Introduction

Restraint remains front-and-center in discussions of global politics. This is especially true after a whirlwind decade and a half that saw the United States fully embrace its aspirations for hegemonic control of the Middle East following the September 11 attacks. It then reversed into "retrenchment" or "offshore balancing" following the disastrous policies in that same region, as well as the devastating effects from the 2008–2009 Global Financial Crisis. Those events were followed by increasing concerns over a number of destabilizing events around the world, from the unpredictable areas of the Middle East and North Africa following the "Arab Spring" of 2011, to the rise of ISIS, a perpetual migration crisis, to overwhelming problems related to environmental degradation and climate insecurity. All of this has been accompanied by a widespread rise in populist movements in a number of countries, movements which have centralized politics, rhetoric, and policies that are anything but restrained.

Such instability foregrounded debates about restraint, including as a potential grand strategy for the United States in the 2010s (Posen 2014). But it is not enough to simply call for, or critique, restraint as a policy, although commentators will continue to do so. A scholarly investigation of restraint needs to acknowledge and then appreciate the forces that overwhelm it. Yet it must also recognize how restraint refers not only to the self, but is also utilized to discipline and oppress *others*. If we want a more meaningful and useful debate about the policy of restraint, we need a better account of the challenges of and for restraint in global politics, from individuals, to groups, to states, to the structure of the global system itself. We need, then, a comprehensive account of the *politics of restraint*.

In this book I provide that account through a near-exhaustive understanding of restraint, reviewing all of its known uses in the field of International Relations. I also engage related concepts (like self-control, moderation, and constraint), and identify and develop their meanings vis-à-vis restraint. I address the flip-side to restraint, its conceptual doppelganger

if you will, in what I title "actionism." Actionism and restraint relate to each other, and both are views on and of the international environment. Restraint involves a faith in that environment or a determination regarding an agent's limitations within it. Actionism is conversely skeptical towards it and sees the potential for *action* to transform it. When all of these contributions are stacked together, what I hope emerges in this book is a very unrestrained insight: *the struggles we find in global politics are really struggles over restraint*. Almost any conflict, tension, dilemma, or anxiety in global politics, today, in the distant past, and anywhere in between, has its origins in the politics of restraint.

The book begins this exploration through three precepts regarding restraint:

1. Restraint involves both agents and structures
2. Restraint requires a mixed ontology – it includes both the body and mind, both materials and "ideas"
3. Restraint has a moral quality, but one that is polyvalent (subject to competing interpretations and judgments)

These precepts are required for a comprehensive theoretical and empirical investigation of restraint in global politics. While I develop them in the following chapters, let me provide a brief overview of each at the outset.

First, restraint involves *both agents and structures*. This first precept guides our methods as well as our prescriptive arguments for restraint. For the former, it means that we cannot only locate the struggles over restraint within agents, or structures, but must seek out the analytical terrain between them. Restraint is incentivized or made possible by the interactions between the two. It may be comforting in policy debates to place the responsibility for restraint upon the leaders or elites of political communities. But structures also incentivize, or overwhelm, the restraint of units within an international environment, as well as within a polity via public opinion. Structures are routines that set up expectations about "commitments," and the burdens an agent maintains for themselves and others. We might think here of the United States's "role" as a hegemonic leader since the post-Cold War era, and perhaps stretching back before that. No matter how beneficial it may be to end that role, it's also difficult to break such a structured routine because of the identity costs it entails. For both methodological and normative reasons, in short, we cannot simply situate our focus on *just* an agent or *just* a structure. We must assess both to understand the challenge of restraint.

Second, restraint involves a *mixed ontology*. We sense this somewhat intuitively when we think about restraint at an individual level, how our mental processes need to match up with our bodily capacities in order to restrain. This same is also true, albeit in a more complex and somewhat

metaphorical way, for political communities. Consider the titles of some recent articles regarding US foreign policy. They often foreground restraint's physicality. For instance, the USA is advised by Stephen Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, and William Wohlforth (2013) to "Lean forward," and conversely to "Pull back" by Posen (2013). Restraining a polity involves not only a policy change, but the removal of forces or changes in force "postures" that such a community may be used to in its recent (or historic) past. To grapple with this precept requires careful attention to the physicality of restraint – from historical practices of putting people "in restraints," to quarantining populations for societal health; from "cutting off" populations from public assistance and funding, to the development of sensibilities or educative practices performed in families, schools, peer groups, and broader society, all of which seek to foster self-restraint, and help to chasten our drives to temptation. Thus, while there are ideational components to restraint in international politics, there are also material-bodily ones as well, from the physiological processes of individuals studied by neuroscientists, to particular "urges" that can be understood via concepts like the libido.

A third precept for understanding restraint is its *moral* quality. For some, restraint is part of a moral framework for a Self, or corporate entity, to recognize and thus work within the political and material limits of what's possible. There are moral arguments for restraining groups that cannot or will not restrain themselves behaviorally, fiscally, morally, and socially. "We" may not need to practice restraint, but we have to restrain "them" so that "their" habits and practices do not impact us. Some individuals and groups may find restraint problematic altogether. Can we, they wonder, afford to practice it in an ever-more dangerous and chaotic world? The emotional and visceral connections to these polyvalent understandings of restraint make "rational" and measured deliberations over it difficult, as the struggles between the two complexes I utilize throughout this book illustrate.

Why Restraint?

Why is restraint worthy of a study like this one? For starters, restraint is somewhat counterintuitive, involving an agent doing something they otherwise *would not do*. Restraint also relates to a number of concepts integral to understanding global politics, including freedom, independence, autonomy, and power. Some of these are inversely related with restraint, as the book discloses. The more freedom we have, for instance, the more paramount a role restraint plays. Further, few works in International Relations represent a comprehensive treatment and

articulation of restraint in global politics, and such a lacuna provides an opportunity itself.

Yet there are three additional sets of reasons, all related to contemporary concerns over global politics, for why restraint requires a book-length investigation. First, in our late modern or postmodern era, technology has influenced our temporal and spatial understandings in global politics – rearranging our notions of speed, rhythm, action, agency, and reaction (Glezos 2012). From the cadence we expect in terms of communicative exchange, to the momentary nature of global economic transactions and reactions, to second-by-second "live-blogs" or "tweetstorms" of international crises, restraint seems risky and even an object of contempt. Can we *afford* to restrain ourselves, spatially, bodily, and temporally, in the face of this rapid cadence of postmodern global politics?

The perceived or real decline of US hegemony within a changing international order is a second setting important for investigating restraint. How might the USA "manage" to unravel from some of its extensive commitments internationally – including how to "treat" rising powers, concerns reflected both in the policy and political spheres as well as in IR scholarship (Zarakol 2014)? Might the United States find ways to return to its unparalleled primacy (Lieber 2016), or should it embrace restraint as a "grand strategy" for transitioning to a different distribution of power (Posen 2014)? A broader and more historical investigation of restraint (and its challenges), as well as how it has been used to "restore" an order that oftentimes nevertheless proves to be a mirage, may speak to some of the contemporary anxieties over a crumbling international order and subsequent calls for a restoration of that order through heroic interventions and even violence.

Third, and more parochially, restraint also speaks to a number of recent trends in International Relations theory, including the work on practices (Adler and Pouliot 2011; Adler-Nissen and Pouliot 2014), stigmatization (Zarakol 2010; Adler-Nissen 2014), emotions (Ross 2006; 2014; Bleiker and Hutchinson 2008), and aesthetics (Bleiker 2001; Steele 2010a; Moore and Shepherd 2010). It works in tandem with recent re-evaluations over the history of the field itself (Ashworth 2014; McCourt 2012). As restraint is a topic integral to deliberations over international security, this book engages work in that field and especially the "critical security studies" literature, including ontological security (Kinnvall 2004; Mitzen 2006; Steele 2008; Subotic 2015; Zarakol 2010; Innes 2015) and securitization theory (Waever 1995; Hayes 2013; Donnelly 2015).

A form of constructivist social theory, with its centralizing of the three assertions noted above, is particularly suited towards explicating

restraint's import for International Relations. But that is also because this form of constructivist work can also, and has, been in the background (at the least) of each of the above trends in International Relations theory for the past decade (McCourt 2016). Social construction is important because it sets our expectations for the types of disturbances that foster (or overwhelm) restraint and for *what* we restrain ourselves from (and how, and why). Thus, this book joins a recent flurry of other studies in calling for the further "micro-interactionist" development of constructivism in International Relations (McCourt 2014; Ross 2014; Solomon 2015). But it must do more than that.

Values-Added of the Inquiry

The book pursues five purposes. First, it provides an *inventory* of how restraint has been treated in International Relations theory, most directly in the following chapter. As I suggest there, restraint plays a crucial role in International Relations and therefore finds reference in a number of conventional approaches to IR, and yet it is rarely on its own explicated. Restraint is qualified or conditioned by its setting – alliance restraint, institutional restraint, self-restraint, and so on. Therefore, I will provide a deeper articulation of restraint so that its function as a qualified conceptual referent is brought into sharper relief.

Second, I pivot from these treatments to my own conceptualization of restraint. Consider this conceptualization along three dimensions – space, time, and "issue area." One may consider restraint to be focused on the individual. Yet if this was the case, then the term "self-restraint" would be redundant. Restraint is instead conditioned by a variety of factors, including what stimulus or object one restrains themselves from, as well as who is doing the restraining. Restraint can be indexed then to a variety of *spaces* – from the neurological to the biological, from the social to the generational, and from the national to even the structure of the global system itself. Appraised in this more comprehensive way, the dynamism of restraint emerges. Most immediately, it involves the mind, a body, an action (or, more likely, a reaction) and an environment against or within which one restrains. Restraint is thus both an inwardly focused phenomenon, but also a relational and societal one as well. It is uniquely situated to be scaled to a variety of "levels" that have been centralized in global politics.

Restraint can be further articulated through a variety of *times or timings* (Hom 2016). This begins from the moment it is enacted, to the anticipatory contexts of interventions, to historical epochs and stages of premodern, modern, and late modern development. It can be found in

a variety of *issue areas* long explored in International Relations – from the actions of democratic states, to its role in shaping the security interests and practices of communities (state and non-state alike), to its deployment in discourses surrounding the function of local, national, and global political economies, to its role in scientific discourses about public health. Restraint is thus one of the most variegated concepts we have in social life.

Carl Gustav Jung's work provides a resource for understanding the struggles over restraint. Thus, a *third* contribution of the book is to introduce the work of Jung and put it into conversation with International Relations. Drawing from Jung, rather than his more infamous contemporary in Freud, is not without its risks. Jung has less of a following in the IR scholarly community, and made far less of an impact on social theories and theorists (including, in this respect, on Norbert Elias – another resource for this book – who was influenced by Freud). That said, the echoes of Jung can be found in the "anarchic lusts" that Reinhold Niebuhr (1932) referenced in his seminal *Moral Man, Immoral Society*, and some broader works that draw from classical realism, as I discuss in Chapter 2. Jung's focus on libidinal expression at the levels of society can also be utilized to grapple with moments of populism, where "dog whistle" discourses serve to activate more "primal" and dark urges among otherwise disillusioned citizens throughout the world. And it finds its expression in some recent works on collective affects and energies that are mobilized by politicians but still exceed the outcomes intended (Ross 2014). Jung's account of the "libido" as a form of psychic energy, and his analytical device of the "complex," color my analysis throughout. Jung's work and thought has for far too long been collapsed into Freudian approaches to psychology – but I argue that Jung provides a richer set of analytical devices than Freud, a less causally mechanistic understanding of social life, and a more social (and slightly less biological and sexual) understanding of human drives and group practices that can all provide analytical leverage in International Relations.

Following from this, and perhaps more ambitiously, is a fourth purpose intimated above. I argue that many of the discussions, tensions, debates, and even irreconcilable differences we find in politics have to do with restraint. The complexes of actionism and restraint thus provide not only an analytical map for what follows, but also for indexing the struggles for restraint in all of social life – including those over gender, race, and class. An investigation into restraint is thus a "history of the present" that can be utilized to understand the discourses and representational practices that color contemporary global politics. These include forms of understanding the world for citizens, as well as the ways in which IR theories and

perspectives prioritize, emphasize, and valorize particular sensibilities in global politics.

A fifth and final goal of the book, proposed in the conclusion, is to make a political and *normative* argument for restraint for contemporary global politics. Such a proposal recognizes at the same time the ethical drawbacks to restraint referenced and analyzed throughout the previous chapters. This recognition includes how restraint has been used to discipline, repress, and oppress groups, as much it has prevented conflict. In a contemporary context that valorizes speed, champions action and *doing something*, and enables a politics that eschews the limits in and of late modern life, our contemporary moment is one, I argue, where a "restrained" case for restraint can be made.

Elias, Restraint, and a Jungian Amendment

While there have been limited engagements with restraint in International Relations scholarship, one major account important for understanding its development over time has forcefully emerged in International Relations. Due to the efforts of Stephen Mennell and Andrew Linklater in particular, the work of Norbert Elias, and especially his thesis on *The Civilizing Process*,[1] provides a seminal contribution to our understanding of restraint. Elias traced restraint's development among different European classes and spaces as a long and nuanced transformation at the level of everyday habits, and over the course of more than a millennium. This civilizing process, Elias argued started in Europe, but gradually expanded outward to include the world. As Elias noted in one key passage of his magnum opus:

> It is at the small functional centres that the foresight, more complex self-discipline, more stable super-ego formation enforced by growing interdependence, first became noticeable. Then more and more functional circles within the West itself changed in the same direction. Finally, in conjunction with their pre-existing forms of civilization, the same transformation of social functions and thus of conduct and the whole personality, began to take place in countries outside Europe. This is the picture which emerges if we attempt to survey the course followed up to now by the Western civilizing movement in social space as a whole. (2000, 387)

[1] Elias's emergence and presence in the field of sociology lagged a bit due to the much later translation of his work into English. As Linklater and Mennell (2010) note, "The reason for this, at first glance baffling, omission is that—partly through Elias's own procrastination—*The Civilizing Process* was not published in English until four decades after it was written" (386, fn 4).

Elias's work bears directly upon my account of restraint in at least four sets of ways. First and foremost, and as detailed in Chapter 1, Elias's work and its development especially by Linklater, combined with some insights from Giddens, forms the basis for a *sociological account of restraint*. Like Giddens, Elias's work intersects with the three "precepts" of my account of restraint. First, as found in his focus on both psychogentic and sociogenetic processes, Elias examined how restraint was involved, or overwhelmed by, both agents and structure. Second, in focusing on a number of factors that directly implicate both bodily (the use of a fork, or sex in private), as well as mental (changes in personality) processes, Elias worked with a mixed ontology. Finally, Elias's account revealed especially the moral quality of restraint – how more civilized groups saw themselves as such and their being more restrained was a key factor that differentiated them from the uncivilized.

Second, and related to this moral quality of restraint, Elias's *The Established and the Outsiders* brings into sharper relief the relationship between restraint and actionism as applied asymmetrically to particular groups throughout history. This study by Elias of a small community near Leicester, England, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, examined the relationship and most importantly, tensions, between different neighbourhoods. It proves important for understanding the politics of restraint that has historically evolved between groups on the bases of class, race, and gender, developed most directly in Chapters 3 and 6 of this book, but found throughout it as a whole.

Third, and related, Elias's work and especially his analysis of how changes in impulse control, emotions, and manners in public and their relegation to more private spaces and places (and even how those were regulated over time),[2] is integral to another assertion made throughout the book: asymmetric access to space and political agency has made particular groups more vulnerable to be "judged" as "incapable" of restraining themselves. Fourth, the applications of Elias's work found in International Relations, beginning with the "reciprocal restraint" account of the Cold War by Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh (1992), through the more recent studies by Stephen Mennell (2007) and Linklater (2004; 2007; 2010; 2011; 2014; 2016a; 2016b), help

[2] This observation is found most directly in Elias's discussion of the carving of meat, a "spectacle [that] was felt more and more to be distasteful. Carving itself did not disappear, since the animal must, of course, be cut when being eaten. But the distasteful was *removed behind the scenes of social life*" (2000, 103, emphasis original). It can also be found in *The Loneliness of the Dying,* where he remarks that "Like other animal aspects, death, both as a process and as memory-image, is pushed more and more behind the scenes of social life during this civilizing spurt. For the dying themselves this means that they too are pushed further behind the scenes" (1985, 12).

accentuate both the conceptual overview of the uses of "restraint" in IR discussed in Chapter 1, as well as the empirical case analyses throughout the book. The Eliasian account of state formation via the civilizing process has been increasingly refined in sociology (Dunning and Hughes 2012), and it proves useful in an investigation of restraint and actionism. Yet while the book's analysis of restraint begins with Elias, it doesn't end there.

Much of the remaining intellectual heavy-lifting in the book derives, as mentioned above, from Jung's account of the libido, and especially Jung's insights regarding the re-emergence through time of the libido at biological, psychological, and societal levels, as well as the push and pull of different epochs related to libidinal "release." Specifically, the otherwise persuasive Eliasian account of restraint contains a few limitations or points of under-emphasis that this book hopes to fill in. First, from the sociological end, institutions are not only important in facilitating restraint, they can also enable and incentivize what I title "actionism." The structure of international society, for instance, may generate the "constraint leading to self-constraint" that Eliasians argue is a feature of contemporary global politics, especially in the form of global harm conventions (Linklater 2011) and processes of international legal measures and practices that help "tame" the sovereign state system (Linklater 2016a). But that also depends on the view of structure, a topic I confront in the Chapter 1. A view of structure depicted in Kenneth Waltz's (1979) neorealist account is more conducive to the Eliasian process. But if the structure of international society is (via Giddens) both constraining *and* enabling, or (via Sjoberg) gendered hierarchically, or, as it was in the United States for much of its history *dependent upon violence in upholding the white power structure* (discussed especially in Chapters 3 and 4), we may find less restraint during periods of time, over and within particular spaces. In fact, and perhaps most disturbingly, violence may be *embedded* in the structure itself so that the order of society depends upon its selective deployment. This helps articulate those moments or eras where "structural" or "institutional" violence is especially pronounced, as has been the case on occasion in the United States against African-Americans, Native Americans, and women.

Second, while Elias's account acknowledges the importance of psychogenic processes and thus the role of agents in practicing restraint, the related concept of *agency* is also necessary for understanding the attraction, fleeting though it may be, for transgression and unrestrained behavior. Whether we consider late modernity a chaotic environment where identity is constantly in flux (hence Bauman's term of "liquid"

modernity),[3] or an epoch of boredom and predictability where the ennui of existence empties out the meaning (and meanings) of identity itself (Kustermans and Ringmar 2011), the possibility of acting out to act out, sometimes (especially) through violence, provides an important way to express agency in the twenty-first century.

Commentators have taken special notice of this in an era of populist politics. In one essay leading up to the 2016 US Presidential election of Donald Trump, Jacob Bronsther (2016), remarked that one expression of the civilizing process is "political correctness . . . [which] has attempted to remove certain 'animalistic' political and social views to the realms of private discussion and thought. We become offended, accordingly, at the public presentation of such views." Yet according to Bronsther, who riffs off Elias's analysis for how meat carving was eventually removed from the table as being distasteful (Elias 2000, 101–103), Trump's appeal was precisely in rejecting this outcome of the civilizing process:

> Trump is demanding that we peel back a layer or two of American civilization, of American manners . . . Being offensive is the message. And that's why his insults and general outrageousness help rather than hurt his campaign. Less repression and calculation, Trump argues, more aggression. More id. Let us return the whole animal carcass to the dinner table, Trump implies, and let us carve it together. No more hiding our true beliefs – about Hispanics, Muslims, terrorists, women, and so forth. (Bronsther 2016)

This does not mean that Elias's contributions, and those of the Eliasian IR turn, can't account for these moments, these "spurts and counter-spurts" to the civilizing process. But such backsliding events and processes can be further theorized, and understood, as being both more frequent and deeply embedded than an Eliasian account would expect. In fact, when stripped of Freud's more mechanistic understandings,[4] a Jungian account of the libido as "psychic energy" finds a number of

[3] "Whenever we speak of identity, there is at the back of our minds a faint image of harmony, logic, consistency . . . The search for identity is the ongoing struggle to arrest or slow down the flow . . . Yet far from slowing the flow, let alone stopping it, identities are more like the spots of crust hardening time and again on the top of volcanic lava which melt and dissolve again before they have time to cool and set" (Bauman 2000, 83).

[4] Although Elias has been deemed to share a "tragic" vision of politics with classical realists (Linklater 2011, 178), Linklater and Mennell also argue that Elias did not quite share a classical realist ontology, especially on the issue of Freud: "though greatly influenced by Freud, Elias rejected his belief that certain natural libidinal impulses lie beneath the veneer of civilization, awaiting the first opportunity to break out" (2010, 401, fn 100). Indeed, Freud appears on occasion in Elias's work especially in the context of the "super id" restraining the "id." Yet, as I discuss in Chapter 2, some of Elias's criticisms of Freud and the latter's articulation of the libido, were quite strikingly similar to those that Jung made of his former mentor and contemporary as well.