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Comparative Grand Strategy


A FRAMEWORK
AND CASES

edited by

thierry **BALZACQ**

peter **DOMBROWSKI**

simon **REICH**



Comparative Grand Strategy: A Framework and Cases develops a new approach in explaining how a nation's grand strategy is constituted, how to assess its merits, and how grand strategies may be comparatively evaluated within a broader framework.

This volume responds to three key problems common to both academia and policymaking. First, the literature on the concept of grand strategy generally focuses on the United States, offering no framework for comparative analysis. Indeed, many proponents of US grand strategy suggest that the concept can only be applied, at most, to a very few great powers such as China and Russia. Second, characteristically it remains prescriptive rather than explanatory, ignoring the central conundrum of why different countries respond in contrasting ways to similar pressures. Third, it often understates the significance of domestic politics and policymaking in the formulation of grand strategies—emphasizing mainly systemic factors. This book addresses these problems. It seeks to analyze and explain grand strategies through the intersection of domestic and international politics in ten countries grouped distinctively as great powers (the G5), regional powers (Brazil and India), and pivotal powers hostile to each other who are able to destabilize the global system (Iran, Israel, and Saudi Arabia). It also examines the case of the European Union to evaluate if an interstate actor can develop and implement a grand strategy. The book thus employs a comparative framework that describes and explains why and how domestic actors and mechanisms, coupled with external pressures, create specific grand strategies. Overall, the book aims to fashion a valid, cross-contextual framework for an emerging research program on grand strategic analysis.

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Editors

Thierry Balzacq is Professor of International Relations at Sciences Po Paris and Professorial Fellow at CERI-Sciences-Po. He was formerly a Visiting Fellow at the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy at the Australian National University (2017–18). In 2016, he was awarded a Francqui Research Chair (Belgium's highest academic title) and elected Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He was the Scientific Director of the French Ministry of Defense's research center (2014–16). A former Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard, Balzacq held an Honorary Professorial Fellowship at the University of Edinburgh, where he was also Fellow for "outstanding research" at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities. In 2015, he was awarded a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Diplomacy and International Security. "Tier 1 Chairs are for outstanding researchers acknowledged by their peers as world leaders in their fields." His articles have been published in *Review of International Studies*, *Security Studies*, *European Journal of International Security*, *International Studies Review*, *Cooperation and Conflict*, *European Journal of International Relations*, *Security Dialogue*, *International Relations*, and the *Journal of Common Market Studies*. He is author/editor of over twelve books in English and French. He has held visiting positions at various universities, including McGill, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, the National University of Singapore (NUS), The International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC), Aberystwyth, and the University Abdou Moumouni of Niamey (Niger). He is currently co-editing (with Ronald Krebs) *The Oxford Handbook of Grand Strategy*. Balzacq holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge and completed his Postdoctoral studies at Harvard in 2004.

Peter Dombrowski is a Professor of Strategy in the Strategic and Operational Research Department as well as the Director of the Cyber and Innovation Policy Institute at the Naval War College. His prior positions include Chair of the Strategic Research Department, Director of the Naval War College Press, editor of the *Naval War College Review*, co-editor of *International Studies Quarterly*, Associate Professor of Political Science at Iowa State University, and defense analyst at ANSER, Inc. He has also been affiliated with research institutions including the East-West Center, The Brookings Institution, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University. Dr Dombrowski is the author of over sixty books, monographs, articles, book chapters, and government reports. Dombrowski's awards include a Chancellor's Scholarship for Prospective Leaders from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Medal, and the Navy Distinguished Civilian Service Medal. He received his BA from Williams College and an MA and PhD from the University of Maryland.

Simon Reich is a Professor in the Division of Global Affairs and Department of Political Science at Rutgers, Newark and a Chercheur Associé at the Centre de Recherches Internationales (CERI), Sciences Po (Paris). Reich is author, coauthor and editor of

x LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

eleven books and over sixty articles or book chapters. Reich's work has been translated into Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Japanese, and Turkish. His most recent book (with Peter Dombrowski) is entitled *The End of Grand Strategy: Maritime Operations in the 21st Century* (Cornell, 2018). Reich also previously served as Director of Research and Analysis at the Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House) in London and the inaugural Director of the Ford Institute for Human Security at the University of Pittsburgh.

Contributors

Andrew S. Erickson is Professor of Strategy in, and a core founding member of, the US Naval War College (NWC)'s China Maritime Studies Institute. Erickson also serves on the *Naval War College Review's* Editorial Board. He is an Associate in Research at Harvard University's John King Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Erickson has taught courses at NWC and Yonsei University. During 2014–15 he helped to establish, and to escort the first iteration of, NWC's first bilateral naval officer exchange program and field studies class in China, which he continues to support. In 2013, while deployed in the Pacific as a Naval Postgraduate School Regional Security Education Program scholar aboard the flagship aircraft carrier USS *Nimitz*, he delivered twenty-five hours of lectures. In 2012 the National Bureau of Asian Research awarded him the inaugural Ellis Joffe Prize for PLA Studies. Erickson received his PhD and MA in politics from Princeton University. Proficient in Mandarin Chinese and conversant in Japanese, he has traveled extensively in Asia and lived in China, Japan, and Korea. Erickson is the author of the book *Chinese Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile Development*. He is coauthor of two other books: *Gulf of Aden Anti-Piracy and China's Maritime Commons Presence* and *Assessing China's Cruise Missile Ambitions*. His research has been published widely in English- and Chinese-language edited volumes and in such peer-reviewed journals as *International Security*, *China Quarterly*, and *Journal of Contemporary China*. It may be accessed via <http://www.andrewerickson.com>.

C. Christine Fair is a Provost's Distinguished Associate Professor in the Center for Security Studies within Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. She previously served as a senior political scientist with the RAND Corporation, a political officer with the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan in Kabul, and a senior research associate at USIP's Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention. Her research focuses on political and military affairs in South Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka). Her most recent book is *In Their Own Words: Understanding the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba* (Oxford University Press). Additionally, she has authored, coauthored, and co-edited several books, including *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War* (Oxford University Press), *Pakistan's Enduring Challenges* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), *Policing Insurgencies: Cops as Counterinsurgents* (Oxford University Press, 2014); *Political Islam and Governance in Bangladesh* (Routledge, 2010); *Treading on Hallowed Ground: Counterinsurgency Operations in Sacred Spaces* (Oxford University Press, 2008); *The Madrassah Challenge: Militancy and Religious Education in Pakistan* (USIP, 2008), *Fortifying Pakistan: The Role of U.S. Internal Security Assistance* (USIP, 2006); and

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The Cuisines of the Axis of Evil and Other Irritating States (Globe Pequot, 2008). Dr Fair is a frequent commentator in print (*New York Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *The National Review* among others) as well on television and radio programs (CBS, BBC, Al Jazeera, CNN, Voice of America, Fox, Reuters, BBC, NPR, among others). She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Women in International Security, International Studies Association, American Political Science Association, and the American Institute of Pakistan Studies and serves on the editorial board of numerous scholarly and policy-analytic journals. She has a PhD from the University of Chicago, Department of South Asian Languages and Civilization, and an MA from the Harris School of Public Policy, also at the University of Chicago.

Daniel Fiott is Security and Defense Editor at the EU Institute for Security Studies. He is also a Visiting Professor at the Institute for European Studies at the Free University of Brussels (VUB) and a Visiting Lecturer at the Brussels School of International Studies at the University of Kent. From 2012 until 2016 he served as a researcher at the Free University of Brussels (VUB). From 2014 until 2016 Daniel was a fellow of the Research Foundation—Flanders (FWO). He specializes in defense and defense-industrial matters. He holds an MPhil from the University of Cambridge and a PhD from the Free University of Brussels (VUB).

Ghaidaa Hetou received her PhD in political science from Rutgers University, she also holds a BA and MA in Economics, and an MS in Global Affairs. Dr Hetou is fluent in Arabic, English, and German. Her recent book is titled: *The Syrian Conflict: The Role of Russia, Iran and the US in a Global Crisis* (Routledge 2018). Her research focuses on foreign policy, security, strategy, trade and political risk in the Middle East and North Africa. Dr Hetou founded i-Strategic LLC, a political risk consulting company specializing in Middle East and North Africa affairs. She also is an Adjunct Professor at Rutgers University, the United Nations and Global Policy Studies Masters program.

Robert Johnson is the Director of the Changing Character of War (CCW) research program at Oxford. The CCW Programme brings together academics, policymakers, and armed forces professionals in the study of armed conflict and its consequences, pursuing a variety of research themes including the future character of armed conflict, violent nonstate actors, civil-military relations, strategy and decision-making, technological developments, and the moral-legal dimensions of war. Rob Johnson's primary research interests are in the history of strategy and war, and how these are understood and utilized in contemporary applications. Rob acts as a specialist advisor to governments and international armed forces on security, stabilization, and strategy. He has run "Insight and Understanding" courses for a number of agencies on areas of security interest. He is author *The Afghan Way of War* (Oxford University Press, 2011), as well as several other works on conflicts in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. He has examined the problems of strategy in a variety of contexts and publications, and draws attention to the local perspectives as well as the difficulties of forming judgements based on a selective reading of history or on the misuse of theories of international relations and politics. In an article in *Parameters*, on "predicting future war," Rob Johnson analyzed *how* we reach deductions about future operating environments. He has recently completed a monograph on the history of partnering irregular indigenous forces, and a strategic study of the First World War in the Middle East. In order to

encourage the introduction of new thinking into British government policy on defense and security, he convened the UK strategy forum for the the Chief of the Defence Staff.

Céline Marangé is a research fellow at the Institute for Strategic Research (IRSEM), a research center affiliated with the French Ministry of Defense. Her current research interests include Russian foreign and defense policy, Russian political and military elites, Russian strategy of influence in Europe and the post-Soviet space, and the international consequences of Russian military interventions. Dr Marangé holds a PhD in political science from the Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po). Prior to her current position, she was a lecturer at Columbia University, a Fox International Fellow at Yale University, and a postdoctoral fellow in Cold War history at Panthéon-Sorbonne University. A graduate of the Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations (Paris), she is also a Russian translator. She recently edited and introduced two special issues devoted to Russia's new strategic posture: one deals with the reconfiguration of the European order in the aftermath of the conflict in Ukraine (*Champs de Mars*, Spring 2017); the other one explores Russian strategic strengths and weaknesses, and the security dilemma for Russia (*Revue de Défense nationale*, 2017).

Carlos R. S. Milani holds a *Doctorat* from the *Ecole de Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* (France, 1997), and was in 2007 a Visiting Scholar at Berkeley's Center for Latin American Studies. He is Associate Professor at the Rio de Janeiro State University's Institute for Social and Political Studies (IESP-UERJ), and Senior Research Fellow with Brazil's National Research Council (CNPq) and Rio de Janeiro State Research Foundation (FAPERJ). He is also Associate Editor of the *Brazilian Political Science Review*. His research agenda focuses on Brazilian foreign policy, international development politics, and comparative foreign policy. His latest publications include: "Brazil's Foreign Policy and the Graduation Dilemma," *International Affairs* (2017), *Atlas of Brazilian Foreign Policy* (CLACSO/EDUERJ, 2015); "The Politics of Brazilian Foreign Policy and Its Analytical Challenges," *Foreign Policy Analysis* (2016). During his stay at Berkeley he started writing a book whose provisional title is *South-South Cooperation and Foreign Policy Agendas: Comparing the cases of Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey*.

Tiago Nery received his PhD in political science from the Institute for Social and Political Studies of the State University of Rio de Janeiro (IESP-UERJ). He is a researcher at the World Political Analysis Laboratory/Labmundo (IESP-UERJ/IHAC-UFBA) and works as a civil servant at the Undersecretariat for International Relations, Executive Office of the State Government of Rio de Janeiro. His research agenda focuses on Brazilian foreign policy, international political economy and regional integration. His most recent publication is *Brazilian Foreign Policy: The Coalitions of Power and UNASUR: Rise and Deconstruction of South America as a Geopolitical Bloc* (Mural Internacional, 2018).

Wendy Ramadan-Alban is a PhD candidate in security studies at the University of Namur and at the EHESS (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, in Paris), working on Iran's strategic thought. She holds a doctoral grant from the French government. She has published in the *European Review of International Studies*. She graduated in Persian language from the Dehkhoda institute based in Tehran.

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Norrin M. Ripsman (PhD University of Pennsylvania, 1997) is Monroe J. Rathbone Distinguished Professor of International Relations at Lehigh University. His primary research interests include: democracy and national security, postwar peacemaking, constructing regional stability, the political economy of national security, neoclassical realism, and the impact of globalization on national security. He has published nine books, most recently *Peacemaking from Above, Peace from Below: Ending Conflict Between Regional Rivals* (Cornell University Press, 2016) and (with Jeffrey W. Taliaferro and Steven E. Lobell) *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2016), and over twenty-five peer-reviewed articles in *International Security*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Security Studies*, and other high-quality outlets.

Eitan Shamir is a Senior Lecturer at the Political Studies Department, Bar Ilan University and a Senior Research Fellow with the Begin Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA Center). Prior to his academic position, he was in charge of the National Security Doctrine Department at the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, Prime Minister Office. He is the author of *Transforming Command: The Pursuit of Mission Command in the US, UK and Israeli Armies* (Stanford University Press, 2011). His most recent book (ed.) is *Insurgencies and Counterinsurgencies: National Styles and Strategic Cultures* (Cambridge University Press, 2017, with Beatrice Heuser). Shamir has published many articles in leading journals and various book chapters on the topics of military strategy and national security. He holds a PhD from the Department of War Studies, King's College London.

Luis Simón is Research Professor at the Institute for European Studies (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) and Director of the Brussels office of the Royal Elcano Institute. He is also Associate Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and the Baltic Defense College (Estonia), and a member of the Editorial Board of *Parameters: The US Army War College Quarterly*. Luis is a frequent lecturer on geopolitical and strategic affairs at several universities and defense colleges, and his research has appeared in prestigious journals, such as *Security Studies*, *International Affairs*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *Geopolitics*, *Survival*, *Orbis*, the *RUSI Journal*, *Comparative Strategy*, *Parameters*, and *The International Spectator*. His current research interests include the evolution of US geostrategy and its impact upon the transatlantic relationship; European security; the future of NATO; and changing geostrategic dynamics in Asia and their implications for Europe. Luis has a PhD in international relations from the University of London (Royal Holloway College) and a Masters in European studies from Sciences-Po (Paris).