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Finding the Foxes: An Analysis of Cognitive Styles used by Experts in International Relations

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Finding the Foxes:

An Analysis of Cognitive Styles used by Experts in International Relations

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of:
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Abstract

The field of International Relations (IR) is dominated by experts whose source of authority is opaque to the public. However, in 2005 Tetlock's *Expert Political Judgement* revealed the inaccuracies in expert predictions. As prediction is a defining feature of a maturing discipline, these results undermine the authority of IR experts. Tetlock found that accurate predictors "are moderates who factor conflicting considerations—in a flexible, weighted-averaging fashion—into their final judgments." Six traits distinguish the cognitive style of these 'foxes' from their opposite, the 'hedgehogs.' This thesis converts these traits into a signal-analysis that can be used to determine the cognitive style of a piece of writing. This analysis is applied to a selection of six essays from the same source. The results generally corroborate Tetlock's findings. Foxes make more modest predictions and avoid the pitfalls of overconfidence while hedgehogs make bolder claims which decreases their accuracy. It is also discovered that there is rigidity in the application of IR theory. Parsimonious applications of theory are favoured, which causes IR foxes to distance themselves from theory altogether. To restore experts' IR authority, new theories need to be crafted which can integrate dissonant theories.

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Introduction

Political experts are often invited to talk shows and interviews to give their views, analyse situations and forecast the future. But how reliable are they? In 2005, Philip E. Tetlock published the ground-breaking *Expert Political Opinion: How Good is it? How can we know?*¹ (EPJ), in which he accumulated and analysed the results of years of research into expert political prediction. The results were clear: political experts do no better at prediction than chimpanzees throwing darts at a dartboard.² As being able to predict the future is often seen as one of the routine practises of any maturing discipline,³ this result should have been a severe blow to International Relations (IR) scholarship. Yet IR experts continue to give their views on the future in a wide range of outlets, such as academic papers, journals, interviews, books, and blog posts. After all, consulting experts has several benefits over other more robust methods of prediction. Experts can make predictions on short notice, can immediately justify their prediction, and cost less than other methods of prediction. Perhaps most importantly, experts who make 'intense' and 'sensational' predictions make popular guests for talk shows and other popular media. In short, it is unlikely that experts will stop being consulted about the future of the political world, despite Tetlock's research showing how unreliable they are. Is all that can be learned from EPJ that experts are bad and should not be consulted or are there ways in which we can know which experts to trust?

There is a divide between 'good' and 'bad' experts, which is based on their cognitive style. The most significant result of EPJ is not the fact that experts do no better than chimpanzees at prediction but rather that some experts do better and some worse. Many factors turned out to be inconsequential to predictive accuracy. Good and bad predictions can be found on the left and right, in moderates and extremes, doomsters and boomsters, the experienced and inexperienced. Even the amount of knowledge an expert has does not matter. The defining trait that distinguishes good and bad predictors is their cognitive style. It turns out that experts who apply a particular cognitive style referred to as 'fox-like' predict significantly better than experts who apply the opposite style referred to as

¹ Philip E. Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

² Louis Menand, "Everybody's an Expert," *The New Yorker*, November 28, 2005, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2005/12/05/everybodys-an-expert>.

³ Gerald Schneider, Nils Petter Gleditsch, and Sabine Carey, "Forecasting in International Relations," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 28, no. 1 (2011): pp. 5-14, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894210388079>, 5.

'hedgehog-like'. While predictions of foxes get better the more specific knowledge they have on a subject, predictions of hedgehogs get worse the more specific knowledge on a subject they have. This result is bizarre as it seems intuitive that more knowledge would lead to better predictions. One might assume that good IR experts should make more accurate predictions than chimpanzees because they have specific knowledge in their field. But if it is impossible to know if someone is a fox or a hedgehog - and thus if their knowledge is detrimental or beneficial to the accuracy of their predictions - it makes little sense to call anyone an expert. So how do we know if something was written by a fox or a hedgehog?

This thesis aims to explore and answer the question: Is it possible to analyse an individual piece of expert writing in the field of IR to distinguish if it was fox-like or hedgehog-like? This leads to further sub-questions, such as: How do foxes in IR write? What predictions are made by foxes in IR? What can analysing texts this way tell us about the state of IR theory writing? Does applying IR theory by experts lead to accurate predictions? To study these questions, I created a methodology which can distinguish how fox-like or hedgehog-like an individual piece of writing is. First, I explored the existing literature on expertise within IR, forecasting in IR and cognitive styles in IR. Second, I analysed Tetlock's research to discover six qualitative factors that distinguish between foxes and hedgehogs. Third, I translated these six factors into concrete signals that can be used to analyse pieces of writing to identify their degree of 'foxiness'. Then I applied this method to a selection of six IR essays to test it. The essays are summarised, and I analysed whether it is possible to identify if these pieces of writing were fox-like or hedgehog-like. I conclude that it is possible to distinguish the foxes from the hedgehogs. While the method is imperfect it confirms Tetlock's results. The analysis also shows the inherent flaw of favouring parsimony in IR theory writing.

Literature Review

This thesis aims to investigate expertise, forecasting, and cognitive styles within IR. The existing literature on these subjects needs to be examined. *The SAGE Handbook of the History, Philosophy and Sociology of International Relations*⁴ offers a starting point.

Forecasting in International Relations

“Forecasting is in a sense the gold-standard of theory testing because it can be thought of as a special case of cross-validation, using new data to evaluate propositions, ideally independent from the data that inspired the theory.”⁵ While the prospect of predicting international politics is seen as murky, it is considered a key aspect of IR scholarship. Forecasts can be defined as “a statement as to what may occur in the future. A forecast in international relations is a specialised subset within the larger category of forecasts. It is a statement of anticipated behaviour of nations and other entities whose actions cross national borders. A forecast focuses on the state of a system at one time and thereby infers its future condition.”⁶

There are multiple methods of forecasting within IR as outlined in the SAGE handbook. Trends are identified and projected to the future to see where a phenomenon might be headed. Historical analogies aim to compare the present with analogous situations in the past. Scenarios explore possible futures to consider how certain situations can be dealt with. ‘War Games’ are used to see how actors and organisations might behave in certain crafted situations. Various quantitative methods of forecasting have been created making use of ‘Big Data’.

Most of the current developments in forecasting in IR are centred on the creation of integrative methods of forecasting. One such method that is currently being explored is Expected Utility Theory. “This method is based on theory; it makes effective use of experts, and it has been found by government analysts to be an accurate predictor of real-world

⁴ Andrea Gofas, Inanna Hamati-Ataya, and Nicholas Onuf, *The Sage Handbook of the History, Philosophy and Sociology of International Relations* (Los Angeles: SAGE Reference, 2018).

⁵ Nils W. Metternich, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Christoph Dworschak, “Forecasting in International Relations,” *International Relations*, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199743292-0179>.

⁶ Gofas, Hamati-Ataya, and Onuf, *Sage Handbook of International Relations*, Chapter 18

events.”⁷ It is likely that research on integrative, combined methods of forecasting will continue as it shows signs of being one of the most accurate methods tested so far.

Finally, there is the expert forecast. The advantage of using experts is their ability to give quick forecasts and ability to justify their predictions. IR experts discuss and write in journal articles, published collection volumes, and even online discussion forums. These experts can come to their conclusions using any of the methods mentioned before. They can also base forecasts on previous works by other scholars and on ‘canon’ IR theory. The accuracy of forecasting by experts has been researched by Tetlock but research on forecasting based on IR theory appears deeply limited. While there are quantitative analyses of expert predictions, qualitative reflections are harder to find. The following section will explore the literature on expertise in IR.

Expertise in International Relations

An expert can be defined as someone who has authoritative knowledge on a specific subject.⁸ This authority can be based on numerous different sources, such as science⁹, professional experience¹⁰, exceptional creativity¹¹ and celebrity status.¹² Experts are ubiquitous in IR and their analyses form the background for how international relations are understood. They are consulted when policy decisions need to be made and are relied upon to make sense of international affairs, analyse the present and predict the future. IR experts have such a strong influence that they can seem beyond accountability. They are inextricably bound to democracy¹³, and “too often still, experts are seen as individuals possessing special skills or superior knowledge applicable to predetermined domains of decision making.”¹⁴ It has even been argued that they are so far beyond accountability that

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ H. M. Collins and Robert Evans, *Rethinking Expertise* (Chicago Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 609.

⁹ Michael Schudson, “The Trouble with Experts – and Why Democracies Need Them,” *Theory and Society* 35, no. 5-6 (2006): pp. 491-506, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-006-9012-y>.

¹⁰ Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

¹¹ Andreas Reckwitz, “Die Erfindung Der Kreativität. Zum Prozess Gesellschaftlicher Ästhetisierung.,” *Zukunft Publikum*, 2012, pp. 401-405, <https://doi.org/10.1515/transcript.9783839422854.401>.

¹² Nathalie Heinich, *De La visibilité: Excellence Et singularité En régime médiatique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012).

¹³ Steve Rayner, “Democracy in the Age of Assessment: Reflections on the Roles of Expertise and Democracy in Public-Sector Decision Making,” *Science and Public Policy* 30, no. 3 (January 2003): pp. 163-170, <https://doi.org/10.3152/147154303781780533>.

¹⁴ Sheila Jasanoff, “(No?) Accounting for Expertise,” *Science and Public Policy* 30, no. 3 (January 2003): pp. 157-162, <https://doi.org/10.3152/147154303781780542>.

it can be seen as tyrannical.¹⁵ However, expertise has never been under fire as heavily as it is today.¹⁶ “For all practical purposes [we] live in an ‘Expert Raj’ (an imperium of experts) whose modes of acquiring authority, especially in global institutions, are as opaque to ordinary citizens as the self-legitimizing claims of rulers in distant metropolises were to colonial subjects living in the peripheries of empire.”¹⁷¹⁸ The position of the expert in IR is rapidly changing and destabilising and “conventional thinking about expertise in IR, in which the expert is seen to be a stable, authoritative figure, is currently being displaced by an image of expertise as an assemblage of shifting, unstable knowledges.”¹⁹ In short, while expertise is one of the backbones of IR scholarship it has recently been heavily scrutinised and a large body of work criticising expertise has emerged.

IR expertise is subdivided into four categories and three ‘waves’ of debate. The categories of expertise that have a stable presence in the field of IR are political, technical, scientific, and academic.²⁰ Political experts derive their status as experts from practice and tie into the present with the field of diplomatic studies.²¹²² Technical experts are found in the legal field of IR and base their field of study around international law.²³ Scientific experts concern themselves with issues of a wide scientific range, such as climate change, terrorism, crimes against humanity, nuclear weaponry, and bio-security.²⁴²⁵ Academic experts engage with IR as an academic discipline in multiple ways and critique aspects, such as its blindness

¹⁵ William Russell Easterly, *The Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor* (New York: Basic Books, 2021).

¹⁶ Anna Leander, “Essential and Embattled Expertise: Knowledge/Expert/Policy Nexus around the Sarin Gas Attack in Syria,” *Politik* 17, no. 2 (November 2014), <https://doi.org/10.7146/politik.v17i2.27576>.

¹⁷ Sheila Jasanoff, *Science and Public Reason* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 11

¹⁸ Gofas, Hamati-Ataya, and Onuf, *Sage Handbook of International Relations*, Chapter 27

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Iver B. Neumann, *At Home with the Diplomats: Inside a European Foreign Ministry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

²² Jönsson Christer and Richard Langhorne, *Diplomacy. History of Diplomacy* (London: Sage Publications, 2005).

²³ David Kennedy, *A World of Struggle How Power, Law, and Expertise Shape Global Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

²⁴ Lisa Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented "Terrorism"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

²⁵ Helmut K. Anheier, Marlies Glasius, and Mary Kaldor, “Expertise in the Cause of Justice: Global Civil Society Influence on the Statute for an International Criminal Court,” in *Global Civil Society Yearbook 2002* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 137-168.

to gender²⁶, inherent Eurocentrism and racism²⁷²⁸ and problems with reflexivity.²⁹

Important to note is that this thesis mainly concerns academic experts in IR and engages with their work.

What defines expertise in IR continues to shift and change. Expertise can be as much derived from reproducing and maintaining the 'established' status quo of the field of IR (the IR 'canon') as it can be derived from challenging or 'transgressing' it.³⁰ To understand this more clearly, the waves of thinking about academic expertise need to be explored. The first wave centred around how experts translate authoritative knowledge into policy practice. In the 1970's, this was replaced by the second wave, which moved the focus to questioning this authority and asking how it could be challenged, democratised, and legitimised.³¹ The current 'third wave' is split into three distinct directions. The first of these is concentrated on the kinds of knowledge that create expertise and how these can be tested. Helmed by Tetlock's EPJ, this approach aims to challenge total relativism by creating 'true' parameters through which expertise can be measured. The second direction has been to denounce expertise, arguing that experts have lost their status and debates should shift in different directions.³²³³ The third direction has been to focus on the transgressions of expertise and create new concepts of expertise no longer anchored within any pre-existing fields.³⁴³⁵ The transgression of expertise in IR has led to several new developments.

²⁶ Christine Sylvester, *Feminist International Relations: An Unfinished Journey* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

²⁷ Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (CORNELL University Press, 2017).

²⁸ Eric Helleiner, "Globalising the Classical Foundations of IPE Thought," *Contexto Internacional* 37, no. 3 (2015): pp. 975-1010, <https://doi.org/10.1590/s0102-85292015000300007>.

²⁹ Inanna Hamati-Ataya, "Reflectivity, Reflexivity, Reflexivism: IR's 'Reflexive Turn' — and Beyond," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 4 (2012): pp. 669-694, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066112437770>.

³⁰ H. Nowotny, "Transgressive Competence: The Narrative of Expertise," *European Journal of Social Theory* 3, no. 1 (January 2000): pp. 5-21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310022224651>.

³¹ H.M. Collins and Robert Evans, "The Third Wave of Science Studies," *Social Studies of Science* 32, no. 2 (2002): pp. 235-296, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312702032002003>.

³² Michel Serres, *Petite Poucette: Le Monde a Tellement changé Que Les Jeunes Doivent Tout réinventer: Une manière De Vivre Ensemble, Des Institutions, Une manière D'être Et De connaître ...* (Paris: Le Pommier, 2012).

³³ Thomas Berker, "Michel Callon, Pierre Lascoumes and Yannick Barthe, Acting in an Uncertain World: An Essay on Technical Democracy," *Minerva* 49, no. 4 (2011): pp. 509-511, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-011-9186-y>.

³⁴ Helga Nowotny, Peter Scott, and Michael Gibbons, *Re-Thinking Science: Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

³⁵ Andrew Barry, "Political Situations: Knowledge Controversies in Transnational Governance," *Critical Policy Studies* 6, no. 3 (2012): pp. 324-336, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2012.699234>.

The internet changes the ways in which authority is established and creates new locations and groups for expert debate and discussion. Online communication bypasses some of the key possibilities for contesting expertise formerly present in academia, such as peer-reviews, professional evaluations, and institutionalised guarantees. Instead, importance shifts towards 'virality' of content.³⁶

A second transgressive shift is the datafication of expertise. 'Big Data' has become increasingly present in all forms of knowledge, and this is true for IR as well.³⁷ Before, data was collected with the intent of using it for specific research. Now, there is such an abundance of data that it can be analysed in previously impossible ways.³⁸ It has led to situations in which the 'authority' experts need can be 'Big Data' itself.

The third transgressive shift is the commercialisation of expertise. Companies and markets play an increasing role in the production of data and expertise. This leads to questions of motivation for research and its objectivity.³⁹ It is argued that commercialisation leads to a decrease in the possibility of truly 'critical' expertise.⁴⁰

The fourth transgressive shift in expertise is its increasingly provisional nature.⁴¹ Statements of experts are increasingly cautious as they are more aware of the limitations of their expertise. "Indeed, nothing would be more likely to undermine the authority of an expert and the related realm of expertise than a rejection of this 'provisionalizing' view on the standing of their own expertise. Expertise has become 'disenchanted' in that it is fully conscious of its own limits and therefore also anticipates its own demise."⁴² As can be seen, expertise is transgressed in numerous ways and deeply discussed in the literature.

³⁶ Tony D. Sampson, *Virality: Contagion Theory in the Age of Networks* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

³⁷ Alain Desrosieres and Emmanuel Didier, *Prouver Et Gouverner: Une Analyse Politique Des Statistiques Publiques* (Paris: La Découverte, 2014).

³⁸ David Chandler, "Conflict Knowledge, Big Data and the Emergence of Emergence," *Assembling Exclusive Expertise*, June 2018, pp. 170-185, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351136747-10>.

³⁹ Jennifer Burns, "Philip Mirowski . Science-Mart: Privatizing American Science . Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 2011. Pp. 454. \$39.95.," *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 3 (2012): pp. 902-903, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.117.3.902>.

⁴⁰ Gofas, Hamati-Ataya, and Onuf, *Sage Handbook of International Relations*, Chapter 27.

⁴¹ Jacqueline Best, *Governing Failure: Provisional Expertise and the Transformation of Global Development Finance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁴² Gofas, Hamati-Ataya, and Onuf, *Sage Handbook of International Relations*, Chapter 27.

Cognitive Styles in International Relations

A final field of literature that needs to be explored for this thesis is research on Cognitive Styles. The author of this thesis is not a student of psychology, but exploring it is necessary for this topic.

The first group of research on cognitive styles in IR focuses on using psychology to understand *what* to think about IR. Research in this group focuses on using knowledge derived from psychology to understand International Relations, primarily the choices made by individuals and rational choice theory. An overview of the literature on this subject is found in *Reasoning of State*⁴³, which largely focuses on rational choice and cognitive styles as applied to leaders and politics. While most of the literature applies to *what* to think in IR, rather than *how* to think, Rathbun does briefly touch upon the thinking of academics themselves. He states that “elites, even academics themselves, exhibit significant variation in their procedural rationality.”⁴⁴ He briefly discusses Tetlock’s work, however it is primarily applied to thinking about the decision making of leaders rather than experts.

Research in the second group of research about cognitive styles in IR focuses on *how* to think in IR, rather than *what* to think. It is a much smaller body of work that explores the cognitive styles and psychology of IR experts. The most important work on this subject is Tetlock’s EPJ. He explored what makes some experts more adept at prediction than others and discovered that the deciding factor is their cognitive style. Tetlock draws from numerous works from a wide range of fields.

As the scope of all these fields is too vast to explore in this literature review, only the more important works that influenced EPJ will be touched upon. Isaiah Berlin’s *The Hedgehog and the Fox*⁴⁵ is used as a basis for Tetlock’s research framework. Relativism challenges the very notion of Tetlock’s research, as it argues that no one’s perception of reality should be judged by someone else’s.⁴⁶ It poses serious questions about the validity of his work and should be considered by anyone researching expertise. Research on language analysis that translates the use of words such as “maybe,” “likely” and “remote

⁴³ Brian C. Rathbun, “The Psychology of Rationality: Cognitive Style in International Relations,” in *Reasoning of State: Realists, Romantics and Rationality in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 13-37.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 24.

⁴⁵ Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History* (Chicago: Dee, 1993).

⁴⁶ P. Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (London: Verso, 1978).

⁴⁷ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003)..

chance” into actual quantitative percentages of likelihood is also referred to.⁴⁸ In addition, there are studies on the link between explanation and prediction that argue that a good explanation does not necessarily lead to a good prediction and vice-versa.⁴⁹⁵⁰ Tetlock also refers to his own previous research. Specifically, his previous work on judging judgement is expanded greatly,⁵¹ such as his work on cognitive styles.⁵²

Research Gap

While research exists on the various topics mentioned above, research on the cross-sections between these is limited. To a degree this is understandable. IR experts might rather write about actual international relations than analyse their own expertise. As this topic by its very nature is deeply cross-disciplinary, these waters might also be ‘too hot’ to tread. Of the three directions of the ‘third wave’ of research on expertise in IR theory, the direction Tetlock helmed has come closest to what this thesis attempts. The other directions either denounce expertise altogether or transgress the concept of expertise completely. No research has been found that attempts to qualitatively analyse cognitive styles in IR writing. There is ample room for study here, applying the lessons found by research on cognitive styles and expertise to deepen our understanding of where these topics intersect. Perhaps the ‘right’ way of thinking about IR can be found after all. The following section dives deeper into the work done by Tetlock in EPJ and uses it to construct a theoretical framework for thinking about expert writing within IR.

⁴⁸ Wändi Bruine de Bruin et al., “Verbal and Numerical Expressions of Probability: ‘It’s a Fifty–Fifty Chance,’” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 81, no. 1 (2000): pp. 115-131, <https://doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1999.2868>.

⁴⁹ Frederick Suppe, *The Structure of Scientific Theories* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1974).

⁵⁰ Neil Cooper and Stephen Toulmin, “Foresight and Understanding: An Enquiry into the Aims of Science.,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 13, no. 51 (1963): p. 180, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2217203>.

⁵¹ Philip E. Tetlock, “Theory-Driven Reasoning about Plausible Pasts and Probable Futures in World Politics: Are We Prisoners of Our Preconceptions?,” *American Journal of Political Science* 43, no. 2 (1999): p. 335, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2991798>.

⁵² Miles Hewstine et al., “Cognitive Styles,” in *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

To analyse the differences in writing between foxes and hedgehogs, it first needs to be understood what it means to be a fox or a hedgehog. To do so, Tetlock's work will now be analysed.

Expert Political Judgement

EPJ was an experiment to test the accuracy of forecasts by political experts. Tetlock spent years asking experts and others to predict the future. Questions covered by EPJ ranged from predicting who will win an election to the likelihood of NATO collapsing. Participants were also asked to state how confident they were in a certain prediction. If a participant noted a very high degree of confidence and was right, this would result in a higher positive 'score' than if they reported a lower degree of confidence. Conversely, those who noted a high degree of confidence in a prediction that turned out to be wrong, got a larger negative 'score' than those who made a wrong prediction with a lower degree of confidence. The scores were then aggregated to analyse their accuracy and compared to several other groups of 'predictors', such as students, dilettantes (experts making predictions outside of their speciality), and chimpanzees.

The results of EPJ are much more nuanced than the idea that experts are no better at prediction than chimpanzees. Due to the EPJ being such an oft-quoted study - one of the few ones to not just have an impact in academia but also outside of it - it has been reprinted numerous times. In the preface to the 2017 edition, Tetlock discusses his surprise at the success of EPJ. He also outlines what he believes are its central findings in five propositions.⁵³

Firstly, the EPJ found a general overconfidence in experts. Events judged by experts to be 100% likely occurred roughly 80% of the time, while events that experts judged to occur 80% of the time only occurred 65% of the time.

Secondly, experts did do better than dart-throwing chimpanzees, but only narrowly. They also did worse than sophisticated dilettantes and simple predictive algorithms. Experts were able to defeat Berkeley undergraduates, who did worse than random chance.

⁵³ Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment*, Preface to the 2017 Edition.

Thirdly, experts who were the most certain of their big picture grasp of the drivers of history did much worse than experts who stuck to the data at hand and used multiple schools of thought. The former group is referred to as ‘hedgehogs’ and the latter ‘foxes.’ The difference in accuracy between these groups became larger the more distant predictions were made. Key to the difference was the certainty which hedgehogs had in events that were much further in the future, whereas foxes seemed more aware of how rapidly unexpected events can compound over time.

Fourthly, a ‘composite’ of what made a good forecast emerged:

“A tentative composite portrait of good judgment emerged in which a blend of curiosity, open-mindedness, and unusual tolerance for dissonance were linked both to forecasting accuracy and to an awareness of the fragility of forecasting achievements. For instance, better forecasters were more aware of how much our analyses of the present depend on educated guesswork about alternative histories, about what would have happened if we had gone down one policy path rather than another. This awareness translated into openness to ideologically discomfiting counterfactuals. (...) Greater open-mindedness also protected foxier forecasters from the more virulent strains of cognitive bias that handicapped hedgehogs in recalling their inaccurate forecasts (hindsight bias) and in updating their beliefs in response to failed predictions (cognitive conservatism).”⁵⁴

Fifthly, foxes have their own pitfalls. Sweeping generalisations, though rarer, can be just as mistaken as overspecification. Additionally, some justifications for inaccurate forecasts are defensible, such as being off on timing (a prediction can still happen) or a close call (a prediction failed due to some unexpected external shift). Being too open to alternative possibilities can lead to wrongful forecasts as well.

Important to note is that the distinction between hedgehogs and foxes is not binary. There is a ‘spectrum’ with the most ‘foxy fox’ at one end, and the most ‘hedgehog-y hedgehog’ at the other, with ample room for ‘hedge-foxes’ and ‘fox-hogs’ in between.⁵⁵ Additionally, Tetlock found no difference in forecasting accuracy between conservatives and liberals, realists and institutionalists, or boomsters and doomsters (extreme optimists and

⁵⁴ Ibid, xxi.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 75.

extreme pessimists).⁵⁶ However, foxes more often are centrists while hedgehogs more often are extremists. The only consistent factor of accurate forecasts across all experts was fame. It was found by a Google count that experts who were more often fêted by the media are significantly less accurate than less well-known colleagues.⁵⁷

The worst forecasters are hedgehogs giving long-term forecasts within their field of expertise, while the best forecasters are foxes giving short-term forecasts within their field of expertise.⁵⁸ Shockingly, hedgehogs do better when they are predicting outside of their field of expertise, suggesting an inverse relationship between expertise and accurate forecasting in hedgehogs. Contrary to this, the accuracy of foxes' predictions improved with expertise. Additionally, while those with extremist political views made worse predictions than moderates, the extremist hedgehogs were to blame for this divide.

As might be expected, forecasting accuracy became worse the more long-term a prediction was made, though a clear divide was found between hedgehogs and foxes in this measure as well. Hedgehogs do far worse at long-term prediction than foxes.

It was also found that both foxes and hedgehogs overpredict change (for the worse or better). Although hedgehogs do so significantly more than foxes.⁵⁹ "Good judges tend to be moderate foxes: eclectic thinkers who are tolerant of counterarguments, and prone to hedge their probabilistic bets and not stray too far from just-guessing and base-rate probabilities of events."⁶⁰

The above results should make clear how relevant and significant the divide between hedgehogs and foxes is. Expertise has a positive effect on the forecasting accuracy of a fox and a negative effect on the accuracy of a hedgehog. Expert predictions should get better the more an expert knows about a topic. If it is known that a certain forecast was made by a hedgehog, trust in that forecast should decrease the more knowledgeable the hedgehog was about the domain asked about. Tetlock's results do not only show that foxes do significantly better than hedgehogs at prediction, but also that they do better than random chance. This means that the transgressive idea that experts can never be trusted is false, but only if it is possible to distinguish between foxes and hedgehogs.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 72.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 68.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 80.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 83.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 85.

So how did Tetlock distinguish between the hedgehogs and the foxes? In EPJ, Tetlock used a questionnaire to quantitatively determine where participants fell on the fox-hedgehog spectrum.⁶¹ By amalgamating the commentaries that study participants gave concerning their forecasts and the research itself, Tetlock distinguished six qualitative ways in which foxes can be identified.⁶²

1: Foxes are sceptical of deductive approaches to explanation and prediction.

Hedgehogs favour parsimony.⁶³ They argue that history is constrained by deep laws that are knowable and can be applied to the real world. They use deductive reasoning to organise a multitude of facts and distinguish possible from impossible futures. However, hedgehogs do not adhere to the same ideas. An extreme liberal and an extreme realist can both be the epitomical hedgehog yet find little to no agreement. By contrast, foxes doubt whether the messy reality of real-world problems can be squeezed into abstract laws based on two arguments. First, they find ambiguity in which law is applied when. Second, they find ambiguity in translating abstract laws to the real world. Foxes can be found to blend opposing theories crudely to come to a 'middle-ground' rather than applying either argument 'purely'. These seemingly dissonant combinations of ideas often lead to more accurate forecasts than applying any single one.

2: Foxes are wary of simple historical analogies.

Both foxes and hedgehogs make use of historical analogies. Hedgehogs tend to veer to extremism when using analogies and focus on a singular or smaller set of analogies that affirm their predictions. Foxes' natural wariness of parsimony makes them seek out potential flaws in any analogy and seek out multiple analogies and take a more multi-faceted approach.

⁶¹ Ibid, 74.

⁶² Ibid, 88.

⁶³ Ibid, 88-91.

3: Foxes are less likely to get lost in a feedback loop of their own rhetoric.

Hedgehogs can argue in ways that have self-reinforcing feedback loops that lead to predicting radical change. Positive events lead to positive effects which in turn lead to more positive events. Negative events lead to negative effects which in turn lead to more negative events. While sometimes this may lead to a shockingly accurate forecast (only more extremist hedgehogs predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union early on) it also leads to a multitude of inaccurate predictions and false flags. Foxes are wary of such overconfidence, “confidence beyond a certain point became a sign not that one is right but rather that one may be wrong, and that the time had come to break the train of thought driving confidence into the zone of hubris.”⁶⁴

4: Foxes are more aware of the uncertainties of the past.

Hedgehogs are more skilled at convincing others and themselves of their arguments and predictions. They can be so convinced of their forecast that they argue that in the future, those who look back will wonder why it was not obvious to everyone. Where hedgehogs might scold those in the past for ‘not seeing the obvious’, foxes will be more sensitive to the uncertainties of the time and more open-minded about close-call counterfactuals (events that might have almost happened). “Good judges retain memory traces of their prior opinions even after they know what needs to be explained. It encourages humility.”⁶⁵

5: Foxes value keeping political passions low.

Hedgehogs are more critical of the flaws of the other side of an argument while downplaying the flaws of their own. In other words, hedgehogs take a more ‘black-and-white’ view of politics. By contrast, foxes can identify problems on either side of an argument. An important point should be made clear here. Foxes are found on either side, left or right, doomster or boomster, realist or institutionalist. The only correlation between fox-like cognitive styles and political opinion is the fact that foxes tend to be more moderate, whereas hedgehogs veer to the more extreme ends of any political spectrum.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 102.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 104.

6: Foxes make more efforts to integrate conflicting cognitions.

Hedgehogs hold sternly to a single idea of reality. However, while foxes are indeed more likely to weigh conflicting views on a singular situation, they do not do so indiscriminately. No evidence was found that foxes are more likely to favour any political position over another. Foxes tend to split the difference, critically weighing multiple sides of an argument and coming to a nuanced conclusion. Additionally, foxes are more likely to update their beliefs in the face of new evidence and are more open to 'exceptions' to rules. Foxes will be open-minded about opposing theories and ideas and will be quicker to update their beliefs when evidence supports one side over the other. With this factor, Tetlock gives a concrete example of when it applies: the rationality of leaders.⁶⁶ Tetlock found that foxes were much less likely to subscribe to 'actor dispensability theory', but did not downright deny rational choice theory either. They were open to psychological analyses of leaders and the idea that in some cases the identity of the leader matters more than others.

Creating an image

These factors combine to create an image of what a fox looks like. Foxes "are moderates who factor conflicting considerations - in a flexible, weighted-averaging fashion - into their final judgments."⁶⁷ Foxes will be less well-known and popular in the media than their hedgehog peers. While it is true that media-popular experts are much more likely to be hedgehogs than foxes, that does not mean that every media-popular expert is one. Each factor of a fox-like cognitive style needs to be carefully weighed when determining how fox-like any expert is.

A fox-like open-mindedness needs to be maintained when attempting to judge whether an expert is a fox or a hedgehog. No single indicator is the 'golden' rule for determination. Even if most of the evidence points to one direction, it is prudent to keep a critical view. Most important is the realisation that there is no binary divide but rather a spectrum. While experts can fall clearly into one or the other camp, most of them are better grouped somewhere between the foxes and hedgehogs.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 106-117.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 119.

Methodology

To see if it is possible to identify foxes, the six characteristics need to be translated into signal-analysis. Each of these factors can be identified by concrete signals that can be found when reading a text by an IR expert.

1: Foxes are more sceptical of deductive approaches to explanation and prediction.

Foxes should be more sceptical of attempts to explain reality using a single IR theory (Liberalism, Realism, Constructivism, Institutionalism etc.), while hedgehogs should be more open to explanations using a single theory. Therefore, this factor will most easily be identified when experts argue from a single IR theory as they can be identified as hedgehogs. Those who are more sceptical of approaches from any single theory are more evident to be foxes.

2: Foxes are wary of simple historical analogies and will more often look at disconfirming mismatches and use multiple analogies for the same case.

Historical analogies are commonplace within IR writing. Crucial here is to distinguish between those using singular analogies to prove their point and those using multiple contrasting analogies and seeing the flaws of each to come to a more critical, nuanced understanding.

3: Foxes are less likely to get lost in a feedback loop of their own rhetoric.

In identifying this factor, it is key to look for evidence of (over)confidence as well as self-critical thinking. Scholars who are 'certain' of their points of view and argue that it should be 'evident' are easily identifiable as hedgehogs. Conversely, writers who show signs of self-criticism and pose arguments that contrast their own ideas are more evidently fox-like.

4: Foxes are more aware of the uncertainties of the past and don't judge those in the past as hard for not predicting the unpredictable.

An indicator for this factor is a very deterministic view of the past. Writers stating that events in the past were 'obvious to predict' betray themselves as hedgehogs. Those who acknowledge the uncertainty of the past are more likely to be foxes.

5: Foxes value keeping political passions low and staying critical of their own 'side'.

Debates in IR tend to be civilised. Discussions among experts tend not to include crude ad-hominems or insults to the opposing side. Finding them is strong evidence of a hedgehog-like cognitive style. When an expert does not dismiss criticism of their own stance and acknowledges the merits of the opposing side, it is clear evidence of a fox-like cognitive style.

6: Foxes make more efforts to integrate cognitions that conflict their own and update their beliefs in accordance.

Foxes are generally more likely to use explanations that integrate facets of multiple dissonant theories. For instance, an expert who analyses a situation through the lens of both realism and liberalism is much more fox-like than one who does not. Additionally, any writer who openly acknowledges their past mistakes and states they have since updated their beliefs show a fox-like cognitive style. Finding evidence for hedgehogs using this factor is harder, though any scholar who - in the light of evidence to the contrary - does not consider updating their beliefs (for instance stating "I still think I am right"), can be seen as more hedgehog-like.

Using the signals above it can be determined whether an expert was fox-like or hedgehog-like in that factor. The views on each of the individual factors can then be combined to judge whether a text was fox-like or hedgehog-like as a whole.

Other evidence that might indicate whether a writer is a fox will not be used in this analysis. Next to the signals identified above that can help distinguish between foxes and hedgehogs, some other factors could be taken into consideration when assessing a text. These indicators mainly concern an analysis of the writers themselves. What have they written in the past? Do they self-identify as foxes? How many hits does googling their name result in? How often have they been invited to give their opinions in popular media? While these indicators would help to make the distinction, they are outside the scope of this thesis.

Case Study: Chaos in the Liberal Order

This signal-analysis can be tested using a case study. To make sure that as many of the parameters for judging the texts are as similar as possible, the case study needs to adhere to several criteria. It needs to be a selection of texts written by IR experts on the same topic, the experts need to have been given comparable time to work on their texts, and they all need to be texts written for the same audience in the same piece of media. Ideally, the texts also relate centrally to IR theory and are predictive in nature, but the latter is not a central requirement. As seen in the literature review, expertise is increasingly provisional in nature. Because foxes are already more cautious than hedgehogs in giving far-reaching predictions, it might be that in the current climate foxes refrain from forecasting altogether.

A case study that adheres to these criteria has been found. In 2018, *Chaos in the Liberal Order: The Trump Presidency and International Politics in the Twenty-first Century*⁶⁸ was published. It is a compilation of 32 expert essays collected after Donald Trump's election. The essays discuss the possible future of US foreign policy as well as the future of IR theory itself. From interviews with the co-editors of the volume,⁶⁹ it has become clear that the volume was created with the express intent of testing the predictive nature of 'classical' IR theories and even asking whether IR as a field is suitable for prediction at all. This volume is ideal for testing the methodology devised for distinguishing foxes from hedgehogs in IR. As these analyses are complex, a sub-selection of essays has been chosen to test this method on.

The essays chosen are specifically from the first two parts of the volume. The first part, *Trump and International Relations Theory*, contains four essays that specifically discuss the impact the election of Donald Trump has had on IR theory and all four have been written by well-known IR experts. These essays are less predictive in nature, but they do discuss IR theory explicitly and are therefore invaluable to analyse. The second part, *Is Liberal Internationalism Still Alive*, contains another four essays that all discuss liberal internationalism as the 'default' US foreign policy since the Cold War and discuss whether Trump's election might dramatically change the direction of US foreign policy. Two of these have been selected for analysis. These essays are more predictive in nature and focus on the

⁶⁸ Robert Jervis et al., eds., *Chaos in the Liberal Order: The Trump Presidency and International Politics in the 21st Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

⁶⁹ For more information in these interviews and transcripts, the author of this thesis can be contacted.

same topic and are thus suitable to analyse. While the rest of the volume does contain many interesting essays written by a wide variety of IR experts, the topics of these essays vary.

The selected essays will be analysed using the six factors that identify foxes. First, the essays will briefly be summarised. Second, for each individual factor it will be analysed if signals were found that identify whether the writer was fox-like. Third, these six individual analyses will be combined and discussed to see whether it is possible to determine if the piece is fox-like, as well as discuss any other findings. The result will be that these essays line up in three pairs that exemplify the findings of Tetlock.

Limitations

According to radical scepticism, even a worldview that leads to radically inaccurate forecasts cannot be judged by any other worldview.⁷⁰ There are also many arguments posed to argue that inaccurate predictions by hedgehogs are still useful, or even not inaccurate at all. EPJ's entire sixth chapter discusses these arguments and shows that even if these are accounted for, foxes still come out on top by a statistically significant margin. Additionally, experts reviewing Tetlock's work have praised its diligence.⁷¹⁷²⁷³⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment*, 25-41.

⁷¹ Hewstine et al., *Cognitive Styles*.

⁷² Gerald F. Gaus, "Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 01 (2007), <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592707070272>.

⁷³ Paul Sniderman, "Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know ? by Philip E. Tetlock," *Political Psychology* 28, no. 2 (2007): pp. 260-262, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2007.00565.x>.

⁷⁴ Tetlock, *Theory-Driven Reasoning*.

Analysis

President Trump and International Relations Theory by Robert Jervis

Jervis argues that the Trump presidency can be an opportunity to test IR Theory. Jervis uses the organising scheme of levels - or images - of analysis. Starting at the individual level, Jervis argues that it has been seen in the past that individual political preferences of the President rarely held sway over the State's pre-established foreign policy.⁷⁵ Jervis quotes former President Barack Obama: "once you're in the Oval Office, once you begin interacting with world leaders, once you see the complexities of the issues, that has a way of shaping your thinking."⁷⁶ Jervis also mentions Trumps' decision in August 2017 to stay in Afghanistan as being an essential continuation of Obama's policy. He notes that "many realist theories imply not only that states should follow the imperatives of the international system, at least on issues concerning national security, but that they usually do so. If Trump can basically alter American policy, this not only contradicts realist prescriptions but also calls into question its explanatory virtues."⁷⁷ He further states that Trumps' foreign policy, if it follows his campaign statements, is hard to square with realism.

Continuing to the domestic level, Jervis argues that drastic changes in foreign policy might not be found in Trump himself but rather in the coalition that put him in power. according to Jervis, changes to policy that were core to US foreign policy since the Cold War can be attributed to Trump's personal views. The same is not true for policy changes on trade and immigration, for which there was a broad base of support amongst voters.

On the International level of analysis, Jervis argues that Trump's nationalism challenges the ideas of democratic cooperation contained within multiple IR theories. Jervis concludes by reiterating the fact that Trump's administration will test many theories of political science.

Aspect 1: Some evidence for the first aspect of fox-like writing can be found. Jervis states: "[p]erhaps the best way to think about this situation is to use the organizing scheme of levels of analysis."⁷⁸ The phrasing here suggests that Jervis has considered multiple ways of

⁷⁵ Jervis et al, *Chaos in the Liberal Order*, 4.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 5.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 3.

analysing the situation and concluded on using one that looks at it from several angles. While the consideration of multiple ways to analyse Trump's presidency is fox-like, the decision to choose one as 'best' veers slightly towards hedgehogs. However, this specific way of thinking is somewhat fox-like as it approaches the subject on several levels. It is hard to criticise a four-and-a-half-page essay for not attempting to make use of a larger multitude of lenses. The choice of this type of analysis at the very least has some inherent foxiness.

Aspect 2: Jervis does not delve into a deep historical analogy. He argues that Trump is an outlier when compared to past American presidents and he notes the surprising continuity between the foreign policies of past presidents. However, he does not attempt to seek a past presidency that is analogous with Trump. This might be considered somewhat fox-like.

Aspect 3: Small indicators, such as the use of 'perhaps' when introducing his method of analysis, show that Jervis is aware of the possibility that other methods might fit better. He shows no sign of overconfidence in his own arguments, which leans fox-like.

Aspect 4: At no point does Jervis discuss anything relating to past uncertainties.

Aspect 5: Jervis does not make clear his personal political views on the situation. He levels some criticism at realists but also acknowledges the merits of realist thinking when stating "Trump's apparent aversion to humanitarian intervention and democracy-building fits with the prescriptions of many realists."⁷⁹ This might be taken to show slight foxiness.

Aspect 6: Crucial for this aspect are the closing remarks by Jervis, stating: "for the field of political science, [the Trump Presidency] also will test many of our theories of international relations and politics."⁸⁰ Jervis shows he is open to the idea of existing theories being 'tested', implying he is open to them being wrong and needing adjustment, which is very much a fox-like attitude.

Discussion:

⁷⁹ Ibid, 5.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 7.

While it can be concluded that Jervis is fox-like in his writing, he seems to be constrained by a strangely hedgehog-like way of thinking. There seems to be a 'duality' in thinking within IR theory: a theory either fits or it does not. There is little wiggle room for any theory to be 'partially right.'

How does this relate to any predictions made by Jervis? One statement clearly mentioned by Jervis concerning the future is "Trump's decision in August 2017 to stay in Afghanistan essentially continued Obama's policy"⁸¹, something we now know has changed. Whether Trump or Biden was responsible for the withdrawal is debated, however it does contradict the idea mentioned by Jervis that US presidents generally pursue similar foreign policies to their predecessors. Jervis argues that Trump "breaks from the previous consensus."⁸² He does not delve much deeper into this, so it is hard to determine what he might believe concerning whether Trump might break with this consensus. What it does give us, however, is further evidence towards the idea that IR theory thinking appears to be quite black and white: either it is true that presidents pursue similar foreign policies to their predecessors, or it is not. Either Trump 'breaks' with this consensus or he does not. The possibility of Trump 'slightly' changing the foreign policy direction of the US is not mentioned. Despite Jervis coming across as a fox, there seems to be no room for a fox-like prediction that suggests a middle ground.

Further evidence for this rigidity in thinking about IR theory is found in Jervis' comments on democratic peace and cooperation theory. He mentions these will be challenged by Trump's nationalism. The question here is whether Jervis mentioning that Trump will 'challenge' these theories implies that if he does, these theories are 'wrong'. Since the publication of this volume, Trump's actions have indeed been criticised by his democratic allies. Trump seemed to be more cooperative with longstanding US rivals such as Russia, North Korea, and China. Is the conclusion now simply that democratic peace theory has been wrong all along? Again, despite Jervis' apparent foxiness, his language suggests that a theory can only be right or wrong with no middle ground possible. This rigidity in IR theory is something that needs to be considered when analysing the following essays.

⁸¹ Ibid, 4.

⁸² Ibid.

What is International Relations Theory Good for? by Michael N Barnett

Barnett challenges the usefulness of IR theory in cases such as the Trump presidency. He argues that realists make use of a sense of an existing international structure and the understanding that actors in the international system behave rationally. He lists some evidence for Trump's pragmatism, such as him not being the first President to criticise NATO, not having started a nuclear war with North-Korea, and not moving the American embassy of Israel. Trump also fits with realism as he seems not to have any values and is purely driven by interests. Nonetheless, Barnett states that many realists would have hoped that he would display more manners and civility.

Barnett argues that institutionalist theories do not explain Trump either. Trump ended the Trans-Pacific Partnership, withdrew from the Paris climate agreement, thinks the World Trade Organisation is harmful to the US economy, and the United Nations is worse than worthless.⁸³ Liberalism also fails to explain Trump as he seems to actively want to oppose it. Trump defends racists, white nationalists, white supremacists, and neo-Nazis openly and questions the place of the USA as the leader of the International Liberal Order.

Finally, Barnett argues that constructivism also fails to explain Trump as it relies on structure and rationality which Trump seems to lack. Trump 'ripped through' domestic society and Barnett argues that he might rip through international society too.⁸⁴ Barnett concludes that none of these theories can explain Trump on the level of the state because "Trump has never met a structure that he does not fail to recognise"⁸⁵ and therefore structures will be less able to influence him. He goes on to argue Trump should not be seen as the cause of change and disruption but rather as an effect, a symptom of instability already in place.

Barnett discusses if Trump's rise could have been predicted at the domestic level of analysis. He argues that all experts on this level predicted Trump to fail at every step of the way. Afterwards, the experts argued that the rise of Trump was a 'white rage against the machine' comparable to the interwar period and Weimar Germany, which gave rise to critical theory and the Frankfurt School. However, this analysis was also merely hindsight.

⁸³ Ibid, 12.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 14.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

Barnett then turns to the individual level. He states that many experts who normally argue for rationalism have now placed their hopes in undemocratic forces, such as bureaucracy and institutions to limit Trump. He states “IR scholars should take a pledge: rational actor models should never be applied to the Trump administration – not by us and not by the students we teach and advise. Not ever.”⁸⁶ So, at this level Trump cannot be explained using a rational choice model. Barnett argues that he also cannot be explained as a ‘typical’ selfish politician, as many of the choices he made during and after his campaign seem to directly oppose his own interest in increasing his popularity.

Finally, Barnett turns to psychiatry to find an explanation for Trump’s behaviour. He states that many psychiatrists have argued to approach Trump as if he is mentally ill. While some argued that he would turn into more of a pragmatist in office, Barnett feels that this is merely an illusion.

Aspect 1: Barnett shows he has no issues with deductive approaches to explaining the world. He approaches the ‘problem’ of Trump from several angles using the lens of the organising schemes of analysis and goes over multiple singular theories to see if they fit. He also argues whether the images themselves fit or do not. He states for instance, “Image Three from Waltz’s analysis falls short because of the porousness of structure and inability to rely on rationality.”⁸⁷ While his approach at first glance seems like the one taken by Robert Jervis, there are some key differences. Where Jervis tentatively decides to use the levels of analysis and to look Trump through all its lenses to create a combined image, Barnett instead goes through the levels to try and find a singular one that ‘fits.’ This approach seems much more deductive than the approach taken by Jervis. Barnett does the same for the various IR theories, but eventually settles on psychiatry as the best ‘fit’ for Trump and ignores the rest. In this aspect, Barnett seems more hedgehog-like than fox-like.

Aspect 2: While Barnett does mention others searching for historical analogies to try and make sense of Trump, mentioning that many found it in Weimar Germany, he himself seems to suggest it is not a great ‘fit’.⁸⁸ He seems somewhat fox-like in this aspect.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 17.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 14.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 15.

Aspect 3: Barnett's entire essay reads as argumentation for the point that IR theories are of little use to try and explain Trump. Throughout the article he does not name any evidence to oppose his argument. Words such as "certainly" bely a great confidence in his own point. In this aspect he is clearly hedgehog-like.

Aspect 4: Barnett is quite critical of any experts in the past that predicted that Trump would lose, "[t]he experts predicted his death on dozens of occasions"⁸⁹ and states many of the occasions on which experts wrongly predicted Trump's demise. His tone is critical of and judgemental towards of these experts. He makes no attempt to acknowledge that predicting that Trump would lose at numerous occasions indeed seemed like a sound estimation. In this aspect he comes across much more as a hedgehog.

Aspect 5: Barnett's negative opinion of those who attempt to explain Trump as opposed to those who do not, is quite clear. "At some future point when Trump has departed from the scene, I suspect IR theorists will retrofit their theories to explain what happened. But when they do so, this will also be an act of denial, a way of saving their theories or wilfully ignoring their limits."⁹⁰ He calls any IR theorist who attempts to make sense of Trump using theory ignorant. His position is clearly hedgehog-like. Barnett is certain of his case and thinks anyone on the 'other side' cannot possibly be right.

Aspect 6: Here as well, evidence of a hedgehog-like cognitive style can be found. Relating to the evidence found for aspect 5, Barnett does not seem to make any room for anyone who attempts to explain Trump using IR theory. Despite himself mentioning some arguments for why certain aspects of realism help to explain Trump,⁹¹ he does not factor this into his conclusion at all and even argues that if someone in the future might attempt to explain it, they will simply be wrong. He does not see any possibility of combining multiple strands of thought - for instance realism and psychology - for both of which he gives arguments to show they fit. In this aspect, Barnett is a hedgehog.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 19.

⁹¹ Ibid, 10-11.

Discussion:

Despite agreeing with Jervis, Barnett comes across as a peculiar kind of hedgehog. His stance is that no IR theory can possibly explain Trump and he forecasts that when those in the future attempt to explain Trump using IR theory, they will be fooling themselves. During the latter half of his presidency, Trump did start acting more and more as a realist once the constraints from having more moderate cabinet members fell away. Arguably a realist explanation of his presidency could explain some of the choices Trump has made. This might be a case in which Barnett's hedgehog-ness set him up to make a wrongful forecast. He might have been so 'stuck' on the idea that no IR theory could possibly explain Trump that he failed to acknowledge the things that do fit.

In this essay the 'black and white' attitude of IR thinking also comes to light much more evidently. The essays by Jervis and Barnett contrast in an interesting way. While their opinions are similar, Barnett is clearly hedgehog-like and Jervis fox-like. This also explains why Jervis is more tentative and careful with his points, whereas Barnett seems highly confident. With the benefit of hindsight, Jervis' essay seems more accurate to reality, simply because he was much more cautious in his argumentation.

***Why Trump Now* by Randall L. Schweller**

Schweller's essay is the only one analysed that is written by an open Trump supporter.⁹² He opposes Barnett and argues that Trump can be explained from a structural-realist perspective. Schweller predicts that Trump will put American interests first and fight as an economic nationalist, using his deal-making skills to keep manufacturing jobs in the United States. He disagrees with Jervis on the point that Trump cannot be squared with realism, arguing that Trump's views conform to its political economy and geopolitics.

He argues that since the Cold War, American foreign policy has been in the grip of liberal internationalism and focused on solving world problems rather than the national interest. However, the American public holds a much more realist perspective.⁹³ Schweller perceives the recent shift from a unipolar to a multipolar world as a compelling reason for

⁹² Ibid, 22.

⁹³ Ibid, 24.

the American public to demand a policy of restraint, retrenchment and a return to realist principles rooted in narrow self-interest.

Schweller then presents his historical perspective. In the bipolar world of the Cold War, realist and liberal prescriptions for foreign policy often overlapped. In cases of contradictions, realist power politics usually triumphed.⁹⁴ He argues that the reason the world stayed unipolar for so long instead of returning to a balance of power is the fact that the United States did not merely serve its own national interests in reshaping the world, but rather provided global public goods that have also served the needs of others. Schweller argues that trust in the US unipolar era ended with the 2007-2008 global financial and economic crisis, with many predicting an American decline and emerging multipolarity. Therefore Trump's "America First" doctrine can be explained by the belief that the United States will no longer be unchallenged and thus a more realist grand strategy is needed.

Schweller argues that President Obama already started the US down this path, seeing his policy as being "a bit of a compromise between realism and liberal internationalism."⁹⁵ Barnett states that the difference between Trump and Obama is that where Obama denied American decline, Trump emphasises it. He frames Trump as an economic nationalist with policies that oppose traditional Republican thinking. He argues that Trump's scepticism of NATO can be squared with the realist perspective. He argues that it is Trump's policy to "wean the world off of American power".⁹⁶

Aspect 1: Schweller is open about his deductive approach, stating: "[i]n this essay, I offer a structural-realist explanation ..."⁹⁷ It shows openness and honesty about his perspective and allows the reader a clear view of his perspective. He touches upon other perspectives - including liberal perspectives and variations of realist perspectives - but does not give room for their merits. Schweller mentions some of the struggles of realists to explain the lack of pushback to unchecked US power after the Cold War.⁹⁸ He also explores a historical analysis without presenting evidence challenging this view. In this aspect Schweller is more hedgehog than fox.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 25.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 29.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 35.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 22.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 27.

Aspect 2: Schweller does not make use of historical analogies to clarify his perspective in this essay.

Aspect 3: Schweller is very confident in his logic stating that “the United States [has] arrived “at a point in our history” where the phenomenon of President Donald Trump or someone like him is, if not inevitable, highly probable.”⁹⁹ He argues that his explanation for why Trump ‘happened’ is so likely it is almost inevitable. Foxes generally are cautious when they seem too confident in their own logic. In this aspect, Schweller leans hedgehog.

Aspect 4: Schweller’s statement that someone like Trump was ‘highly likely’ might be taken to imply that he thinks his victory in the past should have been seen as obvious. However, he does not state this outright. In the end, there is not enough evidence to argue if Schweller is fox-like or hedgehog-like in this aspect.

Aspect 5: As one of the few academics who openly stated they voted Trump, it could be expected that Schweller got a lot of criticism from other academics. In his opening paragraph he argues that he likely got asked to contribute for this reason. Schweller vigorously defends his views and does not give any room for the merits of the arguments of his opponents. In this aspect, Schweller leans hedgehog.

Aspect 6: No evidence for belief-updating can be found in this essay. Schweller also does not attempt to combine his views with any other, dissonant ideas. In this aspect, he is somewhat hedgehog-like.

Discussion:

In this essay, Schweller comes across as hedgehog-like. It can be argued that his perspective has turned out to be right. Trump turned more ‘realist’ in his policies in the latter half of his presidency. Schweller mentions that Trump wants to wean the world off American power.¹⁰⁰ The US withdrawal from Afghanistan can be seen as definitive evidence for this

⁹⁹ Ibid, 22.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 35.

point. Hedgehogs can make correct predictions but that still does not mean their method of prediction is accurate. In this case, it seems that Schweller was the hedgehog that happened to be right.

Schweller's article also gives more evidence for the rigidity of IR scholarship. He mentions "realism's moment in the foreign policy sun",¹⁰¹ which implies that it depends on the moment whether realism is seen as right. Another problem within IR scholarship can be found in this essay. The divide between what is prescriptive and what is descriptive is often unclear. This problem stems from the fact that realism and liberalism are not just theories to describe International Relations but also foreign policy ideals. It makes distinguishing between foxes and hedgehogs more complicated as it makes it more unclear if their arguments are about how the world is or how it should be.

The Donald Versus "The Blob" by Stephen M. Walt

Walt focuses on the relationship between Donald Trump and the US foreign policy establishment, which was constructed around liberal hegemony as the primary focus of US foreign policy.¹⁰² He states that some of the primary concerns of GOP US foreign policy experts are foreign policy 'truths' that Trump put into question in his campaign. Trump questioned the value of NATO by stating he might not fulfil US treaty obligations unless they spent more on defence. He suggested Japan and South Korea having nuclear weapons might not be a bad idea. He praised Putin as a strong leader and did not condemn Russia for the annexation of Crimea, its support of the Assad regime and cyber-attacks on the US. He called the Iran nuclear deal 'the worst deal ever,' vowed to reject the TPP, threatened trade wars with China, Mexico and Canada and revealed to have ill-informed knowledge of international affairs.¹⁰³

Walt Argues that Trump's opposition to the policy of liberal hegemony and his rejection of globalisation was part of his appeal to the electorate. The reason US foreign policy kept liberal hegemony as a default strategy was due to the established foreign policy bureaucracy devoted to it: "the blob."¹⁰⁴ In the end, Trump continued many of the

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 22.

¹⁰² Ibid, 40.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 41.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 43.

established foreign policy principles and reversed most of his previous criticisms. However, Walt argues that the damage has already been done and confidence of key allies in the US has wavered. Walt finally states that time will tell if this presidency means a break from established US foreign policy, or if it will merely prove its staying power.

Aspect 1: Walt's article is mostly descriptive in nature. It does not argue in favour of anything and does not take a specific IR-theoretical stance. The only thing one might argue that does fit in as evidence for this factor, is the fact that his historical analysis of US liberal hegemony does not consider alternative explanations for how the historical context was involved. But calling this short essay hedgehog-like because of that would be a stretch.

Aspect 2: While Walt does give a historical analysis, he does not make use of analogies.

Aspect 3: Walt is careful in his argumentation. "Who will win the battle between the Donald and the Blob? It is still too soon to tell, but the outcome will determine whether the 2016 election was a genuine turning point in US foreign policy or simply another vivid demonstration of the foreign policy establishment's deep roots and impressive staying power."¹⁰⁵ Rather than predicting which outcome is most likely, Walt merely gives a possible range of options. His attitude here and the fact that he remains undecided is more fox-like than hedgehog-like.

Aspect 4: Walt does mention that Trump's victory was 'remarkable'¹⁰⁶ and does not claim that his victory was unavoidable or easy to predict. This is evidence of a fox-like cognitive style.

Aspect 5: No evidence for this aspect was found.

Aspect 6: Walt mentions that while Trump's campaign rhetoric promised severe changes in foreign policy, his policy (at the time he wrote this article) was one that could almost

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 45.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 40.

entirely have been implemented by Hillary Clinton.¹⁰⁷ Yet, despite evidence at the time that his foreign policy would be like those before him, Walt refrains from drawing far-reaching conclusions from it. Instead, he opts to stay open to multiple possible futures. This makes him fox-like in this aspect.

Discussion:

Despite Walt's article being short and largely descriptive, some evidence for aspects of his cognitive style has been found. Walt's essay can be considered fox-like. His reasoning and argumentation are cautious, and he never claims absolute certainty. He does not make any large predictions, though he does mention that "the end result may be the worst of both worlds: the United States will still be deeply engaged in costly overseas commitments, but the ship of state lacks an able helmsman and other states are less and less inclined to follow its lead."¹⁰⁸ This prediction did not entirely come true. Trump and Biden both took steps that resulted in the withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan. In the latter half of his presidency, Trump did 'lessen' the US' commitments abroad. But Walt did clearly state this 'might be' the case and left ample room for other possibilities. All in all, Walt comes across as a fox, and this is shown in his forecasts as well. They are cautious and give a wider range of options and his analysis of what the future might hold appears justified.

Has Liberal Internationalism Been Trumped? by Joshua Busby and Jonathan Monten

Busby and Monten argue that Trump's presidency might mean the end of liberal internationalism. They review poll data from democrat and republican leaders to argue that liberal internationalism as a bipartisan project has ended. The poll data shows that foreign policy issues, such as support for NATO, the benefits of a liberal trading order and support for liberal internationalism itself, have become increasingly partisan under Trump. They state: "[w]hile he may face pushback from elite members of his own party, partisanship is a powerful force, and the Republican public may continue to rally around Trump's worldview, reinforcing the global resurgence of populist nationalism where zero-sum logics, mercantilism, and zealous regard for sovereignty and spheres of influence prevail. By politicizing foreign policy terrain that had previously been outside the bound of partisan

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 44.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 45.

competition, Trump risks undercutting the foundation of the liberal internationalist compact in the United States, even if he does not act on his most extreme foreign policy statements.”¹⁰⁹

Aspect 1: Busby and Monten do not rely on any singular IR theory at all. Rather, they present polling data that they have analysed and draw their conclusions from it. Rather than deductively trying to explain Trump through a theory, they reviewed the data and inductively came to their conclusions. This is a fox-like approach.

Aspect 2: Busby and Monten do not make use of historical analogies.

Aspect 3: Busby and Monten do not get lost in their own rhetoric. They present the results of their research and highlight the trends they have found and suggest possible explanations for it. They also suggest future avenues of research that could further deepen understanding on this subject. Rather than claiming they know it all, they suggest that more research needs to be done to know more. A definitively fox-like attitude.

Aspect 4: Busby and Monten do not discuss counterfactuals or discuss any forecasting done in the past.

Aspect 5: Busby and Monten do not take a political stance at all and simply present the evidence they found.

Aspect 6: Busby and Monten mention that in their previous research they found strong evidence that liberal internationalism was still supported by US citizens and leaders alike,¹¹⁰ which is directly opposed by them in this article. They are open and honest about this and are not afraid to reassess their conclusions based on a changing reality and new evidence. This is a fox-like attitude.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 57.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 49.

Discussion:

Busby and Monten's article is the most fox-like that has been discussed so far. It might be questioned whether it is fair to compare this article to the ones that have been analysed so far. After all, this article was written by two authors, so it can be argued that multiple cognitive styles were at work here. Tetlock's research was aimed at individual experts and their predictions. However, he does mention the Delphi technique of prediction,¹¹¹ which makes use of multiple experts. It was found that this can lead to more accurate, fox-like predictions so it is unsurprising that this article seems more fox-like than the previous ones. The forecast made by Busby and Monten also strikes shockingly true.¹¹² This essay has been published in the same volume and presented alongside the others as a piece of IR expertise and should be analysed accordingly.

This essay shows the usefulness of a fox-like cognitive style. Busby and Monten's prediction clearly got more accurate because they have more data at hand. This also confirms the fact that this essay is fox-like, as a hedgehog would have been much more likely to remain 'stuck' in their previous rhetoric. It also shows that foxes in IR do make predictions, but are more likely to do so when they have clear evidence to back it up. And even then, their predictions remain cautious and careful.

Down But not Out by Chaudoin, Milner and Tingley

Chaudoin, Milner, and Tingley argue that maintaining a policy of liberal internationalism will benefit Trump. They state that many of the 'foreign' problems that Trump wants to fix are not the fault of global forces but rather self-inflicted by the US. They see two sets of constraints for Trump's foreign policy actions. Firstly, the established domestic politics and institutions that are resistant to change. Secondly, the fact that the structure of the international system makes it so that the US benefits most from liberal internationalist policies.

The authors argue that "America first" does not mean isolationism but rather renegotiating existing deals. They argue that as a businessman Trump does not see the world as a zero-sum game, so liberal internationalism can still fit. They predict that the

¹¹¹ Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment*, 118.

¹¹² Jervis et al., 57

domestic political system and economy will prevent a full turn to isolationism. In any international institution there is a trade-off between burden-sharing and control. Trump will face the reality that if other states spend more on NATO, they will expect a larger say in its policy. They also state that allowing countries to fail turns them into safe havens for drug production, terrorism, and crime, which has been the fate of Afghanistan for the past 30 years.¹¹³ This might be taken as a faint prediction that Trump would not in fact abandon Afghanistan.

The authors argue that “it seems unlikely that the American government will abandon liberal internationalism writ large”¹¹⁴, because it didn’t change after major events such as the Vietnam War or the end of the Cold War. If Trump does take foreign policy on a drastically new course, theories about foreign policy and international relations will need to be reassessed. They see Trump’s foreign policy as a ‘test’ for International Relations.

Aspect 1: Chaudoin, Milner, and Tingley argue from the perspective of liberal internationalism as a positive policy that benefits the US and the world at large.¹¹⁵ In doing so, they do not consider other approaches to American hegemony. Their historical analysis of the US as a liberating power feels one-sided and ignores many of the much more critical perspectives on US history. Their approach is largely deductive, and in this aspect comes across as hedgehog-like.

Aspect 2: The authors do not make use of historical analogies in their essay.

Aspect 3: The authors mention confidence in their own argument.¹¹⁶ However, they also mention examples of their own wariness, such as: “[o]ur intentional optimism might turn out to be misplaced.”¹¹⁷ The whole article serves as an argumentation for their perspective on liberal internationalism, which seems to boost their confidence in their conclusion that Trump will be restrained by the institutions in place. In this aspect, their work comes across as hedgehog-like.

¹¹³ Ibid, 83.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 86.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 88.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 63.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Aspect 4: The authors mention past predictions several times. They mention: “[i]n 2011, many predictions were dire”¹¹⁸, and go on to explain that these predictions were wrong. While they mention that their own prediction was wrong as well, it comes across more as a compliment to their own side of the argument as their prediction was “*too understated*.”¹¹⁹ They also mention how large events like the Vietnam War and the end of the Cold War were predicted to cause oscillations in policy but didn’t.¹²⁰ The authors aren’t outright judgemental but they seem unable to recognise that history might have turned out very differently. They appear hedgehog-like in this aspect as well.

Aspect 5: The authors explicitly mention opponents to their point when discussing how experts on the other side were wrong in their predictions.¹²¹ A certain satisfaction with the inaccuracy of the other side is evident. In this aspect, the authors are hedgehog-like as well.

Aspect 6: The authors mention their own past research on several occasions, but it is unclear what lessons they drew from it. They do not explicitly mention looking back at it to consider whether they might have been wrong. They also make no attempt to integrate different views into their own. In this too, the authors are hedgehog-like.

Discussion:

The essay by Chaudoin, Milner, and Tingley comes across as severely hedgehog-like. It is not always clear whether their writing is prescriptive or descriptive. They argue from the viewpoint of liberal internationalism, seeing it as a positive force. They state that “liberal internationalism is still in the American national interest, and because of this, both domestic and international pressures will moderate any of Trump’s preferences for drastic measures to change US foreign policy.”¹²² They imply that they do not expect Trump to cause drastic changes to foreign policy. Of course, it is debatable whether Trump took US foreign policy on a drastic new course, but some changes were made. Their statement that existing

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 67.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 68.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 86-87.

¹²¹ Ibid, 67.

¹²² Ibid, 87.

theories about foreign policy and international relations will need to be reassessed in this case seems ironically true.

Conclusion

It is possible to distinguish fox-like writing from hedgehog-like writing. However, the analysis above depends deeply on the interpretation of writing and language. It would be deeply hedgehog-like to state that any of the results found are certain. Nonetheless, some interesting conclusions can be drawn from the analyses presented above. The essays as they have been analysed strike up in three pairs that exemplify the differences between foxes and hedgehogs.

Jervis and Barnett are a striking example of the difference between foxes and hedgehogs with similar views. They have similar opinions on the usefulness of IR theory for prediction, yet Barnett as a hedgehog takes his confidence too far, which leads him to making overdrawn conclusions. Jervis stays much more cautious in his statements and refrains from making predictions at all, as he likely recognises the provisionality of his own expertise more.

Another interesting contrast is between the essays of Chaudoin, Milner, and Tingley and the essay of Schweller. In this case, both are hedgehogs but with completely opposite political views. Schweller turned out to be more right, making his confidence seem justified. Chaudoin, Milner, and Tingley's optimism seems misplaced. However, the situation could have been reversed making Schweller's confidence seem misplaced while Chaudoin, Milner, and Tingley's optimism would have been justified. Perhaps this duality could have been avoided if either side had given more merit to the arguments of their opponent.

Finally, the essays of Walt and of Busby and Monten pair up to show the benefits of a fox-like cognitive style. Walt's prediction turned out to be somewhat wrong, but the cautious language he used softened the blow and ensured that with the benefit of hindsight his statements are not overblown. Busby and Monten show that with a fox-like cognitive style and decent evidence to support them, it is possible to have confidence without being overblown.

These three pairs confirm the findings of Tetlock in an interesting way. They showcase why foxes make better forecasters than hedgehogs. Their statements and predictions are much more cautious, and their confidence increases with the amount of evidence they have, not with the internal coherence of their own argument. What does this

mean for the future of IR theory writing and expertise? Perhaps it is prudent for IR theorists to consider their cognitive style.

Another curious finding is that IR theory seems to favour parsimony, while that non-parsimonious solutions to problems are not considered by experts. Even though writers might be fox-like or hedgehog-like, the field of IR seems to favour hedgehog-like approaches. It seems to be a common understanding among IR experts that theories should be considered purely. They are either wrong or right and they cannot be combined. Multiple different theories can be considered when analysing a particular problem, but they should not be combined. Instead, one must be found that 'fits.' If none are found that fit, using IR theories when predicting the future is considered pointless.

When looking at the results of this study, what do we make of it all? It has been found that it is possible to find the foxes in IR writing. However, due to the rigidity that has been found in IR scholarship, even foxes can end on a more hedgehog-like conclusion. Can International Relations as a field of study be taken seriously if one of the basic aspects of any mature field of study - its ability to predict the future - is inherently flawed? If International Relations and its experts wish to stay relevant, the dogma of 'pure' IR theory needs to be re-examined and possibly replaced with messier, dissonant, combined IR theories. In the interviews conducted with two of the editors of *Chaos in the Liberal Order*, they came to the same conclusion. The hedgehogs need to make way for foxes to pick apart their canon theories and try to find new ways to understand International Relations as a whole.

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