellation of states on the Danube', in the words of Foreign Minister Jagow, was increasingly looking like a poor investment.[128]

And yet, instead of actively cultivating new alliances, a mentally taxing enterprise which almost certainly would have required additional time, patience and, most likely, complicated political trade-offs with uncertain pay-offs, German leaders clung ever more tightly to their sole reliable ally in Austria-Hungary. Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, already under severe strain due to the death of his wife a few months previously, expressed his fear that if Germany refused to support Austrian actions this time in the Balkans, 'they will approach the Western powers whose arms are open and we will lose our last powerful ally'.[129] (Whether Russia would realistically ever have consented to a more favourable embrace of Austria-Hungary within the construct of the Triple Entente never appears to have been seriously considered.) In other words, despite German leaders' awareness of the predicament they were in concerning Austria-Hungary's potential to set the Balkans alight (and the rest of Europe with it), their extreme loss aversion with respect to their only dependable ally fed

[127] Herwig, 'Imperial Germany', 92-93.

[128] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 526.

[129] Ibid.

the simplistic belief that reasons of survival dictated that they had no other choice but to unconditionally support Vienna.

Fears of Russia were similarly overblown: it was taken as an article of faith that the completion of Russia's Great Programme of armament in 1917 would invite a Russian attack on German soil (at one point Bethmann Hollweg wistfully wondered aloud to his friend Ambassador Hans von Flotow 'whether it made sense to plant new trees' on his estate at Hohenfinow, as 'the Russians would be here in a few years in any case').[130] In fact, the effect of the Great Programme, Russian leaders hoped, would be to deter a German attack against France. Absenting such an attack on the Triple Entente, the ends to which Russia's newfound strength would have been turned remain inscrutable, but it was certainly not intended to provide Russia with a rapid victory over the Central Powers, both of whom retained a considerable advantage over Russia with respect to the pace of their respective mobilisation schedules. As one observer commented regarding the Great Programme: 'Reorganisation of troop units, recruitment of additional troops, provision of extra firepower – these were hardly the stuff of which dreams of military grandeur were made'.[131]

Nevertheless, men like Foreign Minister Jagow captured the fear of Russia that dominated decision-making in Berlin at the height of the July Crisis by pessimistically predicting that the Tsarist regime would soon be 'ready to strike' and to 'crush us [Germany]'.[132] German fears of the growth of Russian power and the 'encirclement' of Germany by her Triple Entente allies were not balanced against more propitious indications for the future, for if Russia was in the ascendency, then France was certainly on the decline. Above all, there were growing strains in the Anglo-Russian relationship – tensions which were only likely to be exacerbated by the growth of Russian power in future.[133]

Risk Propensity

'Fear and desperation paved the way for a reckless elation as Habsburg leaders resolved finally to lash out decisively and violently by initiating war in the Balkans,' observes Alexander Watson.[134] T.

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[130] Holger H. Herwig, 'Germany', in *The Origins of World War I*, eds. Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 166.

[131] David Alan Rich, 'Russia', ibid. 214.

[132] Holger H. Herwig, 'Germany', ibid. 165.

[133] Dominic Lieven notes that 'increasing Russian power was more likely to sway British public opinion against Petersburg than toward it'. 'Within even the Foreign Office, those who inclined toward Russia because of fear of its threat to British interests in Asia were likely to lose ground in the next decade to advocates of a more "balanced" approach'. Lieven, *Towards the Flame*, 342.

[134] Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary at War, 1914-1918* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 7.

G. Otte has characterised Austria-Hungary's decision to launch a war of revenge on Serbia as 'the audacity of despair'.[135] According to Samuel Williamson Jr., once the July Crisis erupted, Hapsburg policy 'rested on hopes and illusions rather than on realistic chances for success'.[136] The unrealistic optimism on the part of many of Austria-Hungary's leaders that they could crush Serbia and nevertheless successfully keep any Balkan conflict localised informed their decision-making throughout the July Crisis. Furthermore, their rosy projections did not end there: a decisive victory over Serbia, it was believed, could do more than just teach the country's troublesome Slavic neighbour a permanent lesson – it could also reverse Austria-Hungary's sagging prospects in the Balkans by casting doubt on Russia's ability to maintain her status as protector of her Slavic brethren. The considerable elements of wishful thinking that infused the mentality of Austria-Hungary's decision-makers were underlined by Berthold Molden, a political commentator with close contacts to the Ballhausplatz. Molden speculated that a reassertion of Hapsburg power through the annexation of Serbian territory would not only destroy 'Serbian imperialism' and expose Russia's protector role as 'vain grandiloquence', but that Romania, the rump state of Serbia, and even Great Britain, would eventually gravitate back to Austria-Hungary once the 'Balkan spectre' had been banished.[137]

Overconfidence on the eve of war, and the risk propensity it facilitates, is the predictable 'positive' corollary to the 'negative' biases that encourage threat inflation on the part of our reflexive mind. The collective traits of our reflexive brain – its base-rate neglect, illusions of validity and control, confirmation bias, and loss aversion – not only make it much easier to inflate threats, but they also make it much harder for human beings to be aware of the actual risk probabilities of their own endeavours, and of the likelihood of errors in their formulation of judgments. Such traits encourage a susceptibility to overconfidence, and the optimism bias to which it gives rise, and a corresponding increase in risk propensities – particularly in the realm of perceived losses. The optimism bias is, therefore, a fundamental characteristic of our reflexive System 1, and it diminishes our aversion to risk by endowing us with positive illusions about the future. Such positive illusions are particularly likely to come into play when individuals believe they are facing an existential threat. Within the realm of international relations, Jannen observes that 'intense threat may lead decision-makers to disregard their country's weaknesses', and that 'rather than return to the stress and anxiety which

[135] Otte, *July Crisis*, 437.

[136] Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*, 208.

[137] Otte, *July Crisis*, 43–44.

have just been relieved by coming to a decision, they simply ignore information indicating their decision is disastrous'.[138]

In the case of Austria-Hungary, whose leaders claimed they were declaring war on Serbia to ensure the 'self-defence and existence' of the Dual Monarchy, the most prominent manifestation of these positive illusions was the near-total discounting of the threat posed by Russian intervention in response to the Serbian ultimatum.[139] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney write that Austro-Hungarian leaders 'denied that Russia would fight, downplayed the consequences of war with Russia if St. Petersburg did fight, or simply ignored the Russian dimension altogether'.[140] For example, during the crucial 19 July Council of Ministers meeting to ratify the text of the ultimatum, at no point was the likelihood of Russian intervention even cursorily discussed.[141] This was even after Vienna had received on 16 July a quiet but unmistakable warning of Russian intentions, transmitted through Italian intermediaries: that St. Petersburg would stand by Serbia with 'unquestionable resolution' in the face of Austro-Hungarian aggression.[142] The Italian ambassador in St. Petersburg, the Marchese Carlotti di Riparbello, characterised Vienna's reception of the warning as 'based on the belief that, although Russia would make a verbal protest, she would not adopt forcible measures for the protection of Serbia'.[143]

Such unfounded optimism would almost certainly not have been the case had Franz Ferdinand been present for these discussions. In contrast to many of his compatriots, the slain Archduke was more cognisant of Russia's own constraints and the ways that the unanticipated outcome of the Balkan Wars had, paradoxically, weakened her status as protector of the Slavs. Ferdinand therefore doubted that Russia would easily stand aside in a future crisis, and he feared that the consequences of a war with Russia would be disastrous for the Dual Monarchy. In rejecting yet another one of Conrad's plans for war against Serbia early in 1913, Ferdinand prophetically declared that:

> War with Russia means the end of us. If we take the field against Serbia, Russia will stand behind her, and we will have the war with Russia. Should the Austrian emperor and the Russian tsar topple one

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[138] Jannen Jr., 'The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914', 61.

[139] Bernadotte E. Schmitt, *The Coming of the War, 1914*, vol. 2 (New York: Howard Fertig, 1966), 2; Hamilton and Herwig, *Decisions for War*, 68–69.

[140] Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney, 'The Rubicon Theory of War: How the Path to Conflict Reaches the Point of No Return', *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 27.

[141] Hamilton and Herwig, *Decisions for War*, 68.

[142] Rich, 'Russia', 216.

[143] Ibid.

> another from the throne and clear the way for the revolution? Tell Conrad that I categorically reject further suggestions in this vein.[144]

However, throughout the July Crisis, men like Berchtold and Hoyos refused to see the Russian threat as decisive. They continued to believe that Russia could be argued or bluffed into tolerating an invasion of Serbia, particularly if Austria-Hungary made assurances that it had no intention of formally annexing the Serbian state.[145] The Austro-Hungarian war plans of the day also attested to this stupendous overconfidence: after the Sarajevo murders Conrad coolly promised his leadership that he had the necessary means to strong-arm Serbia and to simultaneously deal with any Russian threat, so long as Russia made her intentions clear 'by the fifth day of mobilisation'.[146]

Moreover, Austria-Hungary's failure to realistically consider probable Russian reactions, and to include the country's considerable military capabilities in its calculus of war, occurred despite plenty of available evidence to the contrary. For example, during Hoyos' crucial series of meetings in Berlin to secure German support for the Austrian ultimatum, German Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, Arthur Zimmerman, gave Hoyos his stark estimate of a '90% probability for a European war if you [Austria-Hungary] undertake something against Serbia'.[147] And, later, when Emperor Franz Joseph was presented with the approved text of the ultimatum, he remarked that 'Russia cannot possibly swallow this note', before affixing his signature and sealing his empire's fate.[148] Austria-Hungary's General Staff also knew that the country's only chance of beating Russia in a Balkan conflict would be if Germany came to its aid, but it was well known that the Schlieffen Plan first called for an attack on France. This meant that Austria-Hungary would not only have to contend with Serbia, but that it would 'bear the brunt of the Russian steamroller' – a task for which its military leaders knew the country was woefully underprepared.[149]

German leaders were similarly overconfident in their assessments during the first and second weeks of July that they could present Serbia and, more importantly, Russia with a *fait accompli*. 'We hoped', said Bethmann Hollweg's chief of press, Otto Hammann, in October 1914, 'that we would humiliate

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[144] Hamilton and Herwig, *Decisions for War*, 55.

[145] Schmitt, *The Coming of the War, 1914*, vol. 2, 1.

[146] Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*, 112.

[147] Hamilton and Herwig, *Decisions for War*, 68.

[148] Ibid.

[149] After running multiple war games, Conrad had discovered as early as 1911 that he would need at least 14 divisions to beat the Serbian army, an amount that couldn't possibly be spared in the case of a simultaneous war with Russia. Moreover, as late as April of 1914, Governor-General of Bosnia Oskar Potiorek ran his own war game against the Serbs on a visit to Dubrovnik, which, 'to the amazement of all present, the Serbs won'. Wawro, *A Mad Catastrophe*, 102.

Russia without war; this would have been a nice success'.[150] Such hopeful optimism was based on the assumption that Russia had backed down multiple times in the past, including during the Bosnian annexation crisis of 1909, when Russia refused to go to war in the face of stepped-up military preparations by Austria-Hungary and an ultimatum from Germany, and, most recently, during the Balkan Wars, when Russia had stood by as Austria-Hungary led the international charge in forcing Serbia and Montenegro out of Albania.[151] In a crucial meeting on the evening of 5 July that included Kaiser Wilhelm, Bethmann Hollweg, Arthur Zimmerman (who was standing in for Foreign Minister Jagow), and Erich von Falkenhayn, the Minister of War, the group discussed the possibility that Russia might intervene and concluded that the risk was unlikely and they should proceed with encouraging Austria-Hungary to act swiftly to neutralise Serbia: 'though friends of Serbia' the Russians 'will not participate'.[152] The extent to which they were confident that Russia was still too unprepared for war and that the assassination crisis would remain a localised Balkan affair was evident in the Chancellor's recommendation to the Kaiser that he should depart for his holiday cruise the next day.[153]

This thread of optimism stemming from a series of positive illusions, most importantly those concerning the low probability that Russia would back Serbia, the belief that Great Britain would stay neutral in any conflict, and Germany's advantageous chances of winning a world war should it break out before the country's window of opportunity expired, would affect the risk propensities of German decision-makers throughout the July Crisis. 'Because of their unflagging confidence in the possibility of localising an Austro-Serbian conflict', Bethmann Hollweg and Jagow made only the barest pretence of supporting the no fewer than four British offers of joint mediation conveyed to them between 24 and 28 July – all while privately urging Austria-Hungary to declare war on Serbia.[154] Even General Moltke, who, unlike his civilian counterparts, harboured very few illusions about the coming war, still felt confident that the Schlieffen Plan would provide Germany with the strategic advantage in a long, hard conflict.

Moreover, the confidence that Britain would remain neutral in any future continental war particularly affected the risk calculations of men like the Kaiser, Bethmann and Jagow. Ned Lebow writes that 'nowhere was German delusion greater than with respect to the expectation of British

[150] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 528.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 108.

[153] Ibid. 109.

[154] Lebow, *Between Peace and War*, 132.

neutrality, a cornerstone of German policy throughout the crisis'.[155] It never seemed to have occurred to Bethmann that his single-option plan (what he called his 'calculated risk') to limit Britain's intervention in the continental war was totally at odds with the Schlieffen Plan's requirement to march German armies through neutral Belgium.[156] As late as early August, once it became clear that Britain and France *would* intervene on Russia's side, Bethmann satisfied himself with the notion that the war would be a 'violent, but short storm', and that, once Britain and France were defeated, they would join Germany in a triumvirate against 'the Russia colossus'.[157]

Temporal Discounting

Austro-Hungarian leaders favouring war with Serbia exhibited what Jack Snyder has popularly called 'better-now-than-later' thinking – a psychological phenomenon more properly understood as temporal discounting. We know that there is a distinct temporal bias associated with the respective operation of our dual mindsets, and that it generally runs in opposite directions: our reflexive mind is present-focused, more likely to value immediate rewards over those that might be gained in the longer term, and more prone to making automatic, confident assertions about the future based on what it already feels and knows. Our reflective mind, by contrast, is more future-focused, more likely to value the possibility of longer-term rewards over those that can be gained in the immediate moment, and more likely to appreciate the role of contingency in making possible multiple potential futures.

We learned in Chapter 2 that the reason our reflexive System 1 is biased towards the satisfaction of immediate needs comes down to its primary role of priming the mind and body to rapidly respond to threats. In this respect, System 1's myopia and correspondingly high rates of temporal discounting reflect this action-orientation.[158] This allows our reflexive brain to respond automatically and definitively to decision problems, although it is relatively inflexible. By contrast, our reflective System 2 is much less rapid and has limited capacity, but is significantly more flexible.[159]

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[155] Ibid. 129.

[156] Herwig, 'Germany', 181.

[157] Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York: Norton, 1967), 92.

[158] For more on the doer-planner dichotomy, see Richard Thaler, *Misbehaving: The Making of Behavioural Economics* (Great Britain: Allen Lane, 2015), 99–110.

[159] Stephen Benedict Dyson and Paul t' Hart, 'Crisis Management', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, eds. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 379.

During the July Crisis, men like Berchtold, Biliński, Stürgkh and Conrad extrapolated the present state of affairs into the future, which is to say that they believed Serbia's poisonous relations with Austria-Hungary would never improve (and, more likely, only worsen) in the near term. War was, therefore, considered unavoidable, and it was therefore better to engage now, while Austria-Hungary believed that it still had the upper hand. As William Mulligan writes: 'an assertive foreign policy risked war, but this risk was outweighed by the fear that, in the future, their position would become progressively worse'.[160] Most importantly, these threatening future extrapolations from a fearful present provided the necessary psychological rationale for indulging in the temptation of the moment, which was to avoid the painful short-term costs of appearing weak and risking another diplomatic defeat, which could provide fodder for both internal and external political opponents, in favour of the immediately satisfying response of war – for which any long-term risks and costs were, for the time being, purely hypothetical (if only because they resided in a more distant, and therefore unknowable, future).

So, too, was it hard to resist the siren songs of the Austro-Hungarian military, who, Conrad and Berchtold feared, would not stomach a third partial mobilisation (after those in 1912 and 1913) that did not lead to action.[161] Berchtold conceded to his colleagues during the 7 July Council of Ministers meeting that 'a clash of arms with Serbia could have war with Russia as a consequence'.[162] However, he swiftly rebutted his own admission by noting that war with Russia was inevitable 'sooner or later' and that Austria-Hungary's position would be worse later on.[163] Berchtold repeated this line of thinking on 21 July, in a letter to his ambassador in Rome, Count Mérey, who responded that he:

> Would regard it as a genuine stroke of luck if war with Serbia does come about. Supposing a European conflagration does result, that would seem to me to prove that it was in the air and would have come about sooner or later … and there is no doubt … the present moment is more favourable than a later one.[164]

The extent to which many of Austria-Hungary's leaders had exhausted their reserves of long-term patience was evident not only by the speed with which the ultimatum was decided upon, but also the extent to which a full judicial inquiry into the killings (which would have taken time, but whose

[160] Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War*, 232.

[161] Otte, *July Crisis*, 63.

[162] Jannen Jr., 'The Austro-Hungarian Decision for War in July 1914', 58.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid. 62.

results could have been publicised to the world and potentially could have lent Vienna more international credibility should it need to launch a war in future) was immediately rejected out of hand.[165]

Once again, Tisza's initial reaction to the killing of the Archduke stands in sharp contrast to the 'better-now-than-later' thinking of his colleagues. For Tisza, who favoured a *politique de longue main* in the Balkans, there was no sense of immediate urgency after Sarajevo. Instead, he advocated 'calm deliberation, *sang froid* and a quiet, yet determined and persistent approach on our part'.[166] Part of the reason that Tisza may have adopted such a measured view (apart from his self-interested desire to prevent the dilution of Hungarian influence with the absorption of additional Slavic territories) was because he possessed a coherent foreign policy programme. Unlike Berchtold and Conrad, who remained uniquely fixated on responding to the Serbian threat throughout the July Crisis, and who projected their fears accordingly, Tisza saw many more possibilities for manoeuvre in the future.

The Hungarian premier instead supported developing stronger relations with Bulgaria, to act as a counterweight to Serbia and to an increasingly apathetic Romania – such a revitalisation of Balkan policy would require fresh thinking and, above all, patience. His fears were the mirror opposite of those of Berchtold: a unilateral strike against Serbia, although a tempting reprisal for the 'abominable deed of Sarajevo', would be 'a fatal mistake' that might 'unleash a great war under unpropitious circumstances' – particularly now that 'Romania was as good as lost and Bulgaria was exhausted from the latest round of fighting in the Balkans'.[167]

German leaders were, if anything, more affected by present bias than their Austrian counterparts. During his conversations with Alexander Hoyos, Kaiser Wilhelm famously urged his Austrian counterpart to seize the present moment 'which is so favourable to us'.[168] Germany urged its ally to move quickly, while Europe was still in mourning for the slain Archduke and public sympathy had not yet waned, to present Russia and the rest of the Triple Entente with a *fait accompli*: 'An ultimatum from Vienna to Belgrade followed up rapidly with a short victorious war if Serbia did not capitulate would leave the other great powers unable to intervene until it was too late'.[169] Such

[165] Fromkin, *Europe's Last Summer*, 160.

[166] Otte, *July Crisis*, 62.

[167] Ibid. 63–64.

[168] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 108.

[169] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 529.

present bias was no doubt enhanced by their already heightened levels of threat sensitivity and risk propensity – for, once it became clear to the Kaiser and Bethmann that a war was both necessary and feasible, they wanted to move as quickly as possible to avoid or forestall the future negative consequences of their actions.

Lurking in the background was the fear that, if a future war should come, German leaders were facing an acute shortage of time with which to prosecute it successfully. This was largely because Germany's army expansion peaked in 1914, as compared to the expansion of the Russian and French armies, which were ongoing, and because Austria-Hungary seemed to be 'reaching the limits of its power potential as a ramshackle state'.[170] As General Moltke, who believed that war must be waged 'now or never', reiterated in Berlin on 29 July: 'we shall never hit it again so well as we do now with France's and Russia's expansion of their armies incomplete'. The lure of landing a military *coup de grâce* against the Triple Entente powers now, before it was too late, proved too tempting as set against the as-yet unrealised risks inherent in any future continental war – one, moreover, whose risks they confidently believed they could avoid.

As Luigi Albertini, reviewing the evidence to this effect, concluded: 'However much the German government might affirm that if war had to come, it was better for it to come at once than later, it may well be doubted whether they would so light-heartedly have embarked on the adventure if they had been convinced of immediate Russian intervention'.[171] Even after it became clear that Russia would not stand aside, this impulse to move before it was too late was also reflected in Germany's prompt declaration of war after Russia's announcement of general mobilisation on 31 July. In fact, both German and Russian leaders knew that even a general mobilisation in Russia did not imply a declaration of war (as Danilov later wrote, it only affected the empire's ability to defend itself and place its forces in readiness).[172] However, German leaders made no such distinction, and seized on what they believed to be their last opportunity to rejuvenate the Reich by altering the strategic balance in the Balkans.

The Triple Entente

[170] Jack Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later: The Paradox of 1914 as Everyone's Favored Year for War', *International Security* 39, no. 1 (2014): 75.

[171] Luigi Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914*, ed. Isabella M. Massey, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), 161.

[172] Rich, 'Russia', 224.

Threat Sensitivity

Russia's participation in the July Crisis began a few weeks after the initial decisions were taken by Germany and Austria-Hungary. The turning point for Russian leaders came on 24 July, with the presentation of Austria-Hungary's ultimatum to Serbia, which triggered the country's stepwise progress into the crisis. However, having cracked Austria-Hungary's diplomatic codes several years previously, Russian decision-makers were aware that a 'sharp note' would be presented to Belgrade several days (indeed, up to a week) before its actual delivery on the evening of 23 July. Although Russian leaders did not know the precise contents of the text beforehand, Foreign Minister Sazonov had already reflexively decided that it was, according to his Chief of Staff Baron Moritz Schilling, '*la guerre Européenne!*'[173] In a conversation with Peter Bark, Russia's Finance Minister, Schilling relayed that 'Sazonov considered war unavoidable'.[174] Even as Russian leaders lurched from one decision to the next in the six fateful days between the 24 July presentation of the Austrian ultimatum and the 30 July Russian declaration of general mobilisation, the remarkable unity that they displayed, and the consistency of their position of resisting Austro-Hungarian demands on Serbia, stands in contrast to the dissension that characterised decision-making during the Winter Crisis of 1912–1913.[175]

Much like their counterparts in Austria-Hungary and Germany, Russian leaders felt that their country's very survival as a Great Power was under severe threat. Sazonov described the impression that Austria-Hungary's strident response to the Sarajevo assassinations left on him in a crucial Council of Ministers meeting on 24 July to decide the Russian response to the Austrian ultimatum:

> The moment had come when Russia, faced with the annihilation of Serbia, would lose all her authority if she did not declare herself the defender of a Slavonic nation threatened by powerful neighbours … If Russia failed to fulfil her historic mission she would be considered a decadent State and would henceforth have to take second place among the powers ... If, at this critical juncture, the Serbs were abandoned to their fate, Russian prestige in the Balkans would collapse utterly.[176]

The aggressive and powerful Agriculture Minister Alexander Krivoshein, a Germanophobe to the core, took Sazonov's argument a step further by declaring that 'if Russia did not take a strong stand

[173] McMeekin, *July 1914*, 176.

[174] Ibid. 178.

[175] Rich, 'Russia', 190.

[176] Ibid. 215.

this time, the government – if not the whole Tsarist regime – would collapse in the face of public contempt for her weakness'.[177] His argument, recalled Bark, 'made a profound impression on the Cabinet'.[178] (The collapse Krivoshein so feared would, of course, occur a few years into the war.)

Russian threat sensitivity levels with respect to Austro-Hungarian designs in Serbia were inflated by the perception that what lay behind Vienna's actions was a German bid for world power. Sazonov was convinced that the ultimatum was only a 'pretext that would enable her [Germany] to prove her superiority by the use of force'.[179] Indeed, the focus of the crucial Crown Council meeting on 24 July was not on Austria-Hungary but on Germany, and the ways in which previous Russian weakness on the international scene was believed to have encouraged aggressive German behaviour – the Austrian ultimatum had 'obviously been drawn up with Germany's connivance'.[180] If Serbia complied with Austria-Hungary's demands, it was believed, it would become a *de facto* protectorate of the Central Powers.[181] Austria-Hungary had not acted without Germany's blessing, it was correctly assumed.

However, the foundation of Germany's support of its ally stemmed not from a perception of past Russian weakness, but from the fear of the future growth of Russian power. Nor, for all their sophisticated deciphering of Austro-Hungarian diplomatic cables, did Russian leaders seem to realise that Germany had largely been left in the dark during the drafting of the ultimatum, and that it was Austria-Hungary, not Germany, that initially sought to use the occasion of the Sarajevo murders as a pretext for aggressive action. Russian intelligence assessments during the July Crisis fed this threat sensitivity, with their tendency to view the situation in dire terms 'rather than offer a small menu of likely greater and less probabilities and explanations'.[182] As Bruce Menning observes, and as our reflexive System 1 brain would predict, Russian analysts and observers 'connected the dots too well'.[183]

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[177] McMeekin, *July 1914*, 183.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World.*

[181] Ibid. 172.

[182] Bruce Menning, 'Russian Military Intelligence, July 1914: What St. Petersburg Perceived and Why It Mattered', *The Historian* 77, no. 2 (2015): 267.

[183] Ibid.

Risk Propensity

According to Niall Ferguson, 'the Russians overestimated their own military capability almost as much as the Germans did; they also stubbornly ignored the evidence that their political system would crack under the strain of another war so soon after the fiasco of defeat by Japan in 1905'.[184] Fears of an internal revolution by the restive urban proletariat that would lead to the disintegration of the army and the home front – of the kind that Russia in fact faced three years into the war – did not appear to guide the government's reaction to Austria and Germany's coercive diplomacy in July 1914.[185] Instead, Russian leaders laboured 'under the double illusion that Russia's resources would allow it to pursue its political goals and that it could simultaneously guard against a preeminent external danger'.[186] Their decision to stand firm and risk the possibility of a continental war was no doubt bolstered by clear French assurances – something the Russians lacked in 1912 during the Balkan Winter Crisis.

Although the absence of any precise documentation from the Franco-Russian summit of 20–23 July prevents more detailed analysis, historians are generally in agreement that the two powers used the discussions to reaffirm their commitment to the mutual obligations imposed by their alliance (obligations which the French nevertheless chose not to honour during the Bosnian annexation crisis and which remained uncertain during the Winter Crisis), and which, in this case, meant that France would stand by Russia against Austria-Hungary in the looming Balkan crisis.[187] At the end of the visit, Sazonov and Viviani shared what they euphemistically termed a 'perfect community of views' on the maintenance of peace in Europe, and especially the Balkans, with Russian officials in the embassy in Paris simultaneously reporting that the mood among French military circles was 'very elated'.[188]

Positive illusions that increased risk propensity and fostered wishful thinking were evident in Russian decision-making circles with respect to tactics as well as strategy, and increased the chances of a continental conflict breaking out. Vladimir Kokovtsov, the former Chairman of the Council of Ministers, had warned the Tsar and his military advisers during the Winter Crisis of 1912–1913 that a partial mobilisation only directed against Austria-Hungary was unlikely to have the desired effect

[184] Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Penguin, 2004), 249.

[185] Rich, 'Russia', 189.

[186] Ibid. 226.

[187] Ibid.

[188] Ibid. 217; David Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War: Europe, 1904–1914* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996), 388.

of peeling off German support for her ally in a mobilisation crisis – a move that Berlin was likely to see through in any case. 'A mobilisation remained a mobilisation', warned Kokovtsov at the time, to be followed by a European war. Sazonov, who had been in the room with Kokovtsov when Minister of War Sukhomlinov had presented his partial mobilisation plan to the Tsar, and who had agreed with him at the time, was unlikely to have been ignorant of the strategic implications of such a mobilisation and the bellicose perceptions of St. Petersburg this was likely to prompt in Berlin.

Moreover, the Russian army's Plan 19 demanded mobilisation against both Germany and Austria-Hungary, since it was physically impossible for Russia to mobilise effectively against Austria-Hungary without extensive use of the Warsaw railway hub – a move that would inevitably alarm German commanders in East Prussia.[189] However, Sazonov reversed course during the July Crisis and, in the very same palace where he had once stood in support of Kokovtsov, he now threw his weight behind War Minister Sukhomlinov and Agriculture Minister Krivoshein in their support for extraordinary military measures against Austria-Hungary. Moreover, armed with their own 'blank cheque' from France, Sazonov no doubt felt confident that, even if the partial mobilisation proved untenable due to the unavoidability of war, Russia would be sufficiently supported and prepared, and gave instructions to Chief of the General Staff Nikolai Yanushkevich to ready the order for partial mobilisation.[190] Dong Sun Lee writes that 'given [his] expressions of military confidence, Sasonov did not hesitate to stand firmly behind the Serbs even at the risk of war with the Central Powers'.[191]

Temporal Discounting

Individuals in a reflexive mindset are expected to experience higher rates of temporal discounting than those in a reflective mindset. High rates of temporal discounting imply that actions and rewards in the present are valued over those in the future. 'Russia in 1914', writes Sean McMeekin, 'was a country with much to lose, but for which the risks of inaction seemed, by June or July of that year, to be at least as great, and possibly greater, than those of action'.[192] To the extent that Russian decision-makers attempted to slow down the doomsday machine of war – albeit one whose pace had already been set by Austria-Hungary and Germany – it was press for an extension of the Austrian

[189] McMeekin, *July 1914*, 180.

[190] Ibid. 178-182.

[191] Dong Sun Lee, *Power Shifts, Strategy, and War: Declining States and International Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2007), 68.

[192] McMeekin, *The Russian Origins of the First World War*, 40.

deadline for Serbia's reply to the Austrian ultimatum to allow the rest of the Great Powers room to manoeuvre.

However, much like their German and Austrian counterparts, Russian decision-makers during the July Crisis were equally affected by 'better-now-than-later' thinking, which affected both their willingness to go to war and the pace at which they were willing to escalate the confrontation with their adversaries. Even before he knew the precise contents of the ultimatum presented by Austria-Hungary to Serbia, Sazonov had resolved to risk war by refusing to countenance Austria's demands. His now-famous interjection *'C'est la guerre Européene!'* was not so much a spontaneous expression of surprise upon reading the ultimatum (he had known that something of the kind was coming for days) as it was a self-fulfilling prophecy – one that Sazonov helped set in motion one hour after receiving news of the Austrian ultimatum by instructing Nikolai Yanushkevich, Chief of the Russian General Staff, to make 'all arrangements for putting the army on a war footing', which included secret mobilisations along the German frontier.[193]

And even after Sazonov received warnings from British Ambassador Sir George Buchanan on 25 July that 'if Russia mobilised' Germany 'would probably declare war at once', Sazonov made it plain to Buchanan that unless Berlin restrained its ally, 'Russia cannot allow Austria to crush Serbia and become [the] predominant power in [the] Balkans, and, secure of [the] support of France, she will face all the risks of war'.[194] Thus, from 24 July, Sazonov believed that Russia must either prepare for war, and even risk increasing the likelihood of such an eventuality by virtue of its own military preparations, or abandon Serbia – along with any claims to Great Power status as concerned the Balkans and the Turkish Straits.[195] Temporal discounting may also help to explain why certain individuals, such as Minister of War Sukhomlinov, could concede that Russia would remain inferior to the Central Powers until the country's Great Programme of rearmament was complete in 1917 or 1918, but claim that the Russian army was nevertheless ready for the big war in 1914.[196]

[193] Ibid. 54.

[194] Otte, *July Crisis*, 296.

[195] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 429.

[196] Jack Snyder, 'Better Now Than Later: The Paradox of 1914 as Everyone's Favored Year for War', in *The Next Great War? The Roots of World War I and the Risk of U.S.-China Conflict*, eds. Richard N. Rosencrance and Steven E. Miller, Belfer Center Studies in International Security (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015), 41.

Did Mindsets Contribute?

As already discussed at length in this study, the leading decision paradigm of international relations is that of rational choice theory (also known as 'rational actor' or 'expected utility' theory), and it serves as the null hypothesis of this thesis. The null hypothesis of rational choice theory assumes that there is no connection between the mindsets of decision-makers and decision-making outcomes in international relations. Individuals, acting alone or in groups, are assumed to make decisions in an unbiased, uniform and 'rational' manner – meaning that they only respond to incoming information and subsequently re-calibrate the statistical probabilities and utilities of the range of available options to maximise the expected gains of policy choices. According to Kaufmann, rational actor models should either be consistent with no variation in assessments across individual actors in a group (because decision-makers have access to the same information and are perfect Bayesians, or 'belief updaters'), or with random variation (especially if decision-makers do not have uniform access to relevant information).

In contrast to the Balkan crises of 1912–1913, decision-makers in European capitals – particularly in Vienna, Berlin and St. Petersburg – were far more unified in their adoption of a confrontational posture during the July Crisis. Was their decision-making the result of 'rational updating' in response to evolving events? The last tense days of peace on the European continent were undoubtedly tumultuous and chaotic, but it does not appear from the historical record that the various decision-makers suffered from a significant lack of relevant intelligence or information. Both sides had considerable time to assess the doctrinal war plans of the others, as well as the basic strategic assumptions of their adversaries. In 1913, for example, the premier French military academy St. Cyr relied on a Schlieffen-type scenario for their cadets' final exams. The German General Staff based its estimate of military balance trends on quite detailed, accurate information – so much so that Holger Herwig, in his well-documented study of pre-war German intelligence, concluded that 'the German sense of peril in 1914 is clearly not ascribable to defects in the system of collecting or analysing intelligence'.[197]

Much the same could be said of the Russians, who, in the wake of their defeat by Japan in 1905, experienced something of a renaissance in military intelligence collection, with sums for intelligence activity increasing twenty-fold in the interval between the battles of Tsushima and Tannenberg.[198]

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[197] Herwig, 'Imperial Germany', 72.

[198] Menning, 'Russian Military Intelligence', 218.

The Russian General Staff understood Germany's motives and methods for preparing for a preventive war, should it become necessary, and, through a sophisticated network of spies and informants, had a rich vein of strategic intelligence on Hapsburg mobilisation planning from 1907 onwards.[199] Bruce Menning observes that 'in some instances the attainment of the military intelligence edifice so pressed the edge of the envelope that it seemed the Russians might know too much'.[200]

Yet it is hard to argue that the respective declarations of war were the products of Bayesian updating in the rational choice sense. Russia's likely refusal to countenance Serbia's destruction was a consideration that former German Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow admitted should have been apparent to any normal German diplomat at the time.[201] Evidence that punctured the comforting assumptions that underpinned German strategy, particularly as it concerned anticipated Russian and British reactions to the unfolding drama, 'was either suppressed or ignored until the very denouement of the crisis'.[202] The very fact that German leaders chose to wait until their perceived window had almost expired before attempting to forestall a Russian power shift suggests that they were not time-consistent, implicating issues of intertemporal choice that are simply not accounted for by the rational actor model. In France, Eugenia Kiesling writes that in an 'atmosphere of uncertainty and fear … French leaders did not weigh alternatives but desperately seized upon those dangerous choices that brought some clarity to the situation'.[203]

In no case was this arguably more apparent than in Austria-Hungary. The single-minded determination, coupled with the ease, with which Austro-Hungarian leaders immediately decided upon a war with Serbia blatantly disregarded both the verdict of their own country's investigation into the murder (which failed to prove either complicity or responsibility on the part of the Serbian government, and which was not received until a full week after the decision to go to war) and the extreme danger of provoking Russia, whose standing army was three times the size of that maintained by Austria-Hungary.[204] Such behaviour on the part of European leaders is difficult to

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[199] According to Russian Colonel Mikhail Svechin, chief of military intelligence for the St. Petersburg district before the war, Russia's network of informants may even have extended to the eldest son of Chief of the Austrian General Staff Conrad von Hötzendorf. Ibid. 222.

[200] Ibid. 220.

[201] Lebow, *Between Peace and War*, 123.

[202] Ibid. 147.

[203] Eugenia C. Kiesling, 'France', in *The Origins of World War I*, eds. Richard F. Hamilton and Holger H. Herwig (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 264.

[204] Watson, *Ring of Steel*, 11.

explain according to the rational actor model, particularly in such a relatively information-rich environment.

By contrast, the dual mindset theory predicts that certain key European leaders switched to a reflexive mindset once they entered a 'threat state' of stress, and became convinced that conflict was inevitable or unavoidable. For example, once Berchtold allayed Tisza's fears about a potential annexation of Serbia (whose absorption of its Slavic population would disadvantage his own Magyar constituency), he explained his conversion in mid-July to the German Ambassador in Vienna, Heinrich von Tschirschky: 'Every day had strengthened him in the conviction more and more that the Monarchy would have to come to an energetic decision in order to demonstrate its vitality and put an end to the intolerable conditions in the Southeast … I am now firmly convinced of its [the war's] necessity'.[212] He advocated for war on 14 July with the observation that 'the noose has already been placed around our neck and if we do not cut it away now, it would have strangled us at a more appropriate time'.[213]

Tisza echoes Russian Finance Minister Peter Bark's comment to Baron Schilling that, with the presentation of the Austrian ultimatum, Sazonov considered war unavoidable, and Bethmann Hollweg's confession in July 1914 that war appeared ever more attractive because of the 'constant threat of attack' and 'the greater likelihood of its inevitability in future'.[214] This also provides an explanation for why some individuals did not adopt what the Rubicon model would call an 'implemental', or overconfident, stance as war drew near (and, if anything, made their best attempts to arrest the pace of the escalating crisis). These included men like the German Ambassador to London, Prince Lichnowsky, who struggled in vain to get his government to support Sir Edward Grey's last-minute attempts at mediation, and Sir Edward Grey himself, who pushed (albeit belatedly) for another ambassadorial conference.[215] Both men had gone several nights without sleep in their efforts to find a solution and Lichnowsky was beside himself with grief at the outbreak of war, 'running about the Germany embassy in Carlton Terrace like a madman, dressed in his pyjamas in the middle of the afternoon', according to Walter Page, the American ambassador in London.[216] Such individuals, either by virtue of a lower sensitivity to the increased stress load or naturally greater

[212] Otte, *July Crisis*, 159.

[213] Watson, *Ring of Steel*.

[214] Ibid. 37.

[215] Martel, *The Month That Changed the World*, 328.

[216] John C. G. Röhl, 'The Curious Case of the Kaiser's Disappearing War Guilt: Wilhelm II in July 1914', in *An Improbable War: The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture Before 1914*, eds. Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 88.

mindware capabilities (either due to personality or prior experiences or both), were able to remain in a reflective mindset throughout the crisis and to withstand the pressures around them to go to war.

However, we know that several of the participants throughout the July Crisis experienced fluctuations in their respective mentalities and, here, too, the dual mindset theory may potentially shed some light. Margaret MacMillan writes that, as war drew closer, 'Europe was an odd combination of unease and complacency'.[217] We know from our discussion of the inverted-U curve that our reflexive System 1 is most likely to be activated at either end of the inverted-U spectrum. Owing to the near-misses of previous crises, stress levels were paradoxically both too low and too high during the July Crisis, and this created a highly combustible situation. For example, Grey, who is often criticised for the slow pace of his *sotto voce* diplomacy as the July Crisis progressed, found himself initially unconcerned by the potential for the Sarajevo murders to drag Europe into war, owing to the reduction of international tensions and his previous success in managing the fallout from the earlier Balkan crises.[218] Christopher Clark observes that 'the Ambassadors' Conference in London, for which Grey took much of the credit, left him confident in his ability to solve crises and "save peace", a confidence that would impede his ability to react in a timely fashion to the events of July 1914'.[219] Grey admits as much in his memoirs, although he downplays his principal role in dissolving the diplomatic mechanisms that might have prevented a war in 1914:

> In 1912–1913 the current of European affairs was setting towards war. In agreeing to a Conference … it was as if we all put out anchors to prevent ourselves from being swept away. The anchors held. Then the current seemed to slacken and the anchors were pulled up. The Conference was allowed to dissolve. We seemed to be safe. In reality it was not so; the set of the current was the same, and in a year's time, we were all swept into the cataract of war.[220]

As the crisis evolved and the acute stress burden mounted, Grey moved from an under-stimulated to a stimulated 'challenge state' of arousal (the point at which our reflective System 2 becomes activated – see Figure 2.2), but found that his efforts to change the minds of the principal belligerents were in vain. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Kaiser, for example, experienced occasional fluctuations in mindset whenever he experienced a temporary reduction in his immediate threat

[217] MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 510.

[218] Otte, 'Entente Diplomacy v. Détente, 1911–1914', 282.

[219] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 325.

[220] Massie, *Dreadnought*, 840–841.

state of stress (either because of positive developments, such as Serbia's near-total acceptance of the Austrian ultimatum, or because of negative developments, in which certain cherished assumptions, such as the ability of Germany to contain the conflict, were punctured by reality). Indeed, the Kaiser was not the only one to experience these temporary fluctuations. Max Hastings notes that in the last, tense days of the crisis:

> Many of the principals – the greatest men of their nations, the most powerful people in the world – experienced moments when they shrank in size. They glimpsed the horror of the consequences of the courses they were pursuing, and looked back over their shoulders in yearning. This was true of the Kaiser, Bethmann and Tsar Nicholas; but not, apparently, of any of the Austrians, or Moltke, or Sazonov.[221]

These mere glimpses were not enough, however, to ultimately counteract the effects of both the chronic stress load on, and the ego depletion and diminished mindware of, the participants as the July Crisis reached its final, fatal conclusion.

Moreover, we know from previous theoretical chapters that the act of deciding is the most ego-depleting activity of all – if individuals are not already in a reflexive mindset before formally deciding on a course of action, then the very act of deciding itself is likely to encourage the switch to reflexivity and the activation of our System 1. This, in turn, makes it extremely mentally taxing for individuals to revisit decisions already made. This would explain why so many of the key decision-makers, but particularly the three individuals best-placed to influence their respective monarchs (Berchtold, Bethmann Hollweg and Sazonov), found it so difficult to turn back once they had taken concrete steps in the direction of war in the summer of 1914.

After 28 June 1914, for example, one historian echoed that 'Berchtold had made up his mind … had counted the cost, and never looked back'. [222] Similarly, Sazonov counselled the Russian Chief of the General Staff to smash his telephone after the Tsar's order for general mobilisation had been given, while Bethmann Hollweg increasingly abstracted himself from the evolving crisis, characterising the advance of war at the beginning of August as a roll of the iron dice, to which he and others were mere spectators. It would also explain why many of the participants in the July Crisis drama considered their decisions once made to be the products of an impersonal fate or destiny – this, too,

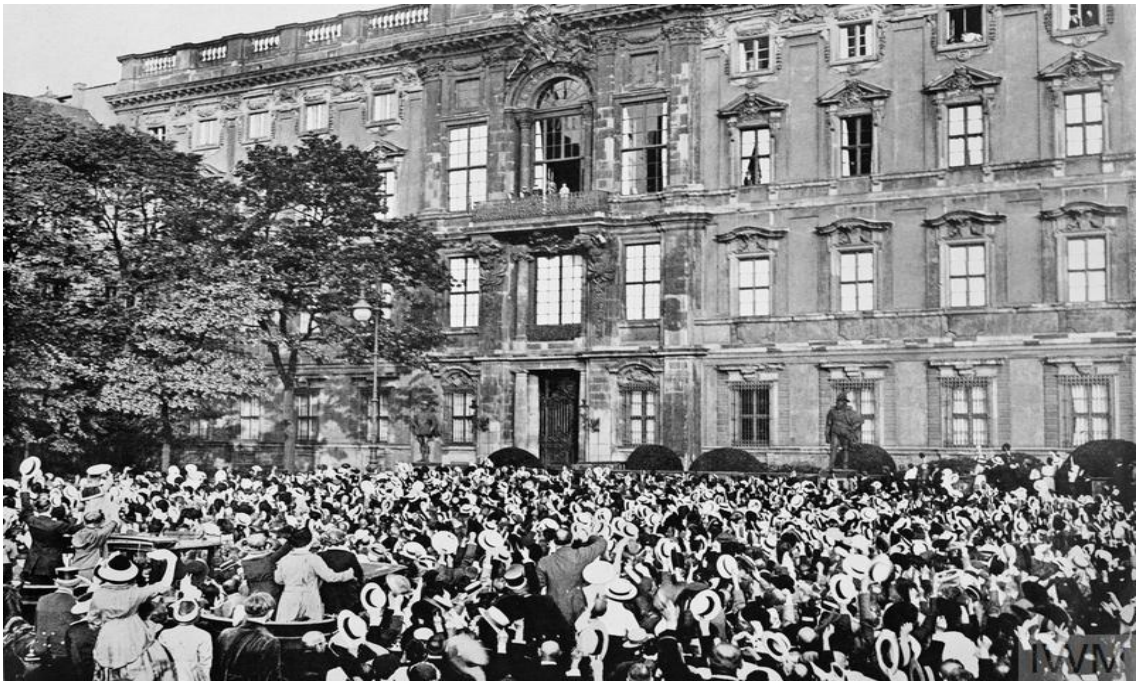
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[221] Stephen Van Evera, 'The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War', *International Security* 9, no. 1 (1984); Hastings, *Catastrophe*, 233.

[222] Gooch, *Before the War*, vol. 2 The Coming of the Storm, 444.

was a reflexive way of clinging to a sense of certainty and simplicity as the stress burden mounted, and of avoiding the unpleasant and mentally fatiguing task of questioning their own – potentially erroneous – intuitions. Christopher Clark reinforces the point by observing that 'if the future was already mapped out, then politics no longer meant choosing among options, each of which implied a different future' and each of which would have required complex mental arithmetic to weigh the prospective geopolitical trade-offs.[224]

Photograph 5.2 Berliners cheering Germany's declaration of war on Russia, 1 August 1914



Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum.[225]

Conclusion

This chapter applied the dual mindset framework to the second of two comparative case studies: an examination of crisis management during the July Crisis of 1914 that precipitated the First World War. It was argued that the predominance of a reflexive frame of mind among key decision-makers during crucial decision-making moments may help to account for the outbreak of war, due to the

[224] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 350.

[225] © IWM (Catalogue Number Q 81739). Reprinted with permission of the Imperial War Museum on the IWM Non-commercial Licence. 'Crowds cheering Kaiser Wilhelm II on the balcony of the Berliner Schloss after the German Government announced the order to mobilise and declared war on Russia, 1 August 1914. The following day, following the requirements of the Schlieffen Plan, Germany invaded Luxembourg and demanded free passage for its troops through Belgium in order to attack France.' Photograph publicly available in the IWM's 'The Road to War' collection at: http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205022452.

exacerbation of Snyder's identified psychological variables: pessimism (threat sensitivity), optimism (risk propensity) and 'better-now-than-later' thinking (temporal discounting). Whether the moment for a European war would have passed if Gavrilo Princip had not successfully assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne is not a question that is directly addressed by this thesis. Nor is the question of who deserves a greater share of the blame in the European hierarchy of culpability. As William Mulligan has observed: 'the international system evolved constantly and the pressures on peace may (or may not) have eased. The point is that the assassination of the Archduke on 28 June came at a moment when leaders in three capitals, Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Berlin, were least disposed to the preservation of peace'.[226] Echoing Mulligan, this author's assessment has remained strictly focused on the question of why these European leaders were indisposed to the maintenance of peace, in a way that they had not been just a few years previously.

The dual mindset theory has suggested that the successful resolution of the Balkan crises in 1912–1913 paradoxically helped to ensure the switch to reflexivity and the disastrous clash that followed one year later. This is because the changes wrought by the Balkan Wars, and the intensive efforts of what remained of the Concert of Europe to prevent them from igniting a general conflagration, simultaneously increased the sustained stress load on, and encouraged ego depletion on the part of, European decision-makers. Excepting certain individuals, such depletion, it has been argued, collectively lowered their respective 'reflective defences' – their capacity for reflective thought – when tasked with responding to the Sarajevo assassinations so soon after the conclusion of the previous round of crises.

In this regard, the chapter has argued that the Balkan Wars were not simply a dress rehearsal for July 1914 – they also made their own 'explosive contribution to the final catastrophe'.[227] This view accords with the views of many historians, such as Samuel Williamson Jr., who has noted that 'the dress rehearsals of 1912–1913 had programmed the Austrian-Russian-German decision-makers to act intuitively and instinctively, blissfully ignoring contrary evidence and simply hoping for the best'.[228] In a similar critique, Ned Lebow writes that while 'the reasons for their failure are numerous', they can 'ultimately be traced to lack of foresight in all the European capitals'.[229]

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[226] Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War*, 226.

[227] Turner, 'The Russian Mobilisation in 1914', 252.

[228] Samuel R. Williamson Jr., 'July 1914 Revisited and Revised: The Erosion of the German Paradigm', in *The Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 61.

[229] Lebow, *Between Peace and War*, 119.

The traits and biases associated with the operation of our reflexive System 1, while essential in responding to genuine threats, may help to explain lack of foresight on both sides that had the ultimate effect of narrowing and foreshortening each participant's field of vision. This in turn can help to explain why historians, such as Holger Herwig, have concluded that 'far from conjuring up what Fritz Fischer called a "bid for world power", the discussions of German leaders at the end of July and beginning of August centred only on managing the immediate crisis; there was no discussion of how that crisis related to the nation's future, to the Tirpitz [naval] plan, or to global power aspirations. *Balkanpolitik* had replaced *Weltpolitik*.' And why, particularly in the case of Russia and Austria-Hungary, 'the certainty of diplomatic defeat, and its foreseeable adverse effects in the short term, proved a more powerful spur not to compromise than the incalculable, because more distant, consequences of military conflict'.[230] Above all, it may help to explain the puzzle of the timing paradox of 1914 – that is, why, even though none of the leaders of the countries involved wanted or sought a world war in the summer of 1914, they were willing to take substantial risks in this direction in order to maintain their influence and avoid what was perceived to be yet another humiliation on the international stage.[231]

[230] Otte, *July Crisis*, 508.

[231] Jack S. Levy and Jack Snyder, 'Everyone's Favored Year for War—or Not?', *International Security* 39, no. 4 (2015): 208.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

'The international system changes when enough persons change their minds about it.'
PAUL SCHROEDER, *'System' and Systemic Thinking in International History* (1993)

'It is only by studying the minds of men that we shall understand the causes of anything.'
JAMES JOLL, *1914: The Unspoken Assumptions* (1968)

With the midnight expiry of Britain's ultimatum to Germany on the evening of 4 August 1914, 'the vials of wrath', wrote Churchill, 'were full'.[1] Although none of the decision-makers of 1914 expressly desired a continental war at the outset of the July Crisis, by the time it reached its confused and chaotic end, European leaders, as Henry Kissinger observed, had lost 'the sense of the tragic'.[2] Their collective loss disgorged tens of thousands of soldiers into scarred and fetid trenches and onto the 'shell-pitted wastes and leafless stumps that had once been green fields and waving poplars'.[3] Through a novel psychological reinterpretation of historical events, this thesis has sought to answer the question of why such a sense of tragedy was lost just at the moment when Europe seemed to be experiencing an unusual period of calm after the relatively successful crisis management of previous years.

Dual mindset theory was introduced to help explain this so-called timing paradox of 1914. The predominance of a reflective frame of mind among decision-makers during the Balkan crises of 1912–1913, it was argued, contributed to the maintenance of the peace. At the same time, the changes wrought by the Balkan Wars, and the intensive efforts of what remained of the Concert of Europe to prevent them from igniting a general conflagration, simultaneously increased the sustained stress load on, and encouraged ego depletion on the part of, European decision-makers. This depletion, it was argued, lowered their 'reflective defences', encouraging a transition to a

[1] Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911–1918* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 13.

[2] Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1974), 6.

[3] Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994; repr., First Ballantine Books Edition: Reprint April 1994), 439.

predominantly reflexive frame of mind. This transition, in turn, may have contributed to the outbreak of war in the summer of 1914. Such a thesis is in keeping with the latest historiographical literature on the First World War that has trended away from the question of what country was most responsible for the war to how such a catastrophe could happen.[4]

Of course, one must always be both cautious and humble when generalising about either war and peace decisions or the causes of the First World War. There is unlikely to ever be a definitive interpretation or a consensus view of the war's outbreak, and it has certainly not been the intention of this author to provide one here. Nevertheless, John Keiger reminds us that:

> The interaction of psychological variables with political and strategic conditions needs to be at the heart of any analysis of foreign policy decision-taking, and all the more so of decisions for war. Without it any understanding of the process by which the Great Powers assessed the risk of war and embarked on it in 1914 will be incomplete.[5]

So, too, this author might add, will any understanding that does not account for the puzzle of why they did not embark on it prior to 1914 when they had several opportunities to do so.

With these objectives in mind, this thesis has consciously avoided wading into important, but already well-worn, debates about the probability versus improbability of the war's occurrence, and about whether structural versus contingent causes possess greater causal weight in the grand scheme of events. Both structural and contingent approaches are clearly necessary for a more complete understanding of why the war broke out; however, neither category, this thesis has argued, presents an adequate explanation of the timing paradox of 1914. The two dominant and opposing models of the individual decision-maker in international relations, the rational actor 'optimiser' model and the psycho-dynamic 'cognitive miser' model, have each also fallen short of the mark in this regard.

Instead, the dual mindset framework has attempted to plough a careful furrow between the fertile fields of international relations theory and history, and between nomothetic and idiographic research. Context, contingency and agency all mattered to the outcome of the two sets of case studies examined in this study. However, a psychological approach such as the one provided here also

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[4] Richard Ned Lebow, 'What Can International Relations Theory Learn from the Origins of World War I?', *International Relations* 28, no. 4 (2014): 388.

[5] John Keiger, 'France's Unreadiness for War in 1914 and its Implications for French Decision-Making in the July Crisis', in *The Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Jack S. Levy and John A. Vasquez (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 272.

suggests the existence of certain established patterns of brain function and human behaviour that supply testable hypotheses for political scientists. In elaborating upon these patterns, the point has been neither to condemn nor to absolve the individual decision-makers of 1914 of responsibility, but rather to explain the impact of the psychological mindsets through which their choices were made. That different men could easily have made different choices is not in doubt; this thesis accords with the basic conclusion of T. G. Otte, that unique individuals 'acting in response to external and internal stimuli, and to perceived opportunities and threats', were central to the developments that led to war.[6] The more interesting question, from the perspective of dual mindset theory, is why so many of the same men made different choices in 1914 from the ones they made in 1912–1913.

The Men of 1914: Sleepwalkers or Gamblers?

Were the men of 1914 sleepwalkers, 'watchful but unseeing' and 'blind to the reality of the horror they were about to bring into the world'? Or were they gamblers, 'aware of and acknowledging the risk that things could go wrong but hoping against hope that their bets would play out right'?[9] This thesis has proposed that the First World War was neither accidental nor premeditated: rather, it unfolded in some liminal space in between. Decision-makers were, in theory, capable of slowing down or even arresting the doomsday machine if they chose (for what else can explain many of these same political leaders doing just that during previous crises?) At the same time, it stretches the boundaries of belief to think that the war that unfolded was the product of a consciously planned attempt at a preventive continental war, an accusation that has most frequently been levelled against Germany and its leaders. As Frank Gavin convincingly observes:

> If one were going to launch a preventive war, it would be hard to go about it in a worse way: waiting weeks while a smouldering crisis provoked by your bumbling, tone-deaf ally unfolded in a manner that allowed everyone to politically and militarily prepare, even allowing your main adversary time to begin mobilisation without replying in kind.[10]

Instead, this thesis has proposed that the mindsets of the decision-makers involved were a crucial intervening variable that affected how changes in the strategic context were interpreted and, subsequently, the decisions that were made on the basis of those interpretations. The characteristics

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[6] T. G. Otte, *July Crisis: The World's Descent Into War, Summer 1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 506.

[9] Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 562; Francis J. Gavin, 'History, Security Studies, and the July Crisis', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014).

[10] Gavin, 'History, Security Studies, and the July Crisis', 326.

of our reflexive System 1 brain – above all, its threat sensitivity, risk propensity and temporal discounting – may help to explain why each of the major belligerents genuinely believed that it had to take inordinate and immediate risks to defend itself and its prospects of survival in the international system in 1914, while the characteristics of our reflective System 2 brain may help to explain why these beliefs held less sway in 1912-1913. They may also help to explain why we so often encounter the paradoxical combination of fearfulness and foreboding alongside outsized arrogance and swagger in many of the same individuals of 1914, and why so many national leaders felt that they could not reverse their decisions once they had mentally accepted the coming showdown.

Not everyone thought the same way in 1914, of course. Some, men like Generals Moltke and Conrad, were convinced of the inevitability of war long before their civilian overlords; others, men like Prime Minister Tisza, and even at times Kaiser Wilhelm, fluctuated in their positions during the July Crisis; while still others, men like Prince Lichnowsky and, latterly, Sir Edward Grey, strove the best they could to stop the doomsday machine in its tracks once they had grasped the full import of the crisis. Nevertheless, enough of the key individuals across the belligerent countries – principally Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia – switched to a reflexive frame of mind during the July Crisis to tip the balance towards war. This thesis has argued that an important reason for this was what psychologists call ego depletion: it was argued that an increased stress load and a diminished capacity for mindware – the direct result of attempting to manage the geopolitical changes tied to the Balkan Wars – lowered the reflective defences of its principal participants.

For this reason, it would be a mistake to view the Balkan Wars and the crises they engendered as the mere precursor of what was to come, and not, as many of their contemporaries did, as significant events on their own terms, whose outcomes were not foreordained.[11] In this regard, the Balkan Wars and their resolution should not be seen as 'a series of beads threaded together to make a chain with the bead marked "1914" at its centre'.[12] Instead, what is striking is the extent to which these crises – in a mere span of months – had so narrowed the field of vision of the continental powers that none seriously considered negotiation a viable option in the aftermath of the Sarajevo assassinations.[13] In retrospect, the great historical irony is that, as the aperture irrevocably narrowed for the so-called men of 1914, it widened for many of the soldiers they sent to kill and be killed. One of the most

[11] See, for example, Noel Buxton and Charles Roden Buxton, *The War and the Balkans* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1915).

[12] T. G. Otte, 'Entente Diplomacy v. Détente, 1911–1914', in *The Wars Before the Great War: Conflict and International Politics Before the Outbreak of the First World War*, eds. Dominik Geppert, William Mulligan, and Andreas Rose (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 264.

[13] Otte, *July Crisis*, 509.

famous, and seemingly miraculous, episodes of the First World War was the Christmas Truce of 1914. What began as a group of soldiers tentatively shouting 'No shoot!' up and down the trenches in one another's languages matured into an agreement to halt hostilities during Christmas dinner and eventually developed into an extensive network of exchanges and mutual restraint across 500 miles of trenches – bartering for food and tobacco, joint burial services and unspoken agreements to halt shelling at mealtimes[14]. This produced a striking phenomenon, whereby war machines in combatant countries 'spewed the usual pseudospeciating propaganda' but the letters and diaries of individual soldiers in the trenches recorded minimal hostility towards their enemy, in the recognition that 'they have people they love at home, they too have to endure mud, rain and steel'.[15]

Photograph 6.1 British and German Soldiers Posing During the Christmas Truce of 1914



Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Creative Commons.

Agendas for Future Research

This thesis was constructed as a plausibility probe into the relevance of dual mindset theory for decision-making in international relations. Harry Eckstein originally defined a plausibility probe as a trial test of a theory on an illustrative case, or set of cases, to determine whether it warranted 'the pains and costs of [formal] testing'; it is generally considered to be an intermediary step between

[14] Not everyone participated in the Christmas Truce and one soldier in particular condemned his fellow combatants as traitors – a lance corporal named Adolf Hitler. Robert Sapolsky, *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* (London: The Bodley Head, 2017), 662–666.

[15] Ibid. 666. See also Tony Ashworth, *Trench Warfare, 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

hypothesis generation and more structured or formalised hypothesis testing.[16] The analysis of dual mindsets thus far suggests that such a theory is not implausible, and, indeed, offers several fruitful directions for future research on the role and impact of mindsets in foreign policy and, more specifically, crisis decision-making. These include future research agendas related to theory testing, as well as to theory development. According to Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, theory testing is primarily concerned with strengthening or weakening support for a given theory, narrowing or extending the scope conditions of that theory, and determining whether the theory provides the best explanation for a case or phenomenon as compared against one or more competing theories. Theory development aims to uncover 'new or omitted variables, hypotheses, causal paths, types, or interactions effects'.[17] Both are necessary in the construction of robust international relations theories.

Theory Testing

This thesis has previously remarked on the extent to which international relations scholarship has remained unduly focused on foreign policy decisions that precipitate war or conflict. The attention given to the recurrence of war and its many causes is – given the horrors generally associated with it – understandable. Unfortunately, in many instances it has also skewed the universe of cases examined by scholars, and, in the process, our view of the contribution of individual psychology and human behaviour to international crisis management. As Robert Jervis has observed, the field's obsession with rationality and of the psychological deviations from it that precipitate war 'inclines us to giving points or demerits to the decision-makers in a way that may obscure understanding', and, just as importantly, may overlook the potential value of psychology in accounting for more salutary outcomes in international affairs.[18]

While the Cuban Missile Crisis stands out as a notable counter-example, a more complete study of mindsets would include far more hypothesis testing of crises that do not end in conflict, to include those that force a more permanent easing of tensions on the part of their participants. Previous psychological work on conflict avoidance has predominantly focused on the role of deterrence, at

[16] Harry Eckstein, 'Case Study and Theory in Political Science', in *Strategies of Inquiry: Handbook of Political Science*, eds. Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (London: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 108; Jack Levy, 'Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference', *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 25, no. 1 (2008): 3.

[17] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, ed. Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, BCSIA Studies in International Security (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 109.

[18] Robert Jervis, *How Statesmen Think: The Psychology of International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 3.

the expense of other psychological phenomena, such as under-confidence, caution, and restraint.[19] Additional research into international crises that do not devolve into war would help to refine our understanding of the scope conditions in which reflective mindsets may or may not play a strong causal role and, in the process, contest the belief that 'good' outcomes in international affairs can only ever occur outside the confines of psychological explanations. As Dominic Johnson rightly points out, 'psychological and biological dispositions will continue to be seen as mistakes or problems until we widen our dataset to look at successes as well'.[20]

This raises another, related issue, which is that of too easily inferring the 'rationality' of decisions from the quality of their outcomes.[21] In international relations scholarship, war is generally assigned to the realm of 'bad' or 'irrational' outcomes in international affairs, and, therefore, any psychological biases that might facilitate its outbreak naturally fall into this normative category as well. This is true with respect to much of the scholarship on the outbreak of the First World War. Although it is certainly not this author's intention to dispute the consensus (perhaps the only consensus that can be said to exist concerning the First World War) that the conflict that erupted from the July Crisis was anything other than a global tragedy, scholars conducting future research on mindsets must guard against the implicit and facile presumption that reflexive mindsets are automatically 'bad' and reflective mindsets automatically 'good' for decision-making in international relations.

Such a presumption derives from scholars' attachment to the standards of the rational actor model, in which war is rarely, if ever, the rational choice. More extensive testing of retrospectively 'good' outcomes in international relations will likely reveal not only that reflexive mindsets may occasionally produce positive outcomes, but that avoidance of conflict may not always be the appropriate means of achieving desired ends. One need only juxtapose Churchill's refusal to sue for a negotiated peace with Hitler in May 1940 with Chamberlain's pursuit of appeasement at Munich eight months prior.

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[19] Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974).

[20] Dominic Johnson, 'Survival of the Disciplines: Is International Relations Fit for the New Millennium?', *Millennium* 43, no. 2 (2015): 752.

[21] Jervis, *How Statesmen Think*, 3.

Above all, the preoccupation of international relations scholars with labelling foreign policy decisions as 'rational' or 'irrational' according to the standards of rational choice theory risks obscuring our understanding of events. Chaim Kaufman similarly concludes that:

> The ultimate goal … should not be to decisively establish that foreign policy makers decide either 'rationally' or 'irrationally'. Rather, we should seek to establish the conditions, limitations, and strengths of different psychological effects in order to develop a more sophisticated, integrated decision-making model which faithfully represents actual political decision making.[22]

By draining much of the blood from portentous decisions, theoretical debates over rationality place political scientists at a disadvantage in terms of doing what historians are always preaching: understanding the past on its own terms. Scott Sagan, for example, has argued that Japan's decision to initiate a preventive war with the United States in 1941 technically met the standard threshold for rationality, in that it was 'a conscious calculation to maximise utility based on a consistent value system'.[23] However, this tell us nothing about why Japanese leaders had psychologically reached a point in time where they felt that a preventive strike was the only way to maximise their welfare, or whether they could have realistically achieved their goals through different means. Similarly, ascribing the outbreak of the First World War to the pervasiveness of an irrational and ultimately self-defeating 'cult of the offensive' that gripped European general staffs on the eve of the conflict, while provocative and genuinely interesting, tells us little about why this 'gulf between myth and the realities of warfare' existed, why it exerted such a powerful hold on the minds of decision-makers in 1914, as opposed to previous years, and why it has so rarely re-surfaced as an explanation for war in other crises and contexts.[24]

Finally, more hypothesis testing can and should be done on the timing, duration and frequency of crises as they affect war and peace decisions in international relations. As Arthur Stein reminds us, 'Wars are the end point of a host of actions and reactions that extend back in time beyond the period immediately preceding the opening of armed hostilities. Pre-war crises and the inferences that states draw from them for their subsequent interactions are crucial to understanding the emergence of

[22] Chaim Kaufmann, 'Out of the Lab and Into the Archives: A Method for Testing Psychological Explanations of Political Decision Making', *International Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1994).

[23] Scott D. Sagan, 'The Origins of the Pacific War', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (1988): 894.

[24] Stephen Van Evera, 'The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War', *International Security* 9, no. 1 (1984): 58.

war'.[26] Coral Bell once referred to such a series of confrontations as a 'crisis slide' into war, and found that a pattern of successive crises over several years historically most often ended in conflict.[27]

One reason that political scientists have often neglected to study the problem of ongoing and repeated interactions between states is the fallacy of the independence of political events. Many studies of international politics, particularly quantitative ones, use the standard practice of large-n case studies that treat individual political events as independent of one another.[28] Excepting game-theoretic approaches, such studies tend to treat crises, events or disputes as static rather than sequential. However, as this initial research into the effects of ego depletion on the human mind has demonstrated, decisions are rarely made in a vacuum. Wars rarely occur the first time that states experience a serious dispute. 'Rather', as Arthur Stein observes, 'most wars reflect long-standing conflicts of interests and are preceded by crises that are at least temporarily resolved'. [29] Understanding why decisions for war were made requires an equally rigorous understanding of why they were not made previously (and, in some cases, vice versa). A more complete study of mindsets would specify the causal effects of recurring crises on both war and peace outcomes.

Theory Development

James Goldgeier and Philip Tetlock observe that 'psychological explanations work best when seamlessly integrated into more macro-organisational, societal, economic, and systemic approaches to international relations'.[30] 'Properly integrated, psychological explanations fill logical holes in existing theoretical coverage'.[31] Unfortunately, psychological approaches in international relations still leave much to be desired with respect to their engagement and integration with the major theoretical perspectives in the field. Perhaps unsurprisingly, psychological explanations have made the greatest inroads into realist thinking, as compared with the other major paradigms, such as institutionalism or constructivism. This is mainly because of the ways in which cognitive biases are often associated with misperception and with the outbreak of conflict, and because many realist

[26] Arthur A. Stein, 'Respites or Resolutions? Recurring Crises and the Origins of War', in *The Next Great War? The Roots of World War I and the Risk of U.S.–China Conflict*, eds. Richard N. Rosencrance and Stephen E. Miller (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015), 20.

[27] Coral Bell, *The Conventions of Crisis: A Study in Diplomatic Management* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 14–15, 17–18, 55–57.

[28] See, for example, Daniel M. Jones, Stuart A. Bremer and J. David Singer, 'Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816–1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns', *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 15, no. 2 (1996).

[29] Stein, 'Respites or Resolutions?', 14.

[30] James Goldgeier and Philip Tetlock, 'Psychological Approaches', in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, The Oxford Handbooks of Political Science (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 476.

[31] Ibid.

thinkers implicitly rely on psychological 'perceptions' (usually threat perceptions) to fill gaps in realist theorising.[32]

Other realists have looked to evolutionary psychology and to the biologically adaptive role of social behaviours to serve as an intellectual foundation for the egoistic and dominating instincts of human behaviour that many classical realists believe lies at the heart of recurring interstate conflict.[33] The psychology of, and the extensive neurobiological research corroborating, the concept of reflexive mindsets introduced in this study can potentially expand the explanatory range of many realist theories in this regard – particularly where, in the case of structural realism, the general concept of anarchy alone struggles to explain specific foreign policy decisions.

However, constructivist and institutionalist approaches, 'which should in principle be open to the inclusion of psychological variables', have only given scant attention to individual agency.[34] Nevertheless, the dual mindset theory supplies many potentially fruitful theory-building possibilities within both traditions. Hearkening back to the July Crisis, Sir Edward Grey regretted that the Great Powers within the Concert of Europe never made the London Conference a 'permanent machine', stating his belief that the absence of a regular mechanism for mediation was, in part, responsible for European leaders' getting swept up in the cataract of war.[35] More research is necessary to determine to what extent institutions and their particular institutional designs – including, but not limited to, their transaction costs, levels of transparency and formality, binding rules, established practices, mechanisms for crisis management and regularised patterns of contact and sustained engagement among members – may or may not facilitate cooperation, détente and collective action through the activation of our more prospective, cognitively empathic and reflective mind.

The same holds true for constructivist scholars, who are primarily interested in the social construction of actors and the norms they share, and the practices in which they mutually participate. Psychological experiments have demonstrated that the formation of certain customs, norms and habits 'can actually improve self-control in the long run by triggering automatic mental

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[32] For examples in each genre see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

[33] Bradley Thayer, 'Bringing in Darwin: Evolutionary Theory, Realism, and International Politics', *International Security* 25, no. 2 (2000).

[34] Jack S. Levy, 'Psychology and Foreign Policy Decision-Making', in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, eds. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 301. For a rare exception see Paul A. Kowert and Vaughn P. Shannon, *Psychology and Constructivism in International Relations: An Ideational Alliance* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2011).

[35] Sir Edward Grey, *Twenty-Five Years: 1892–1916*, People's Library ed., 3 vols., vol. 2 (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1928), 109.

processes that don't require much energy', whereas other such customs and practices can have the opposite effect.[36] This is because, as such experiments have found, individuals are, on average, quite responsive to subtle cues from their environment with respect to whether and to what extent they exert an effort to control their impulses and to exhibit more forward-thinking, reflective behaviour.[37]

Repeated violation of certain rules or norms established for this purpose can have a deleterious effect in this regard. Paul Schroeder presents an interesting hypothesis that the breakdown of the norms, rules and incentive structure that defined the European concert of nations throughout the nineteenth century – prompted in part by the temptations thrown up by the retreat of Ottoman power in Europe – had encouraged Austria-Hungary to believe that only a drastic change would offer survival in an increasingly rapacious and unequal system, in which 'certain states could steal horses to great applause while other states were hanged for looking over the fence'.[38] Matthias Schulz concurs that the 'declining adherence to procedural and normative rules of international conduct' helped pave the way for world war.[39] Such a hypothesis is not incompatible with the dual mindset theory and, in fact, much more theoretical development could be done regarding the ways that certain norms – and their violation – may activate different mindsets during crucial decision-making moments. Although it is beyond the scope of this study, one possible example is the galvanising effect the violation of Belgian neutrality had on the British Cabinet's decision for war in August 1914.

In addition to better integration with the established theoretical paradigms of international relations, this plausibility probe into the effect of dual mindsets on decision-making also leaves room for greater theoretical development in connexion with the other major branches of political psychology – namely social psychology and the study of personality. This thesis has been principally concerned with the realm of cognitive psychology and the impact of individual mindsets on decision-making. However, social dynamics and personalities clearly also matter to decision-making outcomes. Irving Janis' seminal theory of groupthink was primarily aimed at explaining cases of defective decision-making, and not at identifying the causes of war or peace as such. Nevertheless, although Janis published his theory before the advent of modern behavioural science, many of the symptoms of

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[36] Roy F. Baumeister and John Tierney, *Willpower: Why Self-Control is the Secret to Success* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), 156.

[37] Kathleen D. Vohs, Joseph P. Redden and Ryan Rahinel, 'Physical Order Produces Healthy Choices, Generosity, and Conventionality, Whereas Disorder Produces Creativity', *Psychological Science* 24, no. 9 (2013).

[38] Paul W. Schroeder, 'Stealing Horses to Great Applause: Austria-Hungary's Decision in 1914 in Systemic Perspective', in *An Improbable War: The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture Before 1914*, eds. Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 25.

[39] Matthias Schultz, 'Did Norms Matter in Nineteenth-Century International Relations? Progress and Decline in the "Culture of Peace" Before World War I', in *An Improbable War? The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture Before 1914*, eds. Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 54.

groupthink that he identifies – illusions of invulnerability and control, extreme confidence and risk-taking, close-mindedness, poor information search and failure to examine alternatives – align with the known characteristics of our reflexive mindset and our System 1.[40]

It is perhaps not surprising that, in a later study, Janis and his colleagues examined American decision-making during 19 international crises since the Second World War and found that 'crisis outcomes tended to have more adverse effects on U.S. interests and were more likely to increase international conflict when the decision-making process was characterised by a large number of [groupthink] symptoms'.[41] Furthermore, more research could be done on the ways in which previous ego depletion may affect individuals' susceptibility to groupthink pressures – as arguably might have been the case with respect to the conversions experienced by Bethmann Hollweg, Sazonov and Berchtold during the July Crisis. At the other extreme of group solidarity, nascent psychological research is finding that the experience of social exclusion may produce similar reflexive effects on the mind.[42] One recent study found that social exclusion made people particularly prone to threat inflation and conspiratorial thinking – a finding that brings to mind the experience of Austria-Hungary's leaders on the eve of war, many of whom felt that the Great Powers within the Concert of Europe increasingly viewed the Hapsburg Empire as the next 'Sick Man of Europe' and were, thus, largely indifferent to the power-political realities of Austria's precarious security situation.[43]

Finally, future development of the dual mindset theory could greatly benefit from cross-fertilisation with personality approaches to international political behaviour, particularly now that a renaissance in the study of leaders in international politics seems to be under way.[44] The activation of individual mindsets is the proposed result of the combined interaction of internal and external factors, of which the internal baseline level of 'mindware' with which leaders approach problems may be greatly affected by personality. This study has deliberately not addressed the question of what promotes

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[40] Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982).

[41] Gregory Herek, Irving L. Janis and Paul Huth, 'Decision Making During International Crises: Is Quality of Process Related to Outcome?', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution (1986–1998)* 31, no. 2 (1987): 203.

[42] Damaris Graeupner and Alin Coman, 'The Dark Side of Meaning-Making: How Social Exclusion Leads to Superstitious Thinking', *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 69 (2017); Roy F. Baumeister et al., 'Social Exclusion Impairs Self-Regulation', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 88, no. 4 (2005).

[43] Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 559.

[44] See, for example, Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam and Cali M. Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Elizabeth Saunders, 'Transformative Choices: Leaders and the Origins of Intervention Strategy', *International Security* 34, no. 2 (2009); Michael Horowitz, Rose McDermott and Allan C. Stam, 'Leader Age, Regime Type, and Violent International Relations', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 5 (2005); Henk E. Goemans, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Giacomo Chiozza, 'Introducing Archigos: A Dataset of Political Leaders', *Journal of Peace Research* 46, no. 2 (2009).

different levels of mindware across individual political leaders, in which everything from genes to culture to previous life experiences could be considered fair game for evaluation. Nevertheless, additional research to squarely address this question will enhance the ability of mindset theories to more accurately predict how certain individuals are likely to react to certain levels of stress and, more specifically, which mindset is likely to be activated at any given time.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Comparison of Senior Government Officials During the Balkan Crises of 1912–1913 and the July Crisis of 1914

Country	Government Official	Government Position	Balkan Crises of 1912–1913	July Crisis of 1914
Austria-Hungary	Count Leopold von Berchtold	Foreign Minister	+	+
	Lieutenant-Colonel Count Karl von Bienerth	Austrian military attaché in Berlin	+	+
	Leon von Biliński	Austro-Hungarian Finance Minister	+	+
	Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf	Chief of the General Staff	+/- (reappointed Dec. 1912)	+
	Archduke Franz Ferdinand	Heir to the Hapsburg throne	+	- (assassinated)
	Franz Joseph I	Emperor of Austria-Hungary	+	+
	Baron Giesl von Gieslingen	Austrian Minister in Cetinje and Belgrade	+ (Montenegro)	+ (Serbia)
	Alexander Graf von Hoyos	Berchtold's *Chef de Cabinet*	+	+
	Field Marshal Alexander von Krobatin	Imperial War Minister	+/- (appointed Dec 1912)	+
	Count Albert Mensdorff	Ambassador in London	+	+
	Oskar Potiorek	Governor-General of Bosnia-Herzegovina	+	+
	Blasius Schemua	Chief of the General Staff	+/- (removed Dec 1912)	-
	Count Frigyes Szapáry	Ambassador in St. Petersburg	+ (previously Section Chief in the Foreign Ministry)	+
	Count László Szögyény	Ambassador in Berlin	+	+
	Count István Tisza	Minister-President of Hungary	+/- (reappointed June 1913)	+
	Barrère, Camille	Ambassador in Rome	+	+
	Philippe Berthelot	Political Director, Foreign Ministry	+	+
	Jules Auguste Boppe	Minister in Belgrade	-	+

France	Joseph Caillaux	Prime Minister (1911–1912) and Finance Minister	+	-
	Jules Cambon	Ambassador in Berlin	+	+
	Paul Cambon	Ambassador in London	+	+
	Alfred Dumaine	Ambassador in Vienna	+	+
	Joseph Joffre	Chief of the Army Staff	+	+
	Adolphe Messimy	Minister of War	-	+
	Alexandre Millerand	Minister of War	+ (until January 1913)	-
	Maurice Paléologue	Ambassador in St. Petersburg	-	+
	Raymond Poincaré	President of France	+	+
	René Viviani	Premier and Foreign Minister	-	+
Germany	Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg	Chancellor of Imperial Germany	+	+
	Erich von Falkenhayn	Prussian Minister of War	+/- (appointed June 1913)	+
	Julius Adolph Griesinger	Minister in Belgrade	+	+
	Gottlieb von Jagow	State Secretary of Imperial Germany	+/-	+
	Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter	State Secretary of Imperial Germany	+/- (died Dec. 1912)	-
	Prince Karl Max von Lichnowsky	Ambassador in London	+	+
	General Moriz, Freiherr von Lyncker	Chief of the Military Cabinet	+	+
	Helmuth von Moltke 'the Younger'	Chief of the General Staff	+	+
	Georg Alexander von Müller	Chief of the Naval Cabinet	+	+
	Hans von Plessen	Adjutant to Kaiser Wilhelm II	+	+
	Friedrich Pourtalès	Ambassador in St. Petersburg	+	+
	Kurt Riezler	Private Secretary to Bethmann Hollweg	+	+
	Baron Wilhelm von Schoen	Ambassador in Paris	+	+

	Wilhelm von Stumm	Political Director, Imperial Foreign Office	+	+
	Alfred von Tirpitz	Secretary of State of Imperial Naval Office	+	+
	Heinrich von Tschirschky	Ambassador in Vienna	+	+
	Wilhelm II	Kaiser of Imperial Germany	+	+
	Arthur Zimmermann	Undersecretary of State, Imperial Foreign Office	+	+
Great Britain	Herbert Henry Asquith	Prime Minister	+	+
	Sir Francis Bertie	Ambassador in Paris	+	+
	Sir George Buchanan	Ambassador in St. Petersburg	+	+
	Sir Fairfax Leighton Cartwright	Ambassador in Vienna	+/- (departed 1913)	-
	Winston Churchill	First Lord of the Admiralty	+	+
	Dayrell Crackanthorpe	Embassy Counsellor in Belgrade	+	+
	Sir Eyre Crowe	Senior Clerk, British Foreign Office	+	+
	Sir Maurice de Bunsen	Ambassador in Vienna	+/- (appointed 1913)	+
	George V	King of Great Britain	+	+
	Sir William Edward Goschen	Ambassador in Berlin	+	+
	Sir Edward Grey	Foreign Secretary	+	+
	David Lloyd George	Chancellor of the Exchequer	+	+
	Lord John Morley	Lord President of the Council	+	+
	Sir Arthur Nicolson	Permanent Undersecretary, British Foreign Office	+	+
	General Sir Henry Wilson	Director of Military Operations, War Office	+	+
	General Viktor Artamonov	Military attaché in Belgrade	+	+
	Peter Bark	Minister of Finance	-	+
	Count Alexander Benckendorff	Ambassador in London	+	+
	General Yuri Danilov	Quartermaster General (Deputy Chief of the Russian General Staff)	+	+

	Alexander Giers	Minister in Cetinje	+	+
	Ivan Goremykin	Prime Minister	-	+
	Admiral Ivan Grigorevich	Naval Minister	+	+
	Nikolai Hartwig	Ambassador in Belgrade	+	+
	Alexander Izvolsky	Ambassador in Paris	+	+
Russia	Alexander Vasilyevich Krivoshein	Minister of Agriculture	+	+
	Vladimir Kokovtsov	Prime Minister	+	-
	Nikolai Kudashev	Embassy Counsellor in Vienna	+	+
	Nicholas II	Tsar of Imperial Russia	+	+
	Sergei Sazonov	Foreign Minister	+	+
	Baron Moritz Schilling	Head of Chancery, Foreign Ministry	+	+
	Nikolai Shebeko	Ambassador in Vienna	+	+
	General Vladimir Sukhomlinov	War Minister	+	+

Table 2. Chronology of Key Dates During the Pre-War Period

Dates		Political and Military Events
1848	2 December 1848	Franz Joseph becomes Emperor of Austria-Hungary
1894	4 January 1894	Franco-Russian alliance signed
	2 December 1894	Accession of Tsar Nicholas II to the Russian Imperial throne
1899	18 May–29 June 1889	First Hague Peace Conference
1903	11 June 1903	Murder of Serbian King Alexander Obrenovic and his wife
1904	08 April 1904	Signing of the Entente Cordiale between Great Britain and France
	15 October 1904	Treaty of Russo-Austrian neutrality in the event of war with Britain or Italy
	20 October 1904	Kaiser Wilhelm II proposes Russo-German defensive alliance to Nicholas II; Russians stall

1904–1905	February 1904 - September 1905	Russo-Japanese War and Russian defeat
1905	2 January 1905	Fall of Port Arthur
	22 January 1905	'Bloody Sunday': Russian troops fire on crowd in St. Petersburg
	27 May 1905	Battle of Tsushima
	5 September 1905	Treaty of Portsmouth ends Russo-Japanese War
	21 December	Moscow uprising begins and is defeated by the Russian government
1905–1906	May 1905–March 1906	First Moroccan Crisis
1906	1 January 1906	Helmuth von Moltke the Younger replaces Alfred von Schlieffen as Chief of the German General Staff
1907	31 August 1907	Anglo-Russian Entente and the creation of the Triple Entente
1908	8 October 1908	Austria-Hungary annexes Bosnia-Herzegovina; ensuing crisis with Serbia and Russia
1909	8 February 1909	Franco-German agreement signed on Morocco
	26 February	Turks agree to financial indemnity from Austria-Hungary for annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina
	22 March 1909	German ultimatum to Russia to accept Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina
	24 March 1909	General Vladimir Sukhomlinov appointed Russian Minister of War
	31 March 1909	Serbians formally accept Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina
1910	4 July 1910	Russo-Japanese agreement on Manchuria
	27 September 1910	Sazonov replaces Izvolsky at the Russian Foreign Ministry
	4-5 November 1910	Tsar Nicholas II meets Kaiser Wilhelm II at Potsdam
1911	July–October 1911	Second Moroccan Crisis
	24 September 1911	Vladimir Kokovtsov appointed Chairman of the Russian Council of Ministers
	29 September 1911	Outbreak of the Italian–Ottoman War in Tripoli

	8 October 1911	Russia raises with the Ottoman Empire the question of opening the Turkish Straits to Russian warships
	4 November 1911	Franco-German agreement on Morocco
	15 December 1911	Sazonov resumes control of the Russian Foreign Ministry after illness
	14 January	Poincaré becomes French Premier
	13 March 1912	Bulgarian-Serbian treaty of defensive alliance signed
	17 April 1912	Wave of Russian workers' strikes begins after Russian troops fire on workers in Lena goldfields
	29 May 1912	Greece joins the Balkan League
	4 July 1912	Tsar Nicholas II and Kaiser Wilhelm II meet at Baltic Port
	18 July 1912	First conference of Russian and French Chiefs of Naval General Staff begins
	30 September 1912	Russia announces trial mobilisation along Austro-Hungarian border
	8 October 1912	Russia and Austria-Hungary warn the Balkan League against initiating a war with the Ottoman Empire; Montenegro nevertheless declares war on Turkey and precipitates the outbreak of the First Balkan War
	10 October	Izvolsky and Poincaré's conversations reveal firm French support for Russia in the event of an Austrian advance in the Balkans
	13 October 1912	Kaiser Wilhelm proposes further army expansion in light of Austria-Hungary's need to concentrate against the newly powerful Balkan states
	16 October 1912	The Ottoman Empire declares war on the Balkan states
1912	18 October 1912	Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia declare war on the Ottoman Empire; the Peace Treaty of Lausanne formally concludes the Italian–Ottoman War
	21 November 1912	Russian Conference of Chiefs of Staff of the Kiev, Moscow and Kazan Military Districts decides that Russia's offensive strategy must be fully developed to prevent Austria from crushing the Serb army
	22 November 1912	Arrival of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Austrian Chief of the General Staff Blasius Schemua in Berlin for emergency consultations with Kaiser Wilhelm and Chief of the General Staff General Helmuth von Moltke
	23 November 1912	Conference between Tsar Nicholas II and his government advisers at Tsarskoe Selo rejecting additional partial mobilisation measures in response to the 'Winter Crisis' with Austria-Hungary

	26 November 1912	Russia abandons Serbia in its demands for a sea port on the Adriatic and signals flexibility on the Albanian Question
	28 November 1912	Albania declares independence
	3 December 1912	Armistice signed by the belligerents (except for Greece)
	5 December 1912	Renewal of the Triple Alliance and Romania's agreement to support the Central Powers in any future war with Russia
	7 December 1912	Reappointment of Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf as Chief of the Austrian General Staff
	8 December 1912	Infamous 'War Council' between the Kaiser and senior German military officials, including Chief of the General Staff Moltke, Admiral Tirpitz and Admiral Müller, convened in response to Count Lichnowsky's telegram indicating Britain would fight on the side of France in any continental war
	11 December 1912	Meeting at Schönbrunn Palace between Austria-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph, Franz Ferdinand, Berchtold and others over whether to wage war against Serbia (the first of the major 'war–peace crises' for Vienna)
	16 December 1912	Beginning of the London Peace Conference involving the various belligerents of the First Balkan War
	17 December 1912	Beginning of the first London Conference of Ambassadors comprising the six Great Powers
	23 December 1912	Rump meeting of the Austro-Hungarian Common Ministerial Council to discuss preventive war against Serbia
1913	4 January 1913	Full meeting of the Austro-Hungarian Common Ministerial Council in which Berchtold wins strong approval for a diplomatic approach towards Serbia and the Balkan states
	23 January 1913	Young Turk coup in Constantinople
	29 January 1913	Serbia demands revision of the treaty with Bulgaria concerning the territorial division of Macedonia
	30 January 1913	Balkan League denounces armistice with the Ottoman Empire; breakdown of the London Peace Conference
	14 February 1913	Russia agrees that Scutari belongs to an independent Albania
	11 March 1913	Russia and Austria begin to release reservists from colours
	28 March 1913	Collective note from the Great Powers demanding Montenegro and Serbia lift their siege of Scutari
	2 May 1913	Austro-Hungarian Common Ministerial Meeting in which Austria-Hungary agrees to new military reinforcements in Bosnia and Herzegovina meant as a show of force to pressure King Nikola of Montenegro to yield Scutari
	5 May 1913	Montenegro abandons Scutari under international pressure

	30 May 1913	Treaty of London marks the formal end of the First Balkan War
	29 July 1913	The London Conference of Ambassadors of the Great Powers in London agrees on an Organisational Statute for an 'autonomous and sovereign' princedom of Albania
	31 July 1913	Armistice signed in Bucharest
	7 August	French Army Bill ratified, stipulating three-year military service
	10 August 1913	Treaty of Bucharest signed between Greece, Montenegro, Romania and Bulgaria ends the Second Balkan War
	30 September 1913	Treaty of Constantinople signed between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire
	2 November 1913	St. Petersburg is informed of Liman von Sanders' appointment as commander of Turkey's First Corps
	4 November 1913	Tsar Nicholas II approves the Russian Army's 'Great Programme' of military expansion
	18 November 1913	Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Kokovtsov discusses Liman's appointment with Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg
	13 January 1914	Special conference chaired by Kokovtsov discusses Russian policy over the Liman von Sanders affair
	14 January 1914	Liman von Sanders loses command of the Turkish First Corps and is appointed Inspector-General of the Turkish Army instead
	12 February 1914	Tsar Nicholas II dismisses Kokovtsov and replaces him as Chairman of the Council of Ministers with Ivan Goremykin; Peter Bark is also appointed Minister of Finance
	14 March 1914	Treaty of Constantinople signed by Serbia marks the formal end to the Balkan Wars
	18 March 1914	General Yanushkevich appointed Chief of the Russian General Staff
	7 June 1914	Start of Russo-British naval conversations
	28 June 1914	Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo
	1 July 1914	Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza pleads with Emperor Franz Joseph to resist engaging in war with Serbia
	5-6 July 1914	Count Hoyos' mission to Berlin leads to the 'blank cheque'
	7 July 1914	Council of Ministers in Vienna decides to present Serbia with a list of stiff demands in the form of an ultimatum, which, if not satisfied, would justify military action
	10 July 1914	Berlin first learns of Austrian plans for a Serbian ultimatum
	14 July 1914	Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza becomes a convert to the Austrian 'war party'

	18 July 1914	Sazonov returns from vacation and learns of Austrian ultimatum plans
	19 July 1914	Ministerial Council in Vienna approves the text of the Serbian ultimatum
	20–23 July 1914	French presidential summit in St. Petersburg
1914	21 July 1914	Sazonov threatens Berchtold: 'There must be no talk of ultimatum'
	23 July 1914	France and Russia try to warn Vienna not to issue an ultimatum to Serbia; Vienna issues its ultimatum to Serbia anyway
	24–25 July 1914	Russia's Council of Ministers decrees 'partial mobilisation' and decides to support any Serbian rejection of parts of the ultimatum impinging on its national sovereignty; Tsar Nicholas II ratifies the partial mobilisation and France's ambassador gives imprimatur
	26 July 1914	Russia commences its 'Period Preparatory to War'; Grey proposes mediation, which is rejected by Austria-Hungary
	28 July 1914	Austria-Hungary partially mobilises and declares war on Serbia
	29 July 1914	Tsar Nicholas II orders general mobilisation, then changes his mind
	30 July 1914	Russian and Austrian general mobilisation is ordered for 31 July
	31 July 1914	Germany issues ultimatum to Russia to halt its mobilisation
	1 August 1914	France orders general mobilisation, followed by Germany; Germany declares war on Russia
	3 August 1914	Sir Edward Grey gives a speech to the House of Commons, making the case for war if Germany violates Belgian neutrality; Germany declares war on France
	4 August 1914	German troops enter Belgium; Britain issues ultimatum to Germany that expires at 11 pm GMT; Britain declares war on Germany
	6 August 1914	Austria-Hungary declares war on Russia

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