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**Jennifer L. Erickson. *Dangerous Trade. Arms Exports, Human Rights, and International Reputation*.** New York: Columbia University Press, 2016. ISBN: 9780231170963 (hardcover, \$60.00/£50.00).

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## Introduction by William Wohlforth, Dartmouth College

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Jennifer L. Erickson's *Dangerous Trade* is a powerful reminder of the manifold ways in which arms control raises the most enduring questions in the study of international politics. The ability to regulate violence capacity on a given territory is central to the very idea of the modern state. The unfettered capacity to wield organized violence externally in pursuit of collective interest is the central preoccupation of governments. In the middle of the last century, thinkers such as Bernard Brodie, Henry Kissinger, Thomas Schelling, and Hedley Bull were preoccupied with the special incentives nuclear weapons might generate to overcome barriers to cooperation in anarchy and accept limits on states' violence capacity in their own (and the world's) best interest.<sup>1</sup> As scholars such as Robert Jervis and Charles Glaser later made clear, however, explicit or implicit inter-state cooperation on conventional arms control could play a critical role in moderating the security dilemma.<sup>2</sup> Those works and the studies they inspired bore deep into the core questions of security-seeking and cooperation under anarchy, but often abstracted away from important related question of domestic politics, the origins of state interests, and the role of norms and ideas in inter-state relations. Subsequent lines of research began formally to incorporate domestic political incentives, and, inspired by the landmark collection edited by Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*<sup>3</sup>, collectively held ideas and norms.

Erickson's book is the latest and best contribution to this research tradition. Why might powerful states agree to limit conventional arms exports? Addressing that question invokes many others: Why do norms change in international politics? Why, when, and how do those changes get reflected in institutions, like multilateral treaties? When and why would some of the most powerful actors in the international system agree to be bound by rules reflecting those norms even when potent material interests point toward retaining autonomy and freedom of action? And finally (this is the kicker), once formally bound by such treaty commitments, will these actors actually change their behavior? For a large number of compelling reasons that Erickson elucidates, we would not expect any norm about "responsible arms transfers" (that is, "thou shall not sell conventional weaponry to actors we all agree are human rights violators") to have much effect on the states that matter here: the big arms producers. These are big and powerful states that have overlapping economic and security reasons to avoid being bound by such a norm. And yet there is an effect: in a direct reversal of established policy, by 2013 big (democratic) exporters agreed to binding commitments and adopted policies accordingly. But both general patterns of evidence and detailed case studies show that this effect does not, in the main, extend to actual behavior. Erickson leverages case studies and an impressive set of interviews with policymakers to unpack the general findings and reveal a somewhat sordid tale of cynicism: democratic governments adopt norm-compliant policies to preserve their reputations as responsible international actors,

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper, 1957); Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1959); Thomas C. Schelling and Morton H. Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1961); Hedley Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race* (New York: Praeger 1965).

<sup>2</sup> Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 30:2 (January 1978): 167-214, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009958>; Charles Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited," *World Politics* 50:1 (October 1997): 171-201. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100014763>.

<sup>3</sup> Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

but then generally follow their material interests by not actually complying unless some scandal brings their hypocrisy to light. The contributions are many: a new and important explanation for normative change on this key issue, a new theoretical argument for formal compliance that cuts against the main existing explanations, and a model that also accounts for non-compliant behavior.

This brief precis shows that this is no easy book to pigeonhole; it is too eclectic and sensitive to the complexity of real world state behavior for that. Yet its counterintuitive findings are relevant to many policy and research questions. Readers looking to understand the book's key claims and gain an appreciation for the methodological and policy issues involved will benefit from this ISSF roundtable. In their review essays, Josh Busby, Denise Garcia and Srdjan Vucetic praise the book's contributions, situate them in the larger literature, and discuss key pieces of the puzzle Erickson addresses, notably the issue of states' reputations, the nature and power of evolving global norms, and the case studies and interview evidence on which the book's claims ultimately rest. Erickson's response engages the criticisms and develops directions for future research, along the way pointing to key evidence and sources that will be useful to researchers. The roundtable thus serves as a valuable 'state of the field' report for generalists as well as a sophisticated guide for researchers interested in diving deeper into this line of inquiry.

### Participants:

**Jennifer L. Erickson** is Associate Professor of Political Science and International Studies at Boston College. During the 2016-17 academic year, she is also a MacArthur Nuclear Security Faculty Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University. She holds a BA from St. Olaf College and a PhD in Government from Cornell University. Dr. Erickson's research deals with international security governance in the realm of the conventional arms trade, sanctions and arms embargoes, and new defense technologies. In addition to *Dangerous Trade* (Columbia University Press, 2015), her work has been published in the *European Journal of International Relations*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *International Studies Perspectives*, and *Political Science Quarterly*. Her current book project deals with new weapons and norms of war.

**William C. Wohlforth** is the Daniel Webster Professor in the Department of Government at Dartmouth College. His most recent book, coauthored with Stephen G. Brooks, is *America Abroad: The United States' Global Role in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Oxford, 2016).

**Joshua Busby** is an Associate Professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas-Austin. He is a Distinguished Scholar at the Strauss Center for International Security and Law. Prior to coming to UT, Dr. Busby was a research fellow at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School (2005-2006), Harvard's JFK School (2004-2005), and the Brookings Institution (2003-2004). He received his PhD in Government from Georgetown University in 2004. Dr. Busby has written extensively on transnational advocacy movements as well as climate change and global health. His first book *Moral Movements and Foreign Policy* was published by Cambridge University Press in July 2010. His second book *AIDS Drugs for All: Social Movements and Market Transformations* with Ethan Kapstein was published by Cambridge University Press in fall 2013. His works have appeared in *International Security*, *Perspectives on Politics*, *Security Studies*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Current History*, and *Problems of Post-Communism*, among other publications.

**Denise Garcia** is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and the International Affairs program at Northeastern University in Boston. She researches on International Law, global governance of

security, and the formation of new international norms and their impact on international relations. Author of *Small Arms and Security - New Emerging International Norms*, and *Disarmament Diplomacy and Human Security - Norms, Regimes, and Moral Progress in International Relations*, her articles have appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, the *European Journal of International Security*, *International Affairs*, *Ethics & International Affairs*, *Third World Quarterly*, *Global Policy Journal*, *International Relations*, and elsewhere.

**Srdjan Vucetic** is Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa. He received a PhD in Political Science from the Ohio State University. He is the author of *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations* (Stanford University Press, 2011), which examined the evolution of “special relationships” between and among English-speaking states. His research interests revolve around the politics of international hierarchy.

**Review by Joshua Busby, LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas-Austin**

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*Dangerous Trade* offers a methodologically and analytically eclectic take on efforts to impose human rights concerns on the arms trade. It is an easy read and a good contribution to the literature on social movements. Erickson brings in social reputation, what others think about states, to explain why states might sign on to efforts to regulate arms exports. She suggests the social pressures by states and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) might encourage countries to commit to agreements to make the arms trade more ethical. However, she argues that this commitment incentive does not explain variation in compliance, which she ascribes to different levels of transparency and NGO mobilization in different states.

While clearly inspired by constructivist scholarship, Erickson's account distinguishes her reputation-based argument by noting that states may commit to agreements knowing that they might not comply. Because compliance is difficult to observe or will occur after signatories leave office, decision-makers are tempted to sign on to agreements that are socially popular.

Erickson lays out why her reputation-based argument better explains the gap between commitment and compliance compared to alternative explanations, realism, neoliberalism, domestic preferences, and constructivism. A helpful table sets out the expectations of the various theoretical arguments.

For constructivists, Erickson argues that there should not be any daylight between commitment and compliance since states are thought to embrace norms-based policies out of conviction, especially as norms become taken for granted and diffuse throughout the international community. That point is debatable if we think back to the now-classic take on the norms life cycle from Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink where they readily acknowledge self-interested motives might drive, at least for some countries, their accession to support norm-based policies.<sup>1</sup>

This quibble aside, the argument is appropriately cautious about the power of reputation as a driver of behavior. I find two other pieces of the set-up somewhat problematic. Erickson's argument for domestic preferences is fully material. Thus, from this perspective, states will only comply if in the interests of domestic industry. However, domestic political calculations reflect more than the interests of manufacturers. Domestic actors motivated by norms (whether they be advocates for arms export regulation or anti-abortion protesters) can be important political constituencies. While advocates of restrictions on immoral arms exports are mostly politically insignificant, Erickson's argument relies on the emergence of scandal that can periodically make politicians in democracies vulnerable to campaigners' claims. This too is partially a domestic preferences argument, yet one that does not privilege material interests.

A related concern is that states may have had material reasons for controlling the arms trade. An unregulated arms trade in the 1990s and 2000s was leading to blowback abroad and more violence. Erickson notes how it became a scandal in the UK when British arms were used against British soldiers in the first Iraq War. Changes in the sense of appropriateness of uncontrolled arms exports may also reflect changes in an appreciation of the consequences of the trade.

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<sup>1</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52:4 (October 1998): 88-917. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081898550789>.

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In addition, Erickson invokes the potential openness in different states to restrictions on the arms trade to “level the playing field” (40). This suggests a solvable collective action problem in which states’ self-interests are potentially compatible with export regulations. Of course, this material logic might unravel if states worry about leakage to non-democracies (‘if we do not sell them weapons, the Chinese will...’). Nonetheless, I found this a tantalizing alternative explanation.

Erickson anchors her theoretical argument with both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

In chapter 3, she explores the arms exports of 22 of the world’s top arms exporters, which includes the United States, many European democracies, as well as China and Russia. Her quantitative work relies on data that had spotty collection beginning in the early 1980s that got better over time. She tracks arm exports of small and light weapons (such as machine guns) and major conventional weapons (such as tanks). She examines export trends both over time and by human rights scores. She complements this descriptive work with regression analysis.

Her main conclusion is a sobering one for advocates of human rights. For most of this period, from 1981 to 2010, state sovereignty and economic interests trumped normative concerns. This is still true when we reach the high water mark of NGO and state concern about morality and the arms trade in the 2010s when the United Nations (UN) Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was negotiated. The ATT, which regulates the legal trade of conventional arms, passed the UN General Assembly in 2013 and entered into force in 2014. Of the 22 leading arms exporters, all but Russia and China supported the ATT, though the United States has yet to ratify it.

As she periodizes the progression over time, Erickson finds modest evidence that the worst human rights abusers apparently received lower proportions of small arms in the mid-2000s. However, her moving-window regression analysis suggests that these findings go away. Her conclusion is that while there is increasing commitment to ethics in the arms trade, compliance is relatively weak and exhibits considerable variation.

In chapters 4 and 5, Erickson then explores the commitment and compliance patterns in a series of case studies of four European democracies (Belgium, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) as well as the United States. Because Erickson expects transparency norms and civil society mobilization to explain variation, she limits her cases to democracies, a choice which has some virtues but may also limit the generalizability of her argument. These case studies are enriched by meticulous field work, including 67 interviews of government officials, NGOs, defense companies, and experts from the core countries and a few others.

This rich case material unpacks the domestic dynamics at both the commitment and compliance stage. Through quotes from her interview material, Erickson is able to substantiate her claims that reputational concerns drove commitments by states to the ATT and more ethical arms-trade practices. She notes that these reputational concerns were unprompted by her questions.

One challenge is defining what compliance is. Since the ATT only recently entered into force in late 2014, the compliance argument requires Erickson to evaluate country compliance with norms before they were embodied in the ATT. Though the European Union (EU) reached a common position on arms exports in 2008, it is not clear what compliance standard is being evaluated, especially since the United States is one of

the cases. Even for the European cases, this is a challenge since the cases cover an extended period of time when a variety of standards were being proposed.

In addition, the interviews are uniformly anonymized so that one can identify the country code, sector code (such as government official), and year of interview code from a lengthy string of numbers. I found this to be a little frustrating. I would have preferred more on-the-record attributions. Barring that, more explicit references of ‘French NGO activist’ or ‘German government official’ would have been useful to know what kinds of actors were being quoted. The book could have benefitted from an additional table to know by category how many activists, government officials, etc. were interviewed in each country. If candor required anonymity, adding the names of the key advocacy organizations and companies would have brought the actors to life a bit more.

Belgium seemed to be over-represented in the interviews (18) and the United States under-represented (5). Having more Americans speak to the U.S. situation is especially important, it is the largest arms exporter. The U.S. also has a general problem of ratifying international agreements given the high treaty bar of the United States Senate, raising the question of whether it is possible to have compliance with incomplete commitment (such as the Law of the Sea to which the U.S. is a signatory but has never ratified).

Though a table justifies the inclusion of the case studies as being among the top 5 or top 20 exporters for different weapons classes, we are not provided a breakdown by market share of the 22 arms exporters either collectively or individually and how those rankings have changed. That makes it hard to judge the relative importance of the countries and the dynamism of the sector. It is also difficult to know whether there are patterns of arms exports concentrated between particular suppliers and importers.

If the relative employment contribution or income from the arms trade is declining among European countries as they spend less on defense, the importance of that interest group could decline, making the state potentially more amenable to arms control restrictions. Erickson alludes to such a possibility, but this secular weakening of arms traffickers in some countries is not fully explored.

In Erickson’s view, only states that have high transparency and high NGO activity are scandal prone and thus subject to greater pressures for compliance. The two-by-two table in chapter 5 locates the five core studies along both dimensions (as well as three others briefly explored in the conclusion). I would have liked more on the coding rules for concluding high/low NGO activity and what constitutes a threshold for high or low transparency. Since three of the cells yield “low scandal sensitivity” (111), there could be some unpacking of whether dynamics are the same in countries that possess transparency without NGO activity, NGO activity without transparency, or those that lack both.

### *Case Selection*

Erickson’s choices of case selection—based in part on importance—are defensible. She does not expect her argument on compliance to travel to non-democracies since they lack both transparency and civil society to hold leaders accountable. However, given that the book focuses so heavily on four European Union members, I was surprised that there was not a more lengthy discussion of social pressures in the EU. National dynamics of the four European states loom large (such as France’s aspirations for global leadership and fraught relationship with former colonies and Germany’s historical memory of World War Two).

However, as Erickson herself writes, “states whose self-images are strongly tied to international institutions are more likely to respond to social pressures...” (142). This dynamic seems to apply especially well to EU countries but raises questions about the generalizability to other democracies and even the European Union as its social fabric frays.

The short case studies of Israel, South Africa, and Brazil in the conclusion are welcome. Erickson writes that South Africa became a supporter of the ATT as it sought to enhance its reputation internationally. This raises the larger question of what kinds of states are likely open to these social pressures. Are non-democracies immune to these social pressures? China and Russia abstained on the ATT but did not oppose it outright. As Erickson acknowledges, states can acquire reputational benefits by supporting or at least not opposing arms exports.

What kinds of states would be vulnerable to these social pressures to improve their reputations? Are any states vulnerable to social pressures important arms exporters? As Emily Hafner-Burton argues, state vulnerability could be enhanced if leading states are prepared to complement social pressure with material pressure such as trade sanctions.<sup>2</sup> Might regimes in transition to democracies be particularly vulnerable?

Erickson early in the book raises the issue that parliamentary systems might be more vulnerable to these concerns compared to presidential systems because the party as a whole would likely be affected by scandal in parliamentary systems. This question could have been further explored.

Another way to think about target vulnerability is in terms of the ruling party in power. When the Obama administration came in to power in 2009, the U.S. position changed. Similarly, when the Labour Party came into power in 1998, the UK became more receptive to human rights concerns and the arms trade. Do shifts to left-leaning governments potentially explain sensitivity to this issue? I observed something similar in my work on France’s stance on the International Criminal Court (ICC).<sup>3</sup> In 1997, elections in France brought the Socialists in to a cohabitation government with the right-leaning President Jacques Chirac. The Socialists were more favorable to the ICC, which helped shift France’s position on the Court.

France’s later embrace of the ATT under Chirac suggests the limits of the ‘leftist parties’ explanation, but this raises a different question about the separability of issues. Was Chirac’s support for the ATT related to the previous criticism he received from other European states over his stance on the ICC?

If there is regime type, party, or even individual leader variation in sensitivity to social pressures, how do we *ex ante* evaluate which states or actors are likely vulnerable? This is a productive area for future research.

### *Final Thoughts on Reputation*

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<sup>2</sup> Emily M. Hafner-Burton, “Trading Human Rights: How Preferential Trade Agreements Influence Government Repression,” *International Organization* 59:3 (July 2005): 593-629. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818305050216>.

<sup>3</sup> Joshua W. Busby, *Moral Movements and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

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Erickson notes that the salience of social pressures may also be related to which government officials are sent to global negotiations. Most negotiators of the ATT came from ministries of foreign affairs that are more sensitive to international reputational concerns than actors from the ministry of trade.

The arms trade is, as Erickson notes, largely low salience to the mass public, save for the occasional scandal and for particular interest groups like gun-rights groups. Can countries acquire a bad reputation if most of the public is unaware of their behavior? It may require us to be a bit more circumspect and acknowledge that reputations are mostly an elite phenomenon, especially salient to certain diplomats from specific agencies embedded in particular institutional settings. Erickson's cautious conclusions point us in that direction. I look forward to watching where her research goes next.

Review by Denise Garcia, Northeastern University

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**D***angerous Trade* has a compelling title and a gripping argument. This book is at once a page-turner and a page-lingerer due to its riveting prose and profound lessons to the scholarship in International Relations.

Jennifer Erickson sets out the importance and timeliness of her argument by explaining that conventional arms are responsible for the vast majority not only of conflict deaths but also violence in countries ‘at peace.’ These arms have a rightful and enduring place in world politics. States have always been jealous of their arms and choose their trade partners carefully, as these arms are an essential component and tool for international security. Yet, states have agreed to create the first legally-binding “humanitarian or responsible arms trade” treaty by an overwhelming majority vote at the United Nations General Assembly on 2 April 2013 (2). The treaty entered into force on 24 December 2014, and now has 130 signatories and 82 High Contracting Parties. It is the first to regulate the conventional arms trade, setting standards to restrict arms to human rights violators and to conflict zones. The treaty also managed to appeal to three groups that are often at loggerheads: human rights activists, the defense industry, and states.

States were actually racing to the Arms Trade Treaty. Many states were playing an activist role, as much as the many brave nongovernmental organizations, like the Control Arms Campaign. The treaty’s coming to fruition is an exceptional outcome in the midst of the most complex negotiations. This race took place as the overwhelming majority of states in the world wanted the treaty despite the United States’ objections. China and Russia for instance, were playing along, never voted against it, and often even offered a constructive role. Here the contributions provided by Erickson’s books are remarkable: this is a hard area of security and a new regime was formed despite the hegemon’s initial reluctance. The first UN General Assembly resolution called for a treaty in 2006 and the United States objected to it until 2009. But the history of the treaty can be traced back to the early 1990s. The theoretical contribution lies in demonstrating that due to social reputation, most states in this case used the repudiation of the United States to advance their own social standing and enjoyed being seen as doing the right thing for a world that is plagued by armed violence.

Why did states agree to do this? Arms are useful for each state’s national security: they indicate a level of prominence, enhance relationships, they can serve as gifts instead of unsavory troop contribution and may be an essential part of interoperability operations. Thus, why have states consented to place multilateral restrictions on their time-honored foreign policy ability to choose their own arms trade partners and in the absence of visible material incentive? Most of the times, the High Contracting Parties will actually incur great cost to be compliant with the treaty’s obligations.

Erickson’s treatise is the first to answer such fundamental questions and she does so masterfully. When I wrote my *Disarmament Diplomacy and Human Security—Norms, Regimes, and Moral Progress in International Relations* in 2011 the Arms Trade Treaty was in negotiations.<sup>1</sup> I had a full hopeful opening chapter about the potentials of an Arms Trade Treaty and what would constitute its legal core. Those questions, answered by Erickson, were puzzling to policy communities in diplomatic capitals, particularly Geneva and New York, and to an inattentive public (and scholarly audience). Few scholars take tackle the complexities within the heart of

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<sup>1</sup> Denise Garcia, *Disarmament Diplomacy and Human Security—Norms, Regimes, and Moral Progress in International Relations* (Routledge, 2011).

national security so clearly: how states manage their arms. Erickson not only tackled this but also explains why they consent to International Law restraints on their freedom to trade in arms. The significance of the Arms Trade Treaty to world politics is noteworthy.<sup>2</sup> As I have argued, when the treaty came into force, the lack of arms regulation is also hurting the private sector. Corrupt black-market transactions cost the world defense industry an estimated \$20 billion a year. A number of manufacturers in several major arms-producing countries like the United Kingdom and the United States wanted a more transparent arms trade. The treaty sets criteria for transfers by articulating prohibitions on transferring arms *vis-à-vis* existing obligations such as arms embargos and human rights law commitments like prohibition of torture and genocide. It connects arms transfer obligations to a duty to refrain from the commissioning of crimes against humanity and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions (International Humanitarian Law).

*Dangerous Trade* uncovers the rise of the ‘responsible arms trade norm’ and offers an understanding of two central theoretical questions: first, how does change occur in hard security areas despite the absence of material incentive? As the author states: “conventional weapons play a vital role in national and international security and present a hard case for international commitment” (44). Second, how does new norm-acceptance occur, especially from actors interested in keeping the status quo? The book explains the variation in the principal outcome – support for the Treaty - from some of the most reluctant states, including the United States.

Erickson uses a cogent multi-method approach against the background of a rich historical account to explain the magnitude of the change that took place at the heart of the largest arms exporters’ policies. The way she carries out the methodology employed in *Dangerous Trade* is a lesson to all students of International Relations, newly-minted and seasoned. The methodological framework enables the development of a theory of state behavior and social change based upon social reputation that deals a blow to realist perspectives of International Relations. Erickson’s argument is two-fold: first, states react to offenses to their image and want to uphold reputations as responsible members of the international community. Therefore, they respond not only to material incentives but also to other many types of social initiatives that will add to their prestige and their international standing.

States do so in an instrumental way but also in a social way, and this is what previous explanations missed. Second, states will attempt to eschew the possibility of scandals that link their behavior to breaches of what is socially acceptable at home and abroad. Erickson’s is a significant contribution to the literature that had thus far undertheorized reputation. The author fully engages the security-studies literature. If one thinks about it, the nuclear deterrence posture is built on reputation. So is military alliance membership. States therefore care about their reputations, as they impact their global standing in their capacity to make coercive threats. This security-studies argument is strengthened by her theory. Why does reputation matter? What is its purpose? How do states achieve a reputable posture in world politics? For their image and status, they gain more ways to enter into profitable cooperation. States can therefore predict each other’s behavior and wish to maintain global regimes. Most importantly, as good citizens, they are reliable, cooperative, and compliant (20). From an International Law point of view, and for the sake of the processes of treaty implementation, the trustworthy states are likely to comply with treaty obligations. Essential here for Erickson’s theory is the fact

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<sup>2</sup> Denise Garcia, “Disarming the Lords of War, A New International Treaty to Regulate the Arms Trade,” *Foreign Affairs*, 24 December 2014, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/142734/denise-garcia/disarming-the-lords-of-war>.

that reputation entrusts states with the capacity to influence and alter politics through negotiations in international organizations.

Erickson is humble about what she achieved in *Dangerous Trade*. She never says this, but all previous thinking on reputation simplified it. Her theory offers the needed nuanced theorization. The author is clear-eyed about states seeking to build their reputation, though. Erickson fully recognizes that states are “strategic actors operating in a social setting where norms and institutions affect the behaviors that are collectively valued and that build reputation” (23). It is clear therefore that this ground-breaking theory applies both to rationalists and to constructivists alike. This is because Erickson understands reputation as a social incentive and this has consequences for government accountability, norm diffusion, and regime formation (147).

In sum, states care about their reputations in this utterly globalized world politics in which everyone gets to know about everything. Essentially, reputation is part of their identity, both domestically and in international institutions. This was also overlooked until Erickson’s book. States’ presence in international fora is a constituent part of their life and an enabling ingredient that enables them to enter (to be recognized or to get recognition) into and remain in international relations (without sanctions or other forms of ostracizing). *Dangerous Trade* convincingly makes a case for the relationship between strategic behavior and social norms.

Erickson also enlightens in another area which has thus far not fully been explored to explain changes in security: the rise of a mega-norm of transparency that occurred concomitantly in social corporate responsibility, in the diamond trade, in the extractive industries in general. This general move towards a more transparent normative world was critical for the new norm explored in *Dangerous Trade*, namely, the responsible arms trade and transfers norm. Along with this rising transparency enabling normative environment, Erickson delves deeper into an area that I had started investigating in my *Disarmament Diplomacy and Human Security* book. This is the acceptance by states of human rights and humanitarianism norms (which the author places within a context of human security ideational understandings): “new rules and norms have introduced human security to the political calculus or arms export decision making” (140).

Here the author could have tackled head on the fact that humanitarianism is profoundly connected with the global norms enshrined in International Humanitarian Law (IHL). IHL is one of the most widely adhered to branch of International Law and most of its norms, regulating the conduct of state during war, are considered customary. Legally, states are bound to a very deep and dense web of regulation that restrains behaviors. This is compounded by the prohibitions set in the United Nations Charter under article 2.4 that prohibits the use of force in most circumstances. In this sense, commitment to humanitarian standards is not new (147) but an evolving normative framework that was initiated with the first 1864 Geneva Convention and then the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Clearly, as Erickson argues, all this really took hold and became a pronounced reality more recently.

Otherwise, it is very hard if not impossible to fault Jennifer Erickson’s book. This is a great contribution to the understanding of how change occurs at the heart of national security. It is also very timely. In light of the Syrian conflict and the wrongful supplies of arms, this book offers answers on what is desirable for progress in international relations.

What is ahead for the treaty? The United States and most major arms producers are signatories and most of them are High Contracting Parties (but not yet the U.S.). As I argued in 2014,<sup>3</sup> when the treaty became International Law, the bad news for the United States—and the good news for the rest of the world—was that the ATT did not need the United States on board to succeed. It didn't need China or Russia either. Other disarmament treaties have gone on to do considerable good without their support. For instance, although China, India, Russia, and the United States never signed the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, that agreement has cut the number of accidental deaths from exploding landmines by over two-thirds and has eliminated the landmine trade. They all embrace the norms arising from the treaty. Likewise, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), has effectively made the testing of nuclear weapons unacceptable behavior that is considered shameful for respectable nations but the CTBT is not yet into force. These treaties work by creating powerful norms that are now nearly unanimously respected as customary law. Given the support it has ushered, the ATT would mostly likely follow this route.

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<sup>3</sup> “Disarming the Lords of War.”

**Review by Srdjan Vucetic, University of Ottawa**

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The literature on state compliance with new norms is vast and growing, but it rarely extends to conventional arms control. Jennifer Erickson's *Dangerous Trade* changes this, and in a grand way, by developing and testing a new theory of state behavior in the context of the emerging international humanitarian environment. The question is this: Why have major arms-exporting democracies committed to humanitarian or 'responsible' export controls? Erickson's answer is social reputation. Admirably, the reader need not delve deeply into the argot of contemporary International Relations (IR) to understand what she means by this. In the social context of international institutions, states have an incentive to follow the prevailing norms and thus maintain or improve their reputation as 'good citizens.' Such norm-following is powerful because it positively reinforces the self-esteem of their leaders and, more fundamentally, state/national identity.

Erickson should be applauded for situating her explanation in the broader history of the global arms trade (Chapter 3) and also for accomplishing this with the help of a chronology (Appendix A) and regression tables (Appendix C). Traditionally, arms transfers and humanitarianism had little to do with each other. Why not sell arms to Autocrat X if this creates high-paying jobs at home and helps defeat or deter a common enemy abroad? Sure, arms supplies ruin lives, but ultimately these are the lives of others, not the lives of the citizens of the selling nation. In Erickson's view, the normative and policy U-turn began to happen sometime in the 1990s due to the coming-together of four developments: the controversy related to arms sales to Saddam Hussein's Iraq following the Gulf War of 1990-1991, the do-something response to vicious civil wars, the unexpected success of the anti-landmine treaty movement, and the general rise of human security-oriented organizations and networks. Together, these events reconfigured international politics such that more and more governments began to endorse humanitarian arms trade standards. The high point of this process, currently, is the 2013-2014 Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)—the first and only legally-binding treaty designed to regulate the multi-billion-dollar global trade in small and major conventional weapons. Thus far, policy change has not led to more responsible practices, however. States, including democracies, as Erickson shows, continue to sell arms to countries with poor human rights records.

According to some objectivist and materialist IR theories, states should have never even bothered with policy change in the first place. That is, they should have maintained the status quo given that it clearly benefited their defence industries and allowed them wide foreign policy autonomy. But norms and rules matter in international politics and states seek to conform to them, at least publicly. This is the core of Erickson's argument about reputation as a social incentive. If reputation among states explains commitment itself (Chapter 4), then domestic reputation explains variation in compliance (Chapter 5). This is demonstrated through the in-depth case studies of France, Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and the United States—each scrupulously researched and convincing. A quick tour of the politics of arms transfers in Israel, South Africa, and Brazil is also included to show that the author's theoretical insights travel beyond Europe and the West (143-146). Erickson suggests in the end that the policy-practice gap will continue (Chapter 6). Persuading, inspiring, coercing, and/or cajoling states to respect their human security-centered principles and policies agenda requires greater transparency, further legalization, active Non-Governmental Organizations, and time—to mention but four necessary but completely insufficient conditions.

*Dangerous Trade* is so good that I acquired two copies—one for myself and one to gift to whomever ends up being my best student this year. The book is also so good that I wanted the author to give us more. But this is precisely where H-Diplo comes in with its mission to promote dialogue between author and reader. To that

end, I will invite Erickson to expand on three topics: (1) the role of state/national identity in reputation dynamics; (2) the implications of her argument for India, a democracy that refuses to participate in the ATT; and (3) the aforementioned ‘countermovement’ issue.

According to Erickson’s theory, reputations are strategically sought at both international and domestic levels. Actors participate in the prevailing norms and rules-in-order because this bestows them with good reputations that, in turn, helps them gain prestige and influence in the international society. Failing to participate in the prevailing norms and rules, conversely, leads to stigmatization and the accompanying loss of prestige and influence.

Good reputations are particularly important for governments, especially in “established democratic regimes” (33). A democratically elected government will seek a positive image for itself by pursuing actions that conform to “closely held internal definitions of identity and values.” When this fails, there is a risk of scandal. Arms trade scandals in democracies can be costly even if they seldom matter electorally (33). Erickson is explicit that scandal-sensitivity is a function of arms trade transparency and pro-arms control NGO activity (111, Figure 5.1) but in her case studies she also makes an implicit connection to state/national identity. Postwar Germany, as a “civilian power” (119) is thus more sensitive to arms trade scandals than the arms-producing France.

This proposition is eminently defensible: the success of ‘naming and shaming’ campaigns clearly depends on what shame means in a given sociocultural context (sex scandals, for example, are less frequent in Europe, as the author notes on 32). The challenge here, I think, is to provide an account of the prevailing state identity independently from the compliance narrative itself. If both France and Germany have multiple identities and if some of these identities can and do work to blunt the propensity for arms trade scandals—France’s special relationship with the Francophone Africa vs. France as the “birthplace of human rights” (127), and Germany the arms exports ‘powerhouse’ versus Germany the civilian power (121, n. 39)—then the researcher must specify which state/national identity was most dominant before evaluating her propositions about scandal sensitivity.

On to the question about India’s non-participation in the ATT. *Prima facie*, India’s non-participation has little to do with the puzzle examined in the book given that the ‘world’s largest democracy’ is an importer, not an exporter (out of eight arms exporting democracies examined in Erickson’s book, six are India’s major suppliers). New Delhi’s official position is that the treaty interferes with the country’s right and need to buy arms abroad.<sup>1</sup> Yet, India is interesting in this context for two reasons. The first is its post-independence refusal to sell arms abroad. Although this policy eventually collapsed, the episode is a useful reminder that the meanings of ‘good international citizenship’ vary. Indeed, countries not only pursue and obtain self-esteem in different international institutional contexts, but they also do so by building explicitly counter-hegemonic norms and rules.

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<sup>1</sup> A country that experienced multiple arms embargoes at the most inopportune times in the past has since 2008 accounted for around one tenth of global arms imports by volume. Also note that India has long exported weapons to South Asia and that Indian weapons-makers are now aggressively pursuing new markets with little regard to the emerging humanitarian standards. Francis Wade, “India’s fight for Myanmar, 28 May 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/05/20125288919623356.html> on 1 April 2016.

My last point is merely an invitation to the author to further comment upon her observation that the emerging humanitarian norms and rules are being undermined by certain security and economic practices of advanced democratic states—what she calls the “countermovement” (154). The way I see it, herein lies a potential for deeper engagement with sociologically inspired scholarship on ‘liberal militarism’ and/or ‘liberal way of war.’ This is a testament of the high quality of Erickson’s book: not only does it provide valuable contribution to the discussion of social reputation and of arms transfers, but it also opens up conversations between and across theoretical and disciplinary traditions dealing with the nexus of “war, security, and the liberal state.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Vivienne Jabri, “War, Security and the Liberal State,” *Security Dialogue* 37:1 (2006): 47-64.

## Author's Response by Jennifer L. Erickson, Boston College

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I am grateful to Joshua Busby, Denise Garcia, and Srdjan Vucetic for their thoughtful reviews of my book, *Dangerous Trade: Arms Exports, Human Rights, and International Reputation*. I am honored that they would take the time to engage with my ideas. I am also grateful to Tom Maddux for organizing this roundtable and initiating a substantive discussion about the conventional arms trade, an issue with immense policy relevance and the subject of growing academic study.

In *Dangerous Trade*, I explain why major democratic arms exporting states have recently reversed their long-standing opposition to multilateral arms export controls and signed on to regional and global agreements like the European Union's (EU) Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (1998) and the United Nations (UN) Arms Trade Treaty (ATT, 2013). When I started the project, the ATT process had just begun at the UN, and the contrast between established scholarly understandings of governments' arms export control preferences and the policies they now supported was striking. As Denise Garcia points out in her review, governments were "racing" to support the treaty. Yet, as my interviews and statistical analyses also show, their public support did not necessarily mean that they were racing to change their arms export practices to reflect ATT criteria—even governments that had already accepted those norms in national policies and regional agreements like the EU Code.

What accounts for arms exporting governments' support for new 'responsible' arms trade norms and related agreements, particularly in the absence of pre-existing norm internalization or sustained domestic pressures? In the past, governments had seen multilateral arms export controls as carrying heavy costs to their national security, sovereignty, and economic interests. What changed? I argue that, as normative expectations about the arms trade have evolved since the Cold War, states' social concern for their international reputations has come to motivate their support for new 'humanitarian' arms export criteria. Yet I also show that corresponding changes in arms export *practices* have neither preceded these policy commitments nor, for the most part, followed them. Instead, governments adjust their behavior case-by-case at the margins, seeking to avoid arms trade scandals at home, which can harm their domestic reputations. In particular, governments facing an active domestic Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) community and arms trade transparency are more sensitive to the likelihood of scandal in response to 'irresponsible' arms export decisions.

The reviewers highlight a number of *Dangerous Trade's* contributions. Theoretically, it develops reputation as a social concept, linked to how states are viewed by other international and domestic actors. In doing so, the book helps to better understand gaps between states' commitment and compliance and contributes to the growing literature on the instrumental uses of norms in world politics. Empirically, the reviewers praise its multi-method approach, which provides a more comprehensive understanding of states' arms export policies, practices, and the motivations behind them. Naturally, the reviewers also have critiques and questions. I organize the remainder of my response to address their comments about international and domestic reputation, arms trade norms and counter-norms, and the case study data. Their points on these topics are thought-provoking and, I hope, will help to expand the theoretical and empirical discussions *Dangerous Trade* seeks to begin.

### *International Reputation*

*Dangerous Trade* points to states' concern for their reputations as 'good international citizens' to explain their commitment to new multilateral arms export initiatives. In doing so, it reconceptualizes reputation in

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International Relations (IR) following the standard English language use of the term as “a collective judgment of an actor’s character or the esteem in which that actor is held.”<sup>1</sup> Other IR literature, in contrast, more narrowly defines reputation as credibility, focusing on states’ past actions and their material consequences.<sup>2</sup> Yet, as rich as this existing literature is, its narrower conceptualization of reputation overlooks states’ social concern for the ‘esteem’ in which they are held as a reason reputation matters and diverges from how most non-political scientists, including policy-makers, use the term.<sup>3</sup>

In Chapter 2, I argue that actors often attach *social* value to their reputations and publicly commit to policies as a means to gain positive affirmation of their self-image from other actors in the international community, even if they might be privately skeptical of the policies’ potential effectiveness or value. This does not exclude the possibility that a good reputation could lead to material benefits, but rather seeks to return reputation to its social roots. As my interviews for *Dangerous Trade* repeatedly showed, arms exporting governments did not see commitment to ‘responsible’ arms trade criteria as a source of material gain, but rather as carrying significant material costs. In fact, interviewees were skeptical that the new policies could meaningfully curb conflict and human rights abuses abroad, going against Joshua Busby’s hypothesis that governments’ support was based on their desire to control violence elsewhere in order to spare themselves the costs of intervention. Likewise, the statistical evidence shows that norm implementation has been weak, suggesting that governments do *not* expect new rules to provide them with such benefits.

Instead, the empirical evidence in this case shows that anticipation of social benefits and fear of social costs were the primary drivers of major democratic governments’ commitments to ‘responsible’ arms export criteria. These governments set aside worries about material costs and prioritized their wish to be seen by others as good, moral, or responsible actors, in line with their own self-images. Governments hoped to receive a social boost from policy support, replicating, as interviewees consistently mentioned, what had happened for many states with the Ottawa landmine treaty in 1997. They also sought to avoid the social costs of being left behind and especially, as interviewees noted before 2009, of being grouped together with the high-profile and unpopular treaty opponent, the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Accessed at OED Online. See also Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Deborah Welch Larson, “Trust and Missed Opportunities in International Relations,” *Political Psychology* 18:3 (September 2007):701-734, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/0162-895X.00075>; Daryl G. Press, *Calculating Credibility: How Leaders Assess Military Threats* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Michael Tomz, *Reputation and International Cooperation: Sovereign Debt Across Three Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Barbara F. Walter, *Reputation and Civil War: Why Separatist Conflicts Are so Violent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> See also Judith Kelley, *Scorecard Diplomacy: Grading States to Influence Their Reputation and Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). This use is also prevalent in other fields, such as anthropology, business, psychology, and sociology.

Busby asks which states might be vulnerable to social reputational pressures.<sup>4</sup> In general, while all states may face reputational concerns, some states may be more vulnerable to reputational pressures than others, based on their publicly professed values, the communities to which they belong (or seek to belong), and the norms connected to the policy in question. Chapter 2 highlights two key factors that made some states particularly vulnerable to reputational pressures in the case of humanitarian arms control: first, liberal democracies and other states that publicly stake their identities on values related to human rights, humanitarianism, and rule of law, and, second, states that are deeply embedded in international institutions as a source of their foreign policy identity. The United States, which tends to define its identity less in terms of international institutions, has therefore been less vulnerable to external reputational pressures in this case. Similarly, while I note that non-democracies can and do face external reputational pressures, they are less vulnerable to them on issues that highlight values less relevant to their identities, like human rights. Thus, China and Russia took a back seat on the ATT, neither willing to suffer potential social costs for blocking it nor sufficiently pressured to support a treaty rooted in Western understandings of human rights. Moreover, against Busby's expectations, among democracies, these values and self-conceptions of identity have tended to extend beyond the particular ideology of the party in power.<sup>5</sup>

Actors' identity, as Srdjan Vucetic points out, therefore has a central place in this conversation. In essence, I argue in Chapter 2, a state's reputation is feedback from its community on the public image that it projects. This public image is based on a state's self-understanding of its own identity. States look for approval from their peers, who judge their reputations "within the framework of positively valued identity characteristics of a particular group" (27).<sup>6</sup> A good reputation can, in turn, "serve to confirm and even shape [a state's] understanding of its own identity" (27). Thus, international social reputation may be one important way in which identity—and concern for how identities are perceived—can shape state behavior. And while for theoretical and empirical reasons *Dangerous Trade* largely focuses on states with similar identities, their desires

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<sup>4</sup> Busby's work also points to the role of image concerns in driving government decision-making. See, for example, Joshua William Busby, "Bono Made Jesse Helms Cry: Jubilee 2000, Debt Relief, and Moral Action in International Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 51:2 (June 2007): 247-275. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2007.00451.x>.

<sup>5</sup> European support for 'responsible' arms trade norms has crossed parties in power. Although British policy came under Labour, experts noted at the time that the Conservatives were also on their way to supporting it and have done so since their return to power. French support for the EU Code and ATT support came under conservative Chirac, while German support came under Social Democrat Schröder. The EU Common Position came under conservative Sarkozy in France, conservative Merkel in Germany, and Labour leader Gordon in the UK. I also note that although the Obama administration reversed the Bush administration's ATT opposition, President Bill Clinton opposed the landmine treaty and was said to be skeptical about legal small arms controls, even as a Republican-controlled Congress voted to pursue an international arms trade code of conduct. In general, U.S. presidents have more often sought to retain flexibility in decision-making on the issue (103).

<sup>6</sup> This point draws from Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52:4 (October 1998):887-917, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081898550789>; Vaughn P. Shannon, "Norms Are What States Make of Them: The Political Psychology of Norm Violation," *International Studies Quarterly* 44:2 (June 2000): 293-316, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/0020-8833.00159>; Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior," in *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 2nd ed., edited by Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1986).

for others to see them as they see themselves—as cooperative, rule-abiding, human rights supporting democracies—clearly influenced their decisions to support new arms trade norms.

Even so, not all states have invested in articulating and promoting their external identity. Vucetic asks, in particular, why reputational pressures did not result in Indian support for the ATT. The short answer is that, as an arms importing state,<sup>7</sup> India was not a key target for campaign pressures. In fact, ATT leaders were willing to lose India if it meant gaining the support of the United States, the world's top arms exporting state, which, unlike India, they saw as critical for the success of the initiative. For domestic reasons, India required a treaty provision prohibiting transfers to non-state actors. However, in order to keep the U.S. at the negotiating table, ATT leaders excluded non-state actor restrictions from discussions, and India chose to abstain (but, importantly, not veto) in the final votes. The bigger-picture answer to Vucetic's question, however, brings to mind Manjari Chatterjee Miller's research in which she argues that India is unusual historically in its lack of a strong set of diplomatic beliefs and ideational framework about its identity as a rising power.<sup>8</sup> Unlike other great powers, Miller shows that "within India itself, the foreign policy elite shies away from any talk of the country's rising status" and "will not respond positively to abstract calls for it to assume more global responsibility."<sup>9</sup> From this perspective, then, it is perhaps unsurprising that not only has India not been a central target of reputational pressures, but also that it has been less susceptible to such pressures on "responsible" arms trade norms or otherwise.

### *Domestic Reputation*

States also face domestic reputational concerns, linked to how well key domestic audiences judge their policies and practices to reflect domestic values and norms. In the case of conventional arms transfers, the public has tended to be less attentive to governments' policy choices and more attentive (when it has been attentive at all) to select cases in which NGOs and the media have spotlighted extreme gaps between governments' arms export practices and professed values and norms. Governments worry that the resulting scandals can undermine their domestic reputation and, with it, their domestic legitimacy, even if direct punishment at the polls is rare (33). In turn, those governments that perceive a higher likelihood of arms trade scandal are relatively more careful on a case-by-case basis in approving export deals (32). This finding came directly out of interviews with NGOs and government officials. In fact, I was surprised at how frequently interviewees across cases specifically emphasized growing concerns about domestic scandal as an influence on arms export decision-making in practice.

Nevertheless, Busby observes that "domestic political calculations reflect more than the interests of manufacturers" as a point of disagreement between us. In fact, I agree with him. Much of the past arms trade

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<sup>7</sup> Since *Dangerous Trade* focuses on arms exporting states, it excludes India as a potential case. See Chapter 1 on case selection.

<sup>8</sup> Manjari Chatterjee Miller, "The Un-Argumentative Indian?: Ideas About the Rise of India and Their Interaction With Domestic Structures," *India Review* 13:1 (2014):1-14. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14736489.2014.873670>.

<sup>9</sup> Manjari Chatterjee Miller, "India's Feeble Foreign Policy: A Would-Be Great Power Resists Its Own Rise," *Foreign Affairs* (May/June):14-19, 14.

literature holds the defense industry up as the key policy player for most arms exporting governments, based on material motives.<sup>10</sup> *Dangerous Trade*, in contrast, explicitly seeks to broaden the political interests at play in governments' commitment to and compliance with new arms trade policies. First, governments' policy commitments have diverged from this long-standing expectation of reflecting defense industry interests, responding instead to international social pressures. Second, governments' compliance calculations and concerns for domestic reputation are shaped in part by NGO pressures in domestic politics.

First, as the cases in Chapter 4 clearly show, governments set aside defense industry interests in *committing* to "humanitarian" arms export criteria (75-82). Governments announced their support for the ATT and related initiatives against defense industry preferences. Industry representatives framed their subsequent choice as either to support the initiative in order to have some input in making the treaty, or to oppose it, get left out of the policy-making process, and be stuck following a treaty made by people who did not "understand the realities of the business." They chose to support it, but only *after* governments forced their hands. Yet governments were not playing to a more general domestic audience in announcing their policy support, either (with the exception of the UK; see below). Governments and advocates alike noted – and in some cases lamented – that arms export policy does not score points with the public and did not resonate in the same way that the landmine treaty did. In this case, as I show in Chapter 4, the political calculation for policy support is an international one, not a domestic one. Here, I detail the creation of policy expectations and social reputational pressures in two international institutional venues in particular: the EU (84-86), which, as Busby notes, deserves attention, and the UN (86-89).

The one case in which policy commitment originated from domestic political calculations is the UK. The British Arms to Iraq Scandal in the early 1990s put Britain's 'irresponsible' arms trade practices in the public spotlight and became a major campaign issue for the Labour Party in the 1997 elections. As a means to distinguish itself from the reigning Conservative Party, Labour made "ethical foreign policy" a centerpiece of its campaign, consulted with NGOs on the arms trade issue, and appealed to voters in part by promising to clean up British arms exports (114-119). After Labour came to power, it simultaneously pursued national

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<sup>10</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, for example, highlights the dominant role of defense industrial interests in shaping governments' defense procurement and production policies. See Andrew Moravcsik, "Arms and Autarky in Modern European History," in *Defense and Dependence in a Global Economy*, edited by Raymond Vernon and Ethan B. Kapstein (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1992); "Armaments Among Allies: European Weapons Collaboration, 1975–1985," in *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, edited by Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson, and Robert D. Putnam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Similarly, research on the oversized influence of the military-industrial complex in government policy-making also suggests the deciding role of defense industrial preferences. See, for example: Gordon Adams, *The Politics of Defense Contracting: The Iron Triangle* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1981); Asif Efrat, "Toward Internationally Regulated Goods: Controlling the Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons," *International Organization* 64:1 (Winter 2010): 97-131; William D. Hartung, *Welfare for Weapons Dealers: The Hidden Costs of the Arms Trade* (New York: World Policy Institute, New School for Social Research, 1996); William W. Keller, *Arm in Arm: The Political Economy of the Global Arms Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 1995); Edward A. Kolodziej, "Arms Transfers and International Politics: The Interdependence of Independence," in *Arms Transfers in the Modern World*, edited by Stephanie G. Neuman and Robert E. Harkavy (New York: Praeger, 1979); Ann Markusen, Peter Hall, Scott Campbell, and Sabina Deitrick, *The Rise of the Gunbelts: The Military Remapping of Industrial America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

export reform and led the creation of the 1998 EU Code of Conduct. Later, it led the ATT initiative, using EU export criteria as its model.<sup>11</sup>

In doing so, Britain set the new standard for ‘good’ arms export policy and became a key source of international social pressure, particularly among EU member states. Officials repeatedly told me that they found it difficult to come out against new policies when other European states, especially Britain, had come out in favor of them. They did not want to be left behind or grouped with the ‘bad’ states and instead wanted to show themselves as more responsible and more transparent. These intra-EU dynamics helped gain *commitment* to the EU Code and later an ATT. Yet, as I point out elsewhere,<sup>12</sup> EU pressures and norms for *compliance* are still inconsistent, even in high profile export cases.

Second, as I show in Chapter 5, domestic politics have strongly shaped government *compliance* and arms export decision-making in practice. As norms have changed, the domestic political calculus has become more complicated. Rather than simply favoring consistent export pressures from industry, governments attempt to balance industry pressures with more variable public pressures for greater restraint. Although defense industry interests do figure into states’ export decision-making in practice, they are not the only interests. Contrary to Busby’s assertion, I do not show that “states will only comply if in the interests of domestic industry.” Active, pro-control NGOs, as I detail throughout Chapter 5, are also part of governments’ compliance calculus, especially when paired with national arms trade transparency.<sup>13</sup> NGOs are not “mostly politically insignificant,” as Busby says I claim. In fact, I devote Chapter 5 to arguing that, where pro-control NGOs are present and able to access government export information, they alter reputational calculations in a way that, as Busby also contends, “does not privilege material interests.” It is clear that security and economic interests do not go away as governments consider whether and how to comply with new rules and norms. However, in some cases where governments fear the public may be watching, the case studies in Chapter 5 show that NGO pressures can outweigh them.

That said, not all states have an active pro-control NGO community. This variation, I argue, is one main source of variation in governments’ domestic reputational concerns for compliance with arms exports rules and norms. In particular, pro-control NGOs are much less prevalent in the United States and Walloon Belgium, and have only recently begun to grow in France as a result of the ATT process. In their absence, these areas have tended to be less sensitive to arms trade scandals and less inclined to alter their arms export behavior in accordance with new arms trade norms. Yet where these groups have taken a particularly active role, *and* arms trade transparency is relatively strong, governments tend to be more careful to comply with export norms – at least in cases they think might evoke media attention and public disapproval.

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<sup>11</sup> For more on British norm leadership in this case, see Jennifer L. Erickson, “Leveling the Playing Field: Cost Diffusion and the Promotion of ‘Responsible’ Arms Export Norms,” *International Studies Perspectives* (2015). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekv019>.

<sup>12</sup> Jennifer L. Erickson, “Market Imperative Meets Normative Power: Human Rights and European Arms Transfer Policy,” *European Journal of International Relations* 19:2 (2013): 209-234. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066111415883>.

<sup>13</sup> I explain the state of NGO activity and arms trade transparency for each country case in Chapter 5.

### *Arms Trade Norms*

Humanitarian or ‘responsible’ arms trade norms have challenged long-established expectations that arms export decisions are a matter of national sovereignty and security, free from external interference. The norms that began to take shape during the 1990s, in contrast, oblige governments to consider external criteria that privilege human security, conflict, and human rights in selecting their trade partners. In this sense, ‘responsible’ arms trade norms are the original ‘counter-norms’ – that is norms that challenge established ideas of appropriate behavior in this field. Like other recent humanitarian arms control initiatives, new arms trade norms, as Garcia notes, are rooted in international human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL). Unlike other recent humanitarian arms control initiatives, however, ‘responsible’ arms trade norms do not set out expectations for and restrictions on the *uses* of weapons but rather simply their trade. As such, arms trade norms may help to enforce and reinforce IHL, but they are not part of it.

Discussions about ‘responsible’ arms export criteria began to emerge in the early 1990s, in response to four key developments outlined in Chapter 3: greater pressures after the First Gulf War to implement arms trade transparency, greater attention to internal conflict, the success of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, and the growing role of NGOs in international affairs. By the late 1990s, many major exporters had begun to express support for new arms trade norms – in some cases codified in formal agreements. In 1998, the EU adopted its politically-binding Code of Conduct on Arms Exports,<sup>14</sup> formally articulating new norms, and in 1999, the U.S. Congress called on President Clinton to negotiate an International Arms Sales Code of Conduct.<sup>15</sup> Most states were also in favor of including legally-binding criteria for legal small arms transfers in the 2001 UN Programme of Action,<sup>16</sup> and the failure to fold them into the document in 2001 and 2006 due to U.S. opposition led to the creation of a separate ATT.

As such, ‘responsible’ arms trade norms are new, but not as new as Busby suggests by identifying the 2008 EU Common Position (which made the 1998 EU Code legally binding) and the 2013 ATT as the starting points of their development. Moreover, the purpose in Chapter 3 of running statistical analyses of states’ arms transfer practices from 1981 to 2010<sup>17</sup> is not only to see whether governments comply with new rules and norms. Using this longer timeframe, I can also evaluate if, when, and how governments’ arms export practices change over time and whether state practice anticipates or responds to formal agreements, if it changes at all. In doing so, I can better assess not only the trajectory of norm development, but also how governments might calculate the costs of signing on to formal agreements articulating those norms. The statistical analyses can

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<sup>14</sup> For the full text, see <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsupload/08675r2en8.pdf>. In 2008, the EU replaced the politically-binding Code with a legally-binding Common Position.

<sup>15</sup> For background, see “Code of Conduct – Legislative History,” <http://www.fas.org/asmp/campaigns/code/codehist.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Instead, the Programme of Action is a politically-binding document that focuses on national and regional initiatives to curb illicit small arms transfers.

<sup>17</sup> Arms export reporting before the 1980s was so poor, particularly with regard to small arms, that it did not make sense to start the analysis earlier. Even then, it is sensible to take the 1980s data as illustrative at best and most likely a “best case” scenario for state practices. Although it would have been ideal to be able to code the data past 2010, it was not practical given the time frame for review and publication.

reveal, for example, whether new rules reflect existing practice. If so, those new rules would be less costly than if they require their supporters to change their behavior to comply with them. However, as I show, even as policy expectations change and produce reputational pressures, governments have not typically changed their arms export practices to match. These results therefore cast doubt on explanations that expect agreements to codify existing practice. Furthermore, although the EU has had formal norms in play since 1998 and many non-EU states had also expressed support for new norms prior to the ATT, their practices over time largely do not reflect those norms. The statistical findings therefore also suggest that it is important to recognize that laws and norms do not always come hand-in-hand and that if advocates wish for ATT criteria to affect governments' arms export decision-making, they still have work to do.

Part of the reason new arms trade norms are still developing is that government practices are slow to change. Another part of the reason is that there has been greater resistance to these new norms than there was, for example, to the ban on anti-personnel landmines. Although I show that Ministries of Foreign Affairs tend to be more reputation-conscious and supportive of new export policies, the approval processes for specific export deals in practice tends to involve other ministries with different priorities, often more supportive of military or industrial interests. Export decisions therefore tend to reflect not only governments' consideration of international rules and humanitarian norms, but also defense industry interests and foreign policy preferences. Moreover, the War on Terror and 2008 global financial crisis may also have caused governments to more openly confront material pressures to export that have not disappeared despite new norms, although it is too soon to offer a decisive response to Vucetic on their long-term consequences.

In addition, in the United States, the National Rifle Association (NRA) has spoken out strongly against the ATT, which it argues will give the UN power to overturn the Second Amendment. In fact, the ATT explicitly places national civilian possession laws outside the scope of the treaty and leaves them to individual member states to decide. Nevertheless, NRA claims have shaped U.S. Congressional opposition, making it even more unlikely that the treaty-adverse Senate will approve the ATT. Elsewhere, civilian gun ownership has occasionally shown up as a contentious issue, as Clifford Bob demonstrates;<sup>18</sup> however, it has not spilled over to affect support for international arms export criteria outside the US. As a result, what holds governments back from stronger norm implementation is not an organized counter-movement against an ATT, but rather their attempts in their arms export *practices* to balance normative pressures with their perceived foreign policy and defense industry interests – in other words, the same material export pressures of the past.

### *Interviews and Case Selection*

*Dangerous Trade* focuses on five major arms exporting democracies. As I explain in Chapter 1, these are states with big material stakes in placing external limits on their arms trade. Second, they are the states that have most overtly built their identities on certain notions of support for human rights and democracy, international institutions, and humanitarianism. Finally, there is the greatest variation of ATT support in this

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<sup>18</sup> Clifford Bob, *The Global Right Wing and the Clash of World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

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group of states: the United States was a vocal opponent – and indeed the only state to formally vote against the initiative – until late 2009.<sup>19</sup>

All of the cases were either top-five democratic major conventional arms exporter (France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States) based on figures from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and/or top democratic small arms exporters (Belgium, Germany, and the United States) based on figures from the Small Arms Survey. In the case of major conventional arms exports, five states – the United States, Russia/USSR, France, Germany/West Germany, and the UK – have dominated the global market since the 1970s.<sup>20</sup> Although their market shares have become somewhat reduced in the post-Cold War era, they nevertheless continue to be responsible for the vast majority of major conventional arms transfers worldwide. From 2007 to 2011, for example, SIPRI estimates that these five states accounted for 75 percent of global major conventional arms sales.<sup>21</sup> Within the top five, SIPRI calculates export shares from 1981-2010 as follows: United States (44%), Russia/USSR (32%), France (9%), Germany/West Germany (8%), and United Kingdom (7%).<sup>22</sup>

According to Small Arms Survey, at least 30 states have transferred small arms and light weapons “worth USD 10 million in at least one calendar year between 2001 and 2013.”<sup>23</sup> In 2013, 16 of those states (including Belgium, Germany, and the United States) had transfers worth USD 100 million or more. Precise market shares, however, are more difficult to calculate with the small arms data. As I point out in Chapter 3, governments’ small arms reporting is more recent, less frequently done, and less consistently implemented when information is released. Governments do not consistently report cost, price,<sup>24</sup> or volume. Moreover, while gathering data from export *and* import reports increases the ground covered, it is not possible to

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<sup>19</sup> In contrast, Russia and China, who did not profess to buy into the values articulated in the ATT, nevertheless took a backseat in negotiations and only abstained on formal votes. As a result, they were neither key players in norm development, nor meaningful opponents working against adoption.

<sup>20</sup> Note that SIPRI finds that China made it into the top five in 2012-2013 and 2015. Even so, SIPRI’s aggregate for 1950 to 2015 and from 1981 to 2015 still result in the same top five: United States, Russia/USSR, Germany, France, and the UK.

<sup>21</sup> SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbook 2012: Armaments, Disarmament, and International Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). It also notes that 74 of the top 100 arms companies in 2010 were from the United States and Western Europe. See also Erickson, note 7, page 179.

<sup>22</sup> Figures from SIPRI arms transfers database, accessed 10 October 2016, [http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/html/export\\_toplist.php](http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/html/export_toplist.php).

<sup>23</sup> See Small Arms Survey, “Exporters,” accessed 10 October 2016, <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/weapons-and-markets/transfers/exporters.html>. In its annual survey Small Arms Survey sometimes publishes some aggregate figures for legal small arms sales for exporters selling more than USD ten million annually.

<sup>24</sup> Price is a difficult measure, as SIPRI points out. Price paid may not reflect the value of weapon. It may be subsidized, given as a gift, or bartered. As a result, I use SIPRI’s standardized “trend-indicator values” for comparable figures across cases and, since no such standardization exists for small arms transfers, code those as 0 (no export recorded) or 1 (at least one export recorded) from an exporter to an importer in a particular year. I detail challenges with and my approaches to the data in Chapter 3 and Appendix B.

accurately identify individual reports of transfers in a particular year identified as duplicates or separate entries. As a result, these individual reports cannot be aggregated into a reliable annual measure of volume or value. Although small arms reporting has improved tremendously since the late 1990s, without the small arms equivalent of SIPRI's careful process of value standardization, the more specific market share measures that Busby requests are not realistically available.

Busby also questions the high-looking numbers for the Belgian case and low-looking numbers for the U.S. case. As with all interview-based fieldwork, interview numbers stem both from the size of the interview pool itself and, as every researcher knows too well, from how many people returned calls and/or emails. Because of the division of arms export competencies between its federal and regional governments,<sup>25</sup> Belgian interview figures are higher than average. Belgium is essentially three cases, with policy-makers, NGOs, and defense industry representatives to talk to in triplicate, at all three parts of government. In addition, NGO activity in Belgium as a whole has been quite strong, with numerous groups claiming some interest in the issue area, especially at the federal level and in Flanders. This regional variation is also instructive: the stronger NGO tradition in Flanders has kept its government more in the spotlight for its arms transfer decisions than in Wallonia, which prioritizes the economic effects of export decisions over scandals that might result from them (see Chapter 5).

In the U.S. case, numbers are lower partly because the arms trade simply has not been an issue most NGOs have an interest in or see as being worth investing scarce resources in pursuing. As a result, there are many more active NGOs in the European cases in comparison. Partly, however, the numbers are lower because of a reality of doing fieldwork: for a variety of reasons, some governments and groups are more responsive to requests for interviews than others. Finding contacts in relevant U.S. government agencies and gaining access to relevant U.S. government officials took many years, and the number of formal interviews overall was lower than I had hoped. Ultimately, I am therefore especially grateful to the dozens of NGO, government, and industry representatives from each country I studied who took time to speak with me, often at great length.<sup>26</sup> Their conversations were illuminating, and their insights provided the core empirical and theoretical findings of this book.

### *Future Research*

*Dangerous Trade* seeks to spark conversations among scholars and additional research on both the conventional arms trade and the role of social reputation in international politics more generally. Since the ATT went into effect at the end of 2014, the process of formal implementation is now underway and places compliance questions at the center of academic and policy debates. Will the ATT follow the path of the landmine treaty, prompting compliance with rules even among states that have not joined it? What kind of

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<sup>25</sup> After a scandal over small arms transfers to Nepal in 2003, policy in multilateral fora is represented by the Federal Government (with input from the regions), while actual arms export decision-making is delegated to the regional governments.

<sup>26</sup> In the small world of arms trade policy, interviewees requested unanimity, and I chose not to provide the names of their organizations, since this would also make the specific interviewees identifiable. Although more information would be more satisfying to many readers, this was important for the comfort of the interviewees, as the Institutional Review Board agreed, and for integrity of the research.

social and material pressures might lead to such an outcome? Or will arms trade practices continue to diverge from new arms trade norms, even though they are now formally codified at the global level? *Dangerous Trade* leaves open the possibility that norm strength can grow over time, but also cautions that it is not a given. So long as state practices frequently fly under the radar without social and/or material costs to governments, the broader changes treaty advocates pursue may remain elusive.

Beyond arms exports, *Dangerous Trade* invites broader discussions on the role of social reputation in international politics, especially as an explanation for treaty support and other international activities that might at first glance appear to be ‘insincere commitments.’ Defined more broadly as a social concept, reputation can illuminate states’ reputational concerns that might otherwise appear misplaced and behavior that might otherwise appear inexplicable. Why expend political and economic resources negotiating agreements that do not bring material gain or that require costly changes in policy or practice? By simply writing these cases off as ‘cheap talk, we miss out on understanding an array of behavior in international politics and why states care about it. And by using reputation as a social concept, we might acquire more analytical leverage on a variety of issues that fall into these otherwise puzzling categories, for example on other diplomatically popular but costly initiatives on the environment, human rights, and development aid. It is my hope that other scholars will test this concept in other scenarios, so that we might come to a richer and more accurate understanding of how reputation works in international politics. I am grateful to the roundtable reviewers for suggesting avenues others might take to do so.