International Politics Honors Summer Reading Assignment 2017-2018
Mr. Tanner-Read

Because this class is a fast-paced, college-level survey of international politics, it will be in our interest to begin our reading and preparation during summer break. This will allow us to spend the time we will need to delve deeply into important issues during the school year.

In order to be successful in your summer reading, you will need to purchase your textbook as soon as possible. You should be purchasing Jeffrey A. Frieden, David A Lake and Kenneth A. Schultz, *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions Third Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016).

For summer reading, you will need to read the **introduction and the first chapter** of the book. You should be studying key terms from this section and should be prepared for a **reading quiz** when you return to school in the fall. Please be sure to focus on the **differences between realism, liberalism and constructivism**. You will also need to read the attached selections from *Theories of International Politics and Zombies* by Daniel Drezner. Once you have read these selections, you will need to write a **3-4 page essay** in response to the following prompt:

*What are the key differences between realism, liberalism and constructivism as you understand them? Choose one event taking place in the world today and explain how you think realists, liberals and constructivists would view this even differently.*

Here is a picture of the book so that you cannot be confused about what book you need. You may purchase the book as either a hard copy or an e-book from the Oldfields bookstore or from elsewhere. You may also choose to rent from somewhere like Chegg or Amazon.
INTRODUCTION

... TO THE UNDEAD

There are many natural sources of fear in world politics—terrorist attacks, lethal pandemics, natural disasters, climate change, financial panic, nuclear proliferation, ethnic conflict, global cyberwarfare, and so forth. Surveying the cultural zeitgeist, however, it is striking how an unnatural problem has become one of the fastest-growing concerns in international relations. I speak, of course, of zombies.

Whether they are called ghouls, deadites, post-humans, stenches, deadheads, the mobile deceased, or the differently animated, the specter of the living dead represents an important puzzle to scholars of international relations and the theories we use to understand the world. What would different theories of international politics predict would happen if the dead began to rise from the grave and feast upon the living? How valid—or how rotten—are these predictions?

Serious readers might dismiss these questions as fanciful, but concerns about flesh-eating ghouls are manifestly evident in popular culture. Whether one looks at films, songs, games, or books, the genre is
clearly on the rise. As figure 1 shows, the release of zombie films has spiked since the dawn of the new millennium; according to conservative estimates, more than one-third of all zombie films were released in the past decade. Figure 2 suggests that these estimates might be understated. According to one recent analysis, zombies became the most important source of postapocalyptic cinema during the last decade.*

Nor is this interest limited to celluloid. A series of zombie video games, including the Resident Evil and

*Phelan 2009. Zombies are clearly a global cinematic phenomenon. Beyond the United States, there have been Australian, British, Chinese, Czech, German, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mexican, and Norwegian zombie flicks. See Russell 2005 for an exhaustive filmography.

One could dismiss the zombie trend as merely feeding a mass public that craves the strange and bizarre. Such an explanation would be only skin-deep. Popular culture often provides a window into the subliminal or unstated fears of citizens, and zombies are no exception. Some cultural commentators argue that the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks are a primary cause for renewed interest in the living dead, and the numbers appear to back up this assertion (see figure 2).6 Certainly the subsequent anthrax attacks in the autumn of 2001 raised fears about bioterrorism and biosecurity.7 As Peter Dendle notes, “It is clear that the zombie holocausts vividly painted in movies and video games have tapped into a deep-seated anxiety about society.”8 Zombies have been an obvious metaphor for medical maladies, mob rule, and Marxist dialectics.*

Some international relations scholars would posit that interest in zombies is an indirect attempt to get a cognitive grip on what former U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld famously referred to as the “unknown unknowns” in international security.9 Perhaps, however, there also exists a genuine but publicly unacknowledged fear of the dead rising from the grave and feasting upon the entrails of the living. Major universities and police departments have developed “mock” contingency plans for a zombie outbreak.10 An increasing number of college students are playing Humans versus Zombies on their campuses to relieve stress—or perhaps to prepare for the inevitable army of the undead.11 Outdoor Life magazine has run a “Zombie Guns” feature, stressing that “the only way to take ’em out is with a head shot.”12 Biosecurity is a new imperative among national governments.13 The government of Haiti has laws on the books to prevent the zombification of individuals.14

*In one of the more interesting interpretations, Grady Hendrix (2008) concludes that Juan Carlos Frenadillo’s 28 Weeks Later (2007) is “an effective metaphor for the unstoppable, global spread of Starbucks.” For more general discussions of how zombies are used as metaphors, see Aquilina and Hughes 2006; Comaroff and Comaroff 2002; Cooke 2009, chap. 7; Fay 2008; Harper 2002; Kay 2008; Lauro and Embry 2008; Newitz 2006; Paffenroth 2006; Russell 2005; and Webb and Byrnard 2008.
No great power has done the same in public—but one can only speculate what these governments are doing in private.

One must be wary of overstating the case—after all, flesh-eating ghouls are not the only paranormal phenomenon to spark popular interest. Over the past decade, aliens, ghosts, vampires, wizards, witches, and hobbits were also on the tip of everyone’s tongue. For some, the specter of zombies pales in comparison to other paranormal creatures. The disdain of cultural elites has abetted this perspective by placing zombies in the derivative, low rent part of the paranormal spectrum—a shuffling, stumbling creature that desires only braaaiiiiiinnnnns. Twenty-five years ago, James Twitchell concluded, “the zombie is an utter cretin, a vampire with a lobotomy.”

Despite the zombie renaissance in popular culture, they are still considered disreputable. Paul Waldmann observed in 2009 that “in truth, zombies should be boring . . . what’s remarkable is that a villain with such little complexity has thrived for so long.”

In 2010, the Academy Awards presented a three-minute homage to horror cinema, and only a millisecond was devoted to any zombie film—far less than that Chucky doll. No zombie has the appeal of J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter or the Twilight series’ Edward Cullen.

From a public policy perspective, however, zombies merit greater interest than other paranormal phenomenon. In contrast to vampires or demons, scientists and doctors acknowledge that some variation of a zombie could exist in our physical world.”

*Berlinski 2009; Davis 1985, 1988; Efthimiou and Gandhi 2007; Koch and Crick 2001; Littlewood and Douyon 1997. In the main, these possibilities adhere closely to the traditional Haitian notion of the zombie as a human revived via voodoo and devoid of free will, rather than the flesh-eating ghouls that started with George Romero’s Night of the Living Dead (1968).
possess a patina of plausibility that vampires, ghosts, witches, demons, or wizards lack; the creation of a zombie does not necessarily require a supernatural act. Indeed, this plausibility of zombies can be seen in expert surveys. A recent poll of professional philosophers showed that more than 58 percent of philosophers believed that zombies could exist on some level. In contrast, fewer than 15 percent of the same respondents were prepared to believe in God.* Given the raft of religion and theology departments in the academy, it seems churlish for scholars to neglect the question of reanimated corpses snacking on human flesh.

The traditional narrative of the zombie canon also looks different from stories about other paranormal beings. Zombie stories end in one of two ways—the elimination/subjugation of all zombies, or the eradication of humanity from the face of the earth.† If popular culture is to be believed, the peaceful coexistence of ghouls and humans is a remote possibility. Such extreme all-or-nothing outcomes are less common in the vampire or wizard literatures. There are far fewer narratives of vampires trying to take over the world.‡ Instead, creatures of the night are frequently co-opted into existing power structures. Indeed, recent literary tropes suggest that vampires or wizards can peacefully coexist with ordinary teens in many of the world’s high schools, provided they are sufficiently hunky.§ Zombies, not so much. If it is true that “popular culture makes world politics what it currently is,” then the international relations community needs to digest the problem posed by flesh-eating ghouls in a more urgent manner.¶

The starting point of our analysis is that the living dead are a transnational phenomenon. Either corpses reanimate across the globe, or they spread outward from a single source. Either way, they are a threat that all countries must consider in crafting their foreign and national security policies.

And so we arrive at our central question: What would different theories of international relations predict would happen if the zombies started to roam the earth?

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*Data from the PhilPapers Survey of 3,226 professional philosophers and others carried out in November 2009 (http://philpapers.org/surveys/). The philosophical definition of zombie (a being identical to humans in every way except lacking in consciousness) is somewhat different from the vernacular meaning (a reanimated corpse intent on eating human flesh). There is some conceptual overlap between the two meanings, however. As David Chalmers (1996, 96) puts it, “all is dark inside” for both categories of zombies.
THE REALPOLITIK OF THE LIVING DEAD

There are many varieties of realism,¹ but all realists start with a common assumption—that anarchy is the overarching constraint of world politics. Anarchy does not mean chaos or disorder but instead the absence of a centralized, legitimate authority. No matter what ardent cosmopolitans or conspiracy theorists believe, there is no world government. With no monopoly on the use of force in world politics, every actor must adopt “self-help” measures to ensure continued existence. For realists, the primary actors are those that can guarantee their own survival—namely, states. Because force is the ne plus ultra of power, the actors that count are those with the greatest ability to use force—states with sizable armed forces.

Most realists argue that the combination of anarchy and the need for self-help creates recurrent and persistent patterns in international affairs. In a world of anarchy, the only currency that matters is power—the material capability to ward off pressure or coercion while being able to influence others. If one state amasses more and more power, other states will have
an incentive to balance against that state, so as to prevent it from dominating everyone. The anarchic global structure makes it impossible for governments to fully trust each other, forcing all states to be guided solely by their own national interests.

Since all states can only count on their own resources and capabilities, realists are very skeptical about the ability of international institutions to regulate world politics. States will consider the distribution of gains when thinking about cooperating with another actor. The question, for realists like Kenneth Waltz, is not “will both of us gain?” but “who will gain more?” Cooperation in the form of balancing coalitions will always be transient and unstable. Just as zombies will always crave human flesh, realpolitik states will always crave a more favorable distribution of capabilities. When relative gains concerns are paramount, cooperation is always ephemeral.

Because anarchy is such a powerful constraint on state actions, realists are not particularly interested in the domestic politics of other countries. Whether a country has a democratic, autocratic, or revolutionary form of government has only a marginal effect on that country’s foreign policy trajectory. The structure of anarchy is so powerful that it eventually forces all states into roughly similar policy preferences—maximizing security. This does not necessarily translate into power maximization. States that become too powerful risk triggering what is called a security dilemma—that is, acquiring so much power that other countries choose to form a balancing coalition against the rising power. Even scholars who believe in power maximization allow that the “stopping power of water” will likely deter any state from global overreach. Realists acknowledge that, on occasion, states deviate from these predictions because of domestic interests. When this happens, however, the competitive rigors of the system will force these actors to either change their behavior—or they will wither away faster than a rotting corpse.

Realists focus like a laser beam on the international distribution of power. The waxing and waning of states corresponds to their influence over outcomes in world politics. Most realists posit that balance of power politics acts as a natural regulating mechanism. Power transition theorists, however, care about the relationship between the most powerful state—the hegemon—and potential challengers to its primacy in world politics. If a hegemon is supplanted by a rising power, the likelihood of a great power war spikes. When this situation occurred in the past—from Sparta and Athens in ancient Greece to Great Britain and Germany prior to World War I—the world becomes fraught with uncertainty. In the past, the prospect of such a power transition has often triggered great power wars. If the rising power signals
that it has revisionist aims—in other words, it wants to rewrite the rules of world order—then such a conflict will be inexorable.

As this summary might suggest, realism has a rather dystopic and jaundiced view of the world. In other words, realism is perfectly comfortable in the zombie universe—particularly the world of George Romero’s films. In the original Night of the Living Dead (1968), seven people are trapped in a farmhouse surrounded by flesh-eating ghouls. Despite the common external threat posed by zombies, the individuals inside the house are barely able to cooperate. Ties of kinship mean little. Two separate sovereign entities (the basement and the first floor) are quickly created and ruled by separate individuals (Harry and Ben).* Resources—food, access to information, firearms—are the object of fierce distributational conflict. Temporary accords designed to create a public good—escape and rescue—quickly break down when there are shifts in the distribution of power.

A similar dynamic plays itself out in Romero’s Dawn of the Dead (1978). This time a band of survivors fortifies itself inside a shopping mall. Despite possessing an abundance of resources, the main characters do their utmost to prevent another cluster of humans from entering the mall.* When a biker gang breaches their defenses, they respond by opening the docking bays to let in more zombies—to occupy the attention of the bikers. Cooperation breaks down in Romero’s Day of the Dead (1985) as well—indeed, the character of Sarah complains early on in that film that “we’re all pulling in different directions.” The failure of humans to cooperate in the presence of reanimated corpses is a common theme that permeates the zombie canon—just as the futility of international cooperation recurs throughout the realist interpretation of history.

How would the introduction of flesh-eating ghouls affect world politics? The realist answer is simple if surprising—international relations would be largely unaffected. This paradigm would be unimpressed with the claim that a new existential threat to the human condition leads to any radical change in human behavior. To them, a plague of the undead would merely echo older plagues and disasters. Disease has affected world politics from the Black Death of the fourteenth century to the 1918–19 influenza pandemic. In the past, most of these plagues simply reified existing power relationships. Because more dynamic and powerful societies developed stronger

*Indeed, Ben tells Harry, “If you stay up here, you take orders from me!”

*As the biker gang rampages the mall, Stephen mutters, “It’s ours. We took it. It’s ours.” He then starts shooting the bikers.
immunities to plague, they gained a greater share of relative power during pandemics. Similarly, modern research shows that wealthier and more powerful societies can weather natural disasters better than weaker, poorer states. Realists would see no reason to expect an epidemic of zombies to be any different in its effects. To paraphrase Thucydides, the realpolitik of zombies is that the strong will do what they can, and the weak must suffer devouring by reanimated, ravenous corpses.

To be sure, even realists would acknowledge some shifts in the global distribution of power from the reanimation of the dead. Some governments will be better placed to repulse the zombies than others. Those with greater security and communications infrastructures should be able to put down any internal zombie insurrections and reestablish domestic order, or block cross-border zombie incursions. States with low population densities would have more time to adapt to the presence of the undead. Geographic isolation would be no guarantee of zombie prevention. As Romero demonstrated in Land of the Dead (2005) and Max Brooks showed in his novel World War Z (2006), there is no stopping power of water for the undead because they have no need to breathe. Nevertheless, geography still matters. Some geographic features alter the offense-defense balance vis-à-vis an external attack—in other words, defense is easier than offense on certain kinds of terrain, such as coastlines or mountain ranges. Realists would expect countries with mountainous borders to be more likely to thwart hordes of foreign flesh-eating ghouls. Some states would undoubtedly be completely overrun by the living dead.

Would the character of world politics change, however? Not necessarily. The best tactics and strategies for defeating zombies would spread quickly throughout the international system, regardless of the ethical or moral implications of such plans. In World War Z, for example, the national security strategy that diffuses throughout the globe has its origins in an apartheid South African government’s doomsday scenario of an all-out uprising by the black population. This strategy calls for the intentional sacrifice of some population centers. Given the exigencies of the situation, however, it is quickly adopted worldwide.

Realists also predict balance of power politics, so wouldn’t the specter of the undead create a balancing coalition against all ghouls? This possibility cannot be ruled out, particularly for power transition theorists. If zombies emerged from central Eurasia, for example, their capacity to spread quickly could trigger a natural balancing coalition designed to prevent zombie hordes from spreading across the continent. If ghouls overran a significant cluster of states and created a sufficient number of fresh ghouls, a power
transition dynamic could present itself. The zombies would be seen as the rapidly rising power—and no one would deny that their preference for human flesh would represent radically revisionist war aims. A containment strategy would no doubt be proposed as a means of limiting the territorial expansion of the undead.\textsuperscript{14}

Most realists would be very skeptical about the robustness of a universal “anti-zombie alliance,” however. First, \textit{buckpassing} would be an equally likely outcome.\textsuperscript{15} In a buckpassing situation, states would refrain from taking an active stance against the zombie hordes in the hopes that other countries would do the dirty work of balancing in their stead. So even if a powerful state tried to amass an anti-zombie coalition, other governments might commit to such an alliance in name only.

Second, small supporter states would fear that powerful countries would use a global quest against zombies as a subterfuge to augment their own capabilities and interests. Past history offers some support for this prediction. The Soviet Union installed puppet governments in its military theater of operations at the end of World War II to develop a buffer zone between itself and the Western alliance. Even during the peak period of the Cold War, NATO members repeatedly clashed over the scope and nature of the strategic embargo placed on the communist bloc, because some members of the Western alliance benefited disproportionately from trade with the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{16} A similar dynamic has played itself out during the American-led “global war on terror.” The United States tried to coordinate global efforts against all nonstate actors that employed this tactic. Other countries responded by adding groups that were considered national threats but did not quite fit the definition of terrorist.\textsuperscript{17}

Realists would predict a similar dynamic at work in any kind of anti-zombie crusade, except on an even grander scope. In the past, natural disasters have exacerbated preexisting conflicts among humans.\textsuperscript{18} States could therefore exploit the threat from the living dead to acquire new territory, squelch irredentist movements, settle old scores, or subdue enduring rivals. The People’s Republic of China could use the zombie threat to justify an occupation of Taiwan. Russia could use the same excuse to justify intervention into its near abroad; in \textit{World War Z}, the conflict allows Moscow to reabsorb Belarus. India and Pakistan would likely accuse each other of failing to control the zombie problem in Kashmir.* The United States would not be immune from the temptation to exploit the zombie threat as a strategic opportunity. How large would the army of the Cuban undead

\*In \textit{World War Z}, Pakistan’s failure to control its zombie infestation leads to a militarized dispute with Iran.
need to be to justify the deployment of the Eighty-second Airborne? In the end, realists—particularly American realists—would no doubt evoke the cautionary words of former president John Quincy Adams and warn against going abroad “in search of monsters to destroy.”

Some realists would go further, arguing that, in the end, human-zombie alliances of convenience would be just as likely to emerge as human-human alliances. As previously noted, many zombies in the canon start out possessing strategic intelligence, making them more than capable of recognizing the virtues of tactical agreements with some humans. Some zombie studies scholars might object at this point, arguing that flesh-eating ghouls can neither talk nor develop strategic thought. Even if they did not, though, realists would point to Romero’s zombies for empirical support. Even in Night of the Living Dead, Romero’s ghouls demonstrated the capacity for using tools.* In each of his subsequent films, the undead grew more cognitively complex. The zombie characters of Bub in Day of the Dead and Big Daddy in Land of the Dead were painted with a more sympathetic brush than most of the human characters. Both Bub and Big Daddy learned how to use firearms. Bub was able to speak, perform simple tasks, and engage in impulse control—that is, to refrain from eating a human he liked. Big Daddy and his undead cohort developed a hierarchical authority structure with the ability to engage in tactical and strategic learning. In doing so they overran a well-fortified human redoubt and killed its most powerful leader. It would take only the mildest of cognitive leaps to envision a zombie-articulated defense of these actions at the United Nations.

By the end of Land of the Dead the lead zombie character and the lead human character acknowledge a tacit bargain to leave each other alone. This is perfectly consistent with the realist paradigm. For zombies to survive and thrive, they must avoid losing their brains; and, like humans, they also must adapt to the rigors of anarchy in world politics. While some emerging zombie governments might pursue radical antihuman policies at first, the anarchical system would eventually discipline a moderation of views.¹⁹

In a world of sophisticated zombies, alliances between human states and zombie states are possible. Indeed, any government that tried to develop a grand coalition targeting the undead would immediately trigger the security dilemma. Realpolitik states could exploit any move toward an idealistic global war on zombies by creating temporary alliances of convenience with emerging ghoul governments. A more passive strategy would be to encourage what John

*The very first zombie we see in Night of the Living Dead uses a rock to break into Barbara’s car.
Mearsheimer labels “bait and bleed” and “bloodletting” strategies. In these instances, realist states would try to foment conflict between anti-zombie states and the ghouls themselves, profiting at the relative losses incurred by both sides.

Realists would advocate noninterference in how zombie states treated their own living and undead populations.* In the end, realists would conclude that there would be little intrinsic difference between human states and zombie states. Human beings have an innate lust for power in the realist paradigm; zombies have an innate lust for human flesh. Both are scarce resources. Regardless of individual traits, domestic institutions, or variations in the desire for living flesh, human and zombie actors alike are subject to the same powerful constraint of anarchy. Both sets of actors would engage in strategic opportunism to advance their interests in anarchy. The fundamental character of world politics would therefore remain unchanged. In the end, realists would caution human governments against expending significant amounts of blood and treasure to engage in far-flung anti-zombie adventures—particularly blood.

*Some realists would no doubt warn against the power of a “human lobby” to blind governments from their national interests.
Like the realist paradigm, there are many varieties of liberalism. All liberals nevertheless share a common belief: cooperation is still possible in a world of anarchy. Liberals look at world politics as a non-zero-sum game. Mutual cooperation on issues ranging from international trade to nuclear nonproliferation to disease prevention can yield global public goods on a massive scale. These gains are not always distributed evenly, but they do make all actors better off than they would be in the absence of policy coordination. Major actors in world politics therefore have an incentive to realize the benefits that come from long-term mutual cooperation and avoid the costs that come with mutual defection.

Liberals do not believe that cooperative outcomes always happen in world politics. In some cases, preferences might be so divergent that no compromise or bargain can be struck among the actors. Even if a non-zero-sum bargain is possible, this incentive to realize
these gains does not guarantee that collaboration takes place. The benefits generated by cooperation are often nonexcludable—in other words, anyone will benefit from broad-based cooperation even if they themselves do not cooperate. For example, if a plucky band of survivors were to devise a way to eliminate the plague of the undead, all humans would benefit regardless of whether they helped or not. This creates a free-rider problem, as the payoff structure in Table 2 demonstrates. The conundrum for liberals is that while an outcome of mutual cooperation is better than one of mutual defection, everyone is best off in a situation in which they can unilaterally defect. Since every actor has these same incentives, the outcome can be a “tragedy of the commons”—everyone defecting, even though everyone is better off cooperating.\(^2\)

This situation is not hopeless, however. The liberal paradigm offers multiple strategies to overcome the tragedy of the commons.\(^3\) Conditions that lengthen the shadow of the future increase the likelihood of cooperation. The longer one’s time horizon, the greater the rewards from mutual cooperation are in comparison to the fleeting benefits from free riding. If an actor expects to be around for a while, then response strategies that punish noncooperation but play well with “nice” actors—such as tit-for-tat—can sustain multilateral cooperation over the long run.

### Table 2

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<tr>
<th>Player A</th>
<th>Cooperate</th>
<th>Defect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperate</td>
<td>(3,3)</td>
<td>(0,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defect</td>
<td>(5,0)</td>
<td>(1,1)</td>
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Other gambits can increase the rewards from cooperation and reduce the benefits from defection. Economic interdependence reduces the incentive to defect by magnifying the gap in gains between a world of collective action and a world of mutual distrust.\(^4\) Governments will be less likely to cheat in the short term if they know it means they will lose the benefits from trade in the long term. Multilateral institutions that monitor and disseminate information can ensure that cheating will be detected and punished.\(^5\) Institutions reassure all participating actors that they are on the same page in terms of the rules of the game—and they clarify how and when those rules will be broken.

Finally, democracies are more likely to cooperate with each other. Liberals posit that democracies are more likely to have similar preferences, making cooperation easier. More significantly, domestic laws and institutions provides democracies with the means to credibly commit to international agreements.\(^6\) Liberals
allow that the Hobbesian war of all against all predicted by realism could happen, but only under very extreme conditions. A world of economic interdependence, democratic governments, and international institutions should foster extensive amounts of multilateral cooperation.

At first glance, the liberal paradigm appears to be a bad fit for a genre that specializes in zombie apocalypses. Indeed, the tragedy of liberalism in a universe with zombies is that some of its central tenets would accelerate the spread of flesh-eating ghouls. Liberals advocate an open global economy in order to foster complex interdependence and lock in incentives for governments to cooperate. Just as open borders foster greater migration of peoples and pandemics, they would also facilitate the cross-border spread of both the undead and infected human carriers. In sharp contrast to realism, liberal policy prescriptions would appear to exacerbate the first stages of the zombie menace. It is little wonder, therefore, that so many critical theorists equate the unchecked spread of zombies with the unchecked spread of capitalism itself.

Similarly, liberals acknowledge that cooperation with zombies would be next to impossible. One would be hard-pressed to devise sanctions that would compel zombies into cooperating. The divergence of preferences is also too great. The refrain in Jonathan Coulton’s song “Re: Your Brains,” written from a zombie’s point of view, best encapsulates the implacable nature of the zombie bargaining position:

- All we want to do is eat your brains
- We’re not unreasonable; I mean, no one’s gonna eat your eyes
- All we want to do is eat your brains
- We’re at an impasse here; maybe we should compromise:
  - If you open up the doors
  - We’ll all come inside and eat your brains

If this represents the zombie bargaining position, then the liberal assumption of a non-zero-sum bargain does not hold. As table 3 shows, in the Tragedy of the Zombies game, the dominant strategy for zombies is to eat humans. Tit-for-tat strategies do not work. Neither cooperation nor coordination is possible with the living dead.

A second glance reveals that the liberal paradigm still offers significant analytical bite. Romantic zombie comedies—rom-zom-coms for short—contain both implicit and explicit elements of liberalism. Ruben Fleischer’s *Zombieland* (2009) is about the articulation and adherence to well-defined rules for surviving in a zombie-infested landscape. Its central message—beyond the need for cardio workouts—is the need for disparate individuals to credibly commit to each other. The characters in Edgar Wright’s *Shaun of the Dead*
TABLE 3  
Tragedy of the Zombies Game

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Humans</th>
<th>Zombies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don’t kill zombies</td>
<td>Kill zombies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,4)</td>
<td>(0,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t eat humans</td>
<td>(5,0)</td>
<td>(4,1)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(2004) cooperate with each other far more than in any of George Romero’s films. Indeed, just before the climax of that film, the character Shaun rallies his friends and relations with a stirring paean to liberalism: “As Bertrand Russell once said, ‘the only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation.’ I think we can all appreciate the relevance of that now.”

The liberal paradigm offers some intriguing predictions and explanations for how a global zombie outbreak could affect world politics. Perhaps the most important liberal insight is an answer to one of the biggest mysteries in zombie studies—the failure of ghouls to ever attack each other. In Romero’s Dawn of the Dead (1978), a scientist observes that “there are no divisions” among the undead. Even those infected with the “rage virus” in Danny Boyle’s 28 Days Later (2002) focus their rage only on other humans—not their fellow zombies. We assume that zombies have no wish to eat each other, but it is surprising that they do not turn on each other when try-

ing to divvy up a human carcass—especially as human flesh grows scarce. From Romero’s Night of the Living Dead (1968) onward, however, zombies have either tolerated each other’s company or actively cooperated to defeat humans.

Why? The liberal paradigm provides a simple, rational answer: the living dead have the longest possible shadow of the future. John Maynard Keynes famously commented that “in the long run, we are all dead.” In the long run, the undead still have to interact with each other—and therefore they have the strongest of incentives to cooperate. If zombies hang together, then humans face the danger of hanging separately.

Despite the daunting degree of zombie solidarity, liberals would predict that the incentive for multilateral cooperation among humans would be powerful as well. The proliferation of the differently animated represents a classic negative externality problem of economic globalization. Countries that profit from trading with each other would nevertheless reward a third party—flesh-eating ghouls—by unwittingly facilitating their spread. States would therefore view zombies the same way they viewed other public bads that emerged from the open global economy, such as money laundering or food-borne diseases. Powerful governments would create and reinforce international institutions designed to control their spread.
Indeed, the zombie menace would touch so many different spheres of life that liberals would predict a "regime complex" to emerge. A welter of international governmental organizations—including the United Nations Security Council, the World Health Organization, and the International Organization for Migration—would promulgate a series of policies and protocols designed to combat existing zombie hordes and prevent further outbreaks. * A coordinating body, perhaps even a World Zombie Organization (WZO), would need to be formed in order to handle all of the overlapping health, trade, and security issues. In the end, some organization would announce a "comprehensive and integrated dezombiefication strategy," with sufficient buy-in from stakeholders across global civil society, as their plan of action. **

The liberal expectation would be that a counter-zombie regime complex could make significant inroads into the zombie problem. The public benefits of wiping the undead from the face of the earth are quite significant, boosting the likelihood of significant policy coordination. The undead would fall into the category of systemic threats—such as terrorism and global pandemics—where states have engaged in meaningful cross-border cooperation. This prediction is also consistent with key portions of the zombie literature. In Max Brooks's novel *World War Z* (2006), the decision to go on the offensive comes after a United Nations meeting. **Consistent with liberal internationalism, the United States provided the necessary leadership and a strong sense of social purpose in order to rally support.***

How effective would these global governance structures be in combating the undead? The question of regime effectiveness has haunted international relations scholarship for decades. To be sure, liberal security regimes such as NATO or the Chemical Weapons Convention have a credible track record of success. The ability of both security and health regimes to monitor and spread information quickly in the era of instant messaging would facilitate rapid reactions to the zombie problem at an early stage. Globalization has certainly fostered the technical and regulatory coordination necessary for enhancing bio-security. At a minimum, one would expect a significant rollback and stringent regulation of the living dead, roughly consistent with the outcome in Brooks's *World War Z* or Mira Grant's *Feed* (2010).***

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*Given that zombies would be covered under genetically modified organisms, the European Union would immediately invoke the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety as the key regulatory mechanism for the cross-border movement of reanimated dead tissue.

**This liberal prediction hinges crucially on whether the initial policy responses could mitigate the spread of ghouls. If decision makers concluded that no action could halt the spread of the undead, then the shadow of the future would disappear; liberals would predict actors to pursue endgame strategies of noncooperation. Hiding and hoarding would be the appropriate responses at this juncture.
Although the macrosituation might appear stable, it would also be imperfect. At present, the regime for cross-border movement of the dead already has significant loopholes.\textsuperscript{19} Even if current international law is fixed, zombies represent a tough test for global governance structures. They are most difficult kind of governance problem—a prohibition regime.\textsuperscript{20} Unless every single ghoul is hunted down and destroyed beyond recognition, a recurrent spread of the undead remains a possibility. The international regimes designed to eliminate disease demonstrate the difficulties inherent in this task. The scourge of smallpox has been erased, but few other diseases have been completely and totally eradicated.\textsuperscript{21} The persistence of AIDS, polio, malaria, tuberculosis, and the myriad strains of influenza demonstrate the challenges that would face an international counter-zombie regime.

The liberal paradigm would predict two significant loopholes that could form within the confines of a global counter-zombie regime. First, some countries might fail to provide timely information about zombie outbreaks until the problem had escalated beyond local control. Authoritarian countries are often reluctant to admit health crises because of the threat such an admission could have on state control over society. Non-democratic regimes are less likely to invest in the public goods necessary to prevent or contain disasters.\textsuperscript{22} This is one reason why the loss of life from disasters is greater in authoritarian countries.\textsuperscript{23} Local officials could delay reporting a zombie outbreak up the chain of command for fear of being the bearer of bad news. Developing countries might lack the infrastructure to detect the reemergence of the living dead. They would certainly fear the economic impact of any policy response by large market jurisdiction to an announced outbreak of flesh-eating ghouls.* China’s initial refusal to notify the rest of the world of its SARS cases in a timely, transparent, and verifiable manner is the exemplar case of this kind of policy conundrum.\textsuperscript{24} China behaves in a similar manner in World War Z—going so far as to trigger a crisis with Taiwan to disguise the extent of their zombie problem.\textsuperscript{25}

Second, it would not be surprising if nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) devoted to the defense of the living dead acted as an impediment to their eradication. The ability of NGOs to alter global governance structures is a matter of some debate within international relations scholarship.\textsuperscript{26} At a minimum, however, global civil society can raise the transaction costs of implementing the rules of global governance. At least one nonprofit organization in favor of zom-

\*This problem is not limited to developing countries. If flesh-eating ghouls were detected, two immediate and obvious predictions would follow: the European Union would impose a complete ban on British beef, and Japan and South Korea would impose a similar ban on U.S. beef.
Zombie equality already exists—Great Britain’s Citizens for Undead Rights and Equality.27 The formation of more powerful activist groups—Zombie Rights Watch, Zombies without Borders, ZombAid, or People for the Ethical Treatment of Zombies—would undoubt-edly make it difficult for the WZO to achieve perfect eradication.

While these pitfalls could prove problematic, they should not be overstated. China has moved down the learning curve as a result of the SARS episode; authorities in Beijing were much more transparent during the 2009 H1N1 epidemic, for example.28 As countries have adapted to the problem of pandemics, fewer of them would be expected to conceal a growing problem with the undead. Even if multilateral solutions proved to be inadequate, liberals would envision the emergence of “minilateral” or regional organizations to act as a backstop. The United States would likely respond to any failure of a WZO by creating a North American Counter-Zombie Agreement to handle the problem regionally. Similarly, one would expect the European Commission to issue the mother of all directives to cope with the issue.* The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Mercosur, the Arab League, and the African Union would not be far behind. The bulk of global civil society would also be unlikely to raise too much of an objection to the eradication of the undead. Zombie rights would likely be one of those issues that more powerful NGOs

*It is beyond the scope of this text to discuss how zombie comi-
tology within the European Union would be handled. There is little doubt, however, that it would be painful.
would resist pushing on their advocacy agenda for fear triggering donor fatigue or political backlash.\textsuperscript{29}

The liberal paradigm would predict an outcome that would be imperfect and vulnerable to political criticism over time—much like the European Union in its current form. That said, the system would also be expected to function well enough to ward off the specter of a total zombie apocalypse. Zombie flare-ups would no doubt take place. Quasi-permanent humanitarian counter-zombie missions, under United Nations auspices, would likely be necessary in failed states. Liberals would acknowledge the permanent eradication of flesh-eating ghouls as unlikely. The reduction of the zombie problem to one of many manageable threats, however, would be a foreseeable outcome. To use the lexicon of liberals, most governments would kill most zombies most of the time.
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION
OF ZOMBIES

Constructivism is the most recent international relations paradigm to achieve widespread scholarly recognition. Just as with the realist and liberal paradigms, there exists a plethora of constructivist approaches.1 Constructivist approaches do share a set of core assumptions about world politics, however. These assumptions and causal mechanisms revolve around two central tenets: the social construction of reality, and the importance of identity in explaining and interpreting behavior on the world stage.

For constructivists, material factors such as economic wealth and military power are important—but even more important are how social structures filter and interpret the meaning of those material capabilities. For example, zombies are hardly the only actors in the social world to crave human flesh. Cannibals, sharks, and very hungry bears will also target Homo sapiens if there is sufficient opportunity and willingness. Nevertheless, zombies are perceived to be a much greater threat to humankind. Why? There are material factors to consider—to our knowledge, bears can’t
turn human beings into more bears by biting them. Constructivists would argue that this is an incomplete explanation, however. Zombies threaten the powerful human norm of not devouring each other for sustenance or pleasure—and therefore arouse greater security concerns as a result.

Constructivists argue that transnational norms are a powerful constraint on action in world politics. Nuclear weapons, for example, are the most powerful destructive force in human history—but they have not been used in combat since 1945. Social constructivists argue that, over time, a taboo has developed regarding their use. Within societies, actors will usually refrain from violating powerful social norms because they do not want to be ostracized by their peers. Constructivist scholars argue that this effect also exists in global society; by and large, governments want to avoid being ostracized by other actors in the international community.

Just as important to the constructivist paradigm is the role that identity plays in defining actors and their preferences. Identities are developed or constituted through mutual recognition—authoritative actors are considered legitimate in the international community not only because of self-recognition but because others recognize them as legitimate. Actors—including but not limited to states—define themselves in part by distinguishing themselves from the “other.”

This provides all actors a greater sense of ontological security that guides their actions and beliefs in world affairs. Because zombies used to be human, reanimated, ravenous flesh-eating corpses could make humans more uncertain about their identity—and how it differs from the viably challenged.

Significant elements of the zombie canon have a constructivist bent. As cultural critics have observed, the horror in zombie films comes not from a single ghoul but from an ever-expanding community of them. It other words, the terror increases when a large swath of individuals are socialized into the ways of the undead. Similarly, zombie films persistently raise questions about the identity distinctions between ghouls and humans. These questions provoke considerable anxiety—and occasional nightmares—from human protagonists. One recent cultural analysis of the zombie genre observes, “What is remarkable about so many zombie movies is that the survivors of the plague/accident/alien invasion that caused the infection do so little to distinguish themselves from zombies; it’s very much a case of as you are, so too am I.” In George Romero’s films, characters cannot escape commenting on the similarities between the living and the undead. The actions of the zombies and the zombie-hunting posse in Night of the Living Dead (1968) are barely distinguishable from each other. In both Dawn of the Dead (1978) and Day of the Dead
(1985) a human character, discussing the zombies, simply declares, “They’re us.”

One could argue that social constructivism is better prepared than other paradigms to deal with a paranormal phenomenon like the dead rising from the grave. As previously noted, constructivists have engaged with other paranormal actors, such as UFOs. The applicability of these preexisting theoretical arguments to zombies is open to question, however. For example, Alexander Wendt and Raymond Duvall’s constructivist explanation of official denials of extraterrestrial aliens is premised on the notion that these aliens possess superior technology to humans. The technological superiority of aliens undercuts the anthropocentric nature of human worldviews. UFOs therefore go unacknowledged because any official recognition would endanger the sovereignty of Homo sapiens on Planet Earth. While zombies possess some comparative advantage over humans in already being dead, their technological capabilities are far lower. Indeed, Wendt and Duvall’s arguments cannot be extended to vampires, ghosts, Elvis Presley, or the Loch Ness monster—much less zombies. Unfortunately, attempting to advance this UFO-specific variant of constructivism further would represent a theoretical dead end.

The constructivist paradigm nevertheless offers some useful predictions and policy recommendations.

If confronted with the exogenous shock of the undead, constructivists would undoubtedly argue that zombies are what humans make of them. That is to say, there are a number of possible emergent norms in response to zombies. One possible effect could be the Hobbesian “kill or be killed” scenario in which human beings turn on each other as well as the living dead. Some research, as well as most of the zombie canon, concludes that the natural response to the rise of the living dead would be sheer panic, leading to genuine anarchy.

Most constructivists would instead posit that a Kantian “pluralistic counter-zombie security community” in which governments share sovereignty and resources to combat the undead menace is more likely. Empirical work on how individuals respond to manufactured and natural disasters suggests that this is the more likely outcome than that predicted in George Romero’s oeuvre. Rebecca Solnit observes that, “in the wake of an earthquake, a bombing, or a major storm, most people are altruistic, urgently engaged in caring for themselves and those around them, strangers and neighbors as well as friends and loved ones. The image of the selfish, panicky, or regressively savage human being in times of disaster has little truth to it.” Anthropological research further suggests that only with extreme resource scarcity will communities of people turn on each other.
This could hold with even greater force if flesh-eating ghouls are the source of the disaster. The existence of zombies might foster some initial ontological security, but over time the implacable nature of the zombie threat should create a stronger feeling of collective identity among humans—because they have no intrinsic compulsion to consume the entrails of the living.\textsuperscript{15} This shared sense of identity should, in turn, foster a greater sense of ontological security. Indeed, for some constructivists, the existential peril posed by zombies could be the exogenous shock needed to break down nationalist divides and advance the creation of a world state.\textsuperscript{16}

To nudge key actors toward the creation of a pluralistic security community in response to zombies, constructivists would offer two controversial but concrete policy recommendations. The first preemptive move would be to destroy every copy of nearly every zombie film ever made. Intentionally or unintentionally, constructivists argue that the consistency of the zombie narrative socially constructs “apocalypse myths.” As Frank Furedi observes, “The experience of disasters—major and minor—is a social phenomenon which is mediated through the public’s cultural imagination.”\textsuperscript{17} Cultural narratives that suggest panic, disaster, and mayhem can have real-world effects.\textsuperscript{18} If everyone expects the rise of living dead to trigger panic and dystopia, then those misperceptions could very well reify that outcome. The zombie canon stresses the dog-eat-dog (or person-eat-person) nature of zombie apocalypses. Those images could become cemented in both elite and mass public perceptions. At the very least, security institutions should subsidize countervailing narratives about resilience in the face of flesh-eating ghouls—something that, not coincidentally, occurs in Max Brooks’s novel *World War Z* (2006).

The second policy suggestion would be to socialize zombies into human culture. Jen Webb and Sam Byrnard observe that “zombies aren’t social isolates—they seem to prefer to live in groups, within built social environments.”\textsuperscript{19} In Romero’s *Day of the Dead*, Dr. Logan suggested that zombies were demonstrating the “bare beginnings of social behavior,” allowing for the possibility of human society socializing them. This was certainly the aim in their efforts to “train” Bub. Similarly, at the end of Edgar Wright’s *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), a montage demonstrates the ways in which English society reinserts the remaining zombies—as game show contestants, daytime talk show guests, supermarket workers, and video game players. This would be consistent with the socialization efforts advocated by constructivist scholars. If the undead learn to act as if they are human again, then constructivists would posit that they have abandoned their identity as flesh-eating ghouls.
These policy recommendations assume that once zombies walk the earth, humans will be able to socialize them before they proliferate beyond human control. If a critical mass of flesh-eating ghouls were to emerge, however, then the constructivist paradigm offers a very different prediction. Constructivists would predict an emergent “norm cascade” from the proliferation of the living dead. A norm cascade functions like peer pressure—as people witness others adhering to a particular standard of behavior, they are more likely to conform to that standard of behavior as well. As a larger fraction of individuals are converted to the undead persuasion, the remaining humans would feel significant material and social pressure to conform to zombie practices.

The conformity meme appears frequently in the zombie canon. In World War Z, Brooks noted the existence of “quislings,” humans who acted like they were zombies. As one character described them, “These people were zombies, maybe not physically, but mentally you could not tell the difference.” In Shaun of the Dead, the principal characters practiced shuffling and moaning in order to blend in. In Ruben Fleischer’s Zombieland (2009), Bill Murray put on zombie makeup in order to go out for an evening. Even if humans adopt zombie norms simply to survive, over time these actions will begin to constitute their identity.

Norms acquire general acceptance through a combination of greater numbers and the intrinsic attractiveness of the practices themselves. While one could casually dismiss the idea that eating live human flesh would be attractive, other components of the zombie lifestyle might be alluring to many humans. The living dead do not feel the need to bathe, shave, or change their clothes—nor do they judge their own kind based on appearance. Zombies do not discriminate based on race, color, creed, ethnicity, or sexual
orientation. They always hang out in large packs. They are extremely ecofriendly—zombies walk everywhere and only eat organic foods. This description accurately captures many of the lifestyle traits of the typical college student, the change agent of many societies. Zombies might have hidden reserves of soft power, leading humans to want what zombies want. If this cultural vanguard were to embrace the zombie way of life, remaining survivors would eventually internalize all zombie norms. These would include guttural moaning, shuffling, and smelling like death warmed over. In the end, both socialized humans and zombies would crave the flesh of unrepentant humans. At this point, the conceptual category of zombies would not be restricted to reanimated corpses—it would be a social construct as well.