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The Lungs of the Planet? Compliance, Contestation, and Environmental Norm Diffusion in Brazil and Australia

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Abstract

Climate change presents a quandary for the international state system. In the context of a warming planet, states must look beyond their national self-interest in order to reach voluntary agreements with other sovereign nations about how to collectively reduce the scale and impacts of climate change. Moreover, when one nation takes actions that deliberately undermine global efforts to reduce emissions, other nations face a dilemma: how to hold that nation accountable in the absence of structural and institutional constraints on states' behavior. In light of these challenges, this paper investigates the following question: How do states socialize foreign nations to address domestic ecological crises, and what explains their success or failure? I leverage my claims through qualitative case studies of wildfires that took place in Brazil and Australia in 2019 and the resultant international response. Using data from policy documents, statements by heads of state, and international reporting, I argue that efforts to socialize these states are differentiated by the claim of communal land ownership leveraged toward Brazil. While this strategy sought to generate collective action by emphasizing a "we're in this together" mentality, it was also perceived to reproduce discourses of extractive imperialism and undermine Brazil's territorial claim to the Amazon. I further consider the implications of this research for the study of climate cooperation within the discipline of international relations.

I. Introduction

Climate change presents a quandary for the international state system. In the context of a warming planet, states must look beyond their national self-interest in order to reach voluntary agreements with other sovereign nations about how to collectively reduce the scale and impacts of climate change. At the same time, international environmental agreements such as the Paris Agreement--while representing a major diplomatic success--have often proven insufficient for reducing global emissions in a way that is consistent with the scale of the climate problem. Moreover, when one nation takes actions that deliberately undermine global efforts to reduce emissions, other nations face a dilemma: how to hold that nation accountable in the absence of structural and institutional constraints on states' behavior.

In light of these challenges, this paper investigates the following question: How do states socialize foreign nations to address domestic ecological crises, and what explains their success or failure? Much of existing international relations scholarship tends to characterize climate change as a collective action problem beset by concerns over free-riding, making cooperation (often in the form of international environmental agreements) unlikely. This paper instead contributes to a growing body of literature that examines the diffusion of environmental norms and their role in influencing states' behavior, and which examines domestic factors to explain the relative success or failure of international pressure and socialization.

I leverage my claims through comparative case studies of two recent ecological crises. The first case study is of Brazil, the nation occupying the largest share of the Amazon Rainforest. While deforestation and slash-and-burn methods have been widespread in the Amazon since the 1970s, wildfires spread at an unprecedented rate during the 2019 dry season due to a combination of exceptionally dry conditions and the persistence of lax environmental policies under the governance of President Jair Bolsonaro. The crisis led to renewed concern internationally over the fate of the Amazon and a protracted diplomatic conflict between Brazil and Global North states. The second case study is of Australia, a nation with a history of bushfires, especially in the Eastern and Southeastern states of Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria. Like in Brazil, exceptionally dry conditions largely attributed to anthropogenic climate change exaggerated the severity of the 2019-2020 fire season. Yet in contrast to Brazil, efforts to socialize Australia to comply with environmental norms--through a combination of aid, appeals to shared values, and criticism--did not yield backlash by the Oceanic state.

Why did efforts to socialize these states experiencing similar ecological crises lead to backlash by Brazil but not by Australia? Through qualitative case studies, I show that efforts to socialize these states are differentiated by the claim of communal land ownership leveraged toward Brazil. While this strategy sought to generate collective action by emphasizing a "we're in this together" mentality, it was also perceived to reproduce discourses of extractive imperialism and undermine Brazil's territorial claim to the Amazon.

I begin this paper with a literature review that engages existing scholarship on international environmental agreements, norm diffusion, and socialization. I then present my hypothesis and describe my scope conditions. After describing my methods, explaining my case selection, and identifying alternative explanations, I proceed to examine the Brazilian and Australian cases. I conclude by evaluating the relevance of my findings for the study of climate cooperation within the discipline of international relations.

II. Literature Review

In what follows, I describe the literature that evaluates international environmental agreements (IEAs) and the mechanisms that have constrained their effectiveness for responding to environmental problems. Beginning with rationalist approaches encompassing both realist and institutionalist schools of thought, I then transition to a discussion of an emerging body of literature that critiques traditional takes on climate change politics and offers alternative ways of understanding collective action problems

and especially issues of environmental governance. I conclude by engaging the literature on norm diffusion and the circumstances under which socialization has been shown to succeed or backfire.

Rationalist approaches to climate change politics

International relations scholarship has traditionally employed collective action theory to understand patterns in climate policy making. In the absence of a world government, each nation is responsible for deciding on an appropriate course of action for addressing climate change. Yet because the benefits of reducing emissions are collective (all nations will benefit) while the costs are individual, nations face a strong incentive to free-ride. Moreover, when states agree to undertake costly actions to address climate change, they risk becoming seriously disadvantaged if other nations fail to hold up their end of the climate bargain (Keohane & Oppenheimer 2016, 144). The climate problem thus exemplifies the prisoner's dilemma (Sooros, 1994; Heitzig, Lessman, and Zou, 2011). Cooperation is unlikely because every nation behaving in their own rational self-interest will wish to avoid sustaining losses from others' free-riding.

Such concerns are said to have undermined the scope of the Kyoto Protocol. Signed in 1997, Kyoto was characterized by a top-down emissions reduction model and exempted developing nations from emissions reduction obligations. It was thus beset by persistent free-riding concerns; the U.S. ultimately never ratified the Kyoto Accord, and Canada later withdrew. It is in part for this reason that Kyoto has been described as a "dead-end" and is widely considered by academics and policymakers to have been a failure (Keohane & Oppenheimer 2016, 143). Barrett (2008) argues that a climate treaty

must achieve three criteria in order to be successful, and that the Kyoto Protocol failed for having been unable to meet these conditions:

> "A climate treaty must achieve three things. It must get countries to participate; it must get participants to comply; and it must do both of these things even as it requires that parties reduce their emissions substantially. The Kyoto Protocol satisfies none of these conditions. It would be easy to design a treaty that satisfied one or two of the conditions, but success depends on meeting all three of them--no exceptions." (244)

The 2016 signing of the Paris Climate Agreement represented a major departure from the failures that previously characterized many international environmental agreements. In contrast to the Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement employed discretion and vagueness to skirt the constraints that had previously characterized international climate policymaking (Keohane & Oppenheimer, 2016, 146). Prior to the signing of the Paris Agreement, each Party submitted an Intended Nationally Determined Contribution describing how they intended to reduce domestic emissions should the Agreement proceed. Following the adoption of the Agreement, all Parties became obligated to submit a Nationally Determined Contribution outlining progressively more ambitious commitments every five years via the Agreement's "ratchet mechanism". At the time of this writing, 190 nations have ratified the agreement. Yet because Paris does not obligate states to implement the goals outlined in its NDCs, it fails to meet all of Barrett's (2008) criteria for a successful climate treaty. Further, when states fail to progressively reduce their emissions or blatantly shirk the goals outlined in their NDC, the Paris

Climate Agreement provides other signatories with little recourse against the violating state. For this reason, it has often been regarded as only a starting point for addressing the climate problem.

Alternative approaches to problems of collective action

A rationalist approach implies that climate cooperation is unlikely given nations' desire to maximize individual gains. Yet if this were the case, states would unilaterally continue to emit, pollute, and contaminate natural resources with impunity to the extent that it benefits them--which they do not. Such an approach, which views the state as the primary agent in international politics, fails to account for the full picture of climate governance and the variety of mechanisms that constrain state behavior. Accordingly, a growing body of political science scholarship wonders whether conventional analyses of collective action problems have mischaracterized the challenges associated with climate coordination. In her classic text *Governing the Commons,* Elinor Ostrom (1990) reassesses the prisoner's dilemma game as applied to natural resource governance, and questions the assumption that common pool problems can only be addressed using either strong government regulation or privatization. Using an institutional mode of analysis, she explains how communities around the world employ a variety of solutions to governing the commons that are neither wholly public nor wholly private:

> "Instead of there being a single solution to a single problem, I argue that many solutions exist to cope with many different problems. Instead of presuming that optimal institutional solutions can be designed easily and imposed at low cost by external authorities, I argue that

> 'getting the institutions right' is a difficult, time consuming, conflict-invoking process. It is a process that requires reliable information about time and place variables as well as a broad repertoire of culturally acceptable rules. New institutional arrangements do not work in the field as they do in abstract models unless the models are well specified and empirically valued and the participants in a field setting understand how to make the new rules work" (14).

Why, then, have some communities and individuals established solutions to the commons dilemma while others remain trapped within it? Ostrom argues that differences have to do with factors internal to a given group: "The participants may simply have no capacity to communicate with one another, no way to develop trust, and no sense that they must share a common future. Alternatively, powerful individuals who stand to gain from the current situation, while others lose, may block efforts by the less powerful to change the rules of the game" (21). When it comes to governing the commons, a lack of cooperation may have less to do with the structural conditions of the game than with a lack of effective communication, or, more grimly, the intentional persistence of one party's benefit at the expense of another's gain.

Ostrom's empirical case studies of long-enduring and self-governed common pool resources range from studies of communal tenure in Swiss meadows and forests to Zanjera irrigation communities in the Philippines. Yet more contemporary scholarship critiques rationalist approaches to the commons at a global scale as well. Recent work by Aklin and Mildenberger (2020) has cast doubt upon the popular theory that climate policy is primarily structured by free-riding concerns. According to the authors, this assumption is empirically unsubstantiated by quantitative data, archival work, and

interviews with elite policymakers. Rather, domestic distributive conflict tends to act as a more powerful constraint on cross-national climate policy action (19). For this reason, scholars should more closely examine the influence of domestic actors and concerns upon international climate policymaking. In a similar vein, Purdon (2015) questions whether neoliberal institutionalism is "capable of explaining and understanding global climate change politics, particularly given its assumptions about which domestic institutions, interests, and ideas matter [...] In other words, domestic politics are much more important to climate change politics than they are to security and international trade." (4). Purdon further identifies a shift in academic interest from climate policy negotiation to its implementation. Rather than focus exclusively on policy outputs, research must focus on climate outcomes, such as trends in emissions reduction (6).

Should we take the critiques of Purdon, Aklin and Mildenberger seriously, the state ceases to be the only or even the primary agent in climate change politics, compelling us to more earnestly consider the influence of domestic institutions, private interests, and civil society in determining the fate of the global climate. To use an empirical example, according to Hale (2016), Paris marks a departure not only from "global deal" to "pledge and review", but also from top-down to bottom-up climate action. The Lima-Paris Action Agenda is an initiative which recognizes the critical role that nonstate actors--cities, companies, investors, foundations, universities, etc.--play in the immediate and long-term response to reducing GHGs. When the French presidency declared LPAA a fourth pillar of the Paris Climate Alliance, alongside and equal to national pledges, financing package, and negotiated agreement, it underscored the continued importance of bottom-up and nonstate actors for climate governance (14).

In what follows, I continue to probe the relevance of civil society actors and non-policy interventions for influencing state action on climate change by engaging the literature on international norm diffusion and socialization.

The role of international norms

By what process does norm diffusion occur? Finnemore and Sikkink's (1998) classic understanding of norm influence as a three-stage process--or norm "life cycle"--offers one way to understand how norms arise and gain global acceptance. The first stage of norm emergence is facilitated by norm entrepreneurs (for example, activists or NGOs) that attempt to persuade a critical mass of states, or norm leaders, to embrace a new norm (897). If this attempt at persuasion is successful, the norm reaches a "tipping point" and "cascades" into the second stage, in which norm leaders attempt to socialize other states to become norm followers (902). In response to socialization by norm leaders--often in the form of praise, censure, sanctions, or other material incentives--states may feel compelled to comply in an effort to enhance international legitimation, demonstrate conformity and "belonging" in the international community, or protect one's identity by defending the aspects upon which they gain self-esteem (903). A norm reaches the third and final stage of the life-cycle once it has been internalized and is no longer a matter of public debate: Finnemore and Sikkink identify women's suffrage and the abolition of slavery as important examples (895).

The norm life cycle helps theorize the process by which ideas advanced by transnational environmental movements become embraced by states and institutionalized in environmental law,

international treaties, and environmental agreements. Finnemore and Sikkink identify activists and social movements, especially those with organizational platforms and support, as primary examples of norm entrepreneurs. Activists may choose to deliberately violate existing norms of behavior in order to send a message or frame an issue; despite the immense personal costs this might entail, norm entrepreneurs are often more strongly motivated by ideational commitment than by personal gain. As Finnemore and Sikkink write, "for many of the social norms of interest to political scientists, it is very difficult to explain the motivations of norm entrepreneurs without reference to empathy, altruism, and ideational commitment" (898). Youth climate activists represent a case in point: Haugestad et al. (2021) use in-depth interviews with young activists in Norway to discover their motivation for participating in #FridaysForFuture demonstrations. Set in motion by Swedish high school student Greta Thunberg in 2018, #FridaysForFuture has since become a global movement of young people demanding action on climate change and divestment from the fossil fuel industry by staging school strikes on Fridays. The researchers' interview data coalesces around three themes: one, that climate change is an unintended consequence of economic and technological advances of which the participants themselves benefit, making responsibility for the crisis a shared one; two, that the future depends on timely action to mitigate the worst effects of climate change, creating a sense of urgency around the problem; and three, that participants' shared identity as youth motivates protest and legitimizes their concerns (3). Despite the possibility of incurring personal losses by participating in demonstrations (which may include, for example, losing hours of academic instruction to protest),

participants' ideational commitment to climate action and sense of shared responsibility for climate change motivate engagement with the movement.

This effort to establish climate change as a moral and ethical quandary is also increasingly evidenced by the framing of climate change as a matter of human rights and social justice. Whereas past generations of environmental activism may have instead emphasized ecological destruction, animal extinction, and biodiversity loss as the primary damages incurred by industrialization and resultant global warming, contemporary climate activists tend to foreground the ways that climate change reveals or exacerbates existing racial, economic, and global inequalities. For example, in the U.S., exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5)--a major health risk factor--is disproportionately caused by consumption of goods and services mainly by non-Hispanic U.S. whites. Despite this, PM2.5 is disproportionately inhaled by black and Hispanic populations (Tessum et al. 2019). In this context, the slogan "I can't breathe"--popularized by U.S. racial justice movements in the years following the deaths of Eric Garner and other Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement--gains renewed meaning (Chow, 2020). Climate change has been shown to exacerbate inequalities at the global level as well: Diffenbaugh and Burke (2019) use counterfactual historical temperature trajectories from a variety of global climate models and empirical evidence of the relationship between historical temperature fluctuations and economic growth to show that there is a >90% likelihood that per capacity GDP is lower today in most poor countries than it would have been in a world where global warming had not occurred. The increased tendency to frame climate change as something other than a primarily ecological problem is perhaps best captured by activists' use of the term "climate justice", which

Kashwan (2021) describes as "a framework to recognize and redress the unequal distribution of costs and burdens of climate change and climate responses of various types" (2). By building connections between environmental protection and norms that are already broadly accepted by states and international organizations (for example, racial, economic, or social equality), activists seek to strengthen support for policies that will mitigate the effects of climate change while addressing persistent inequities that are exacerbated by warming, both globally and within their country context.

While research that examines the direct influence of environmental "norm entrepreneurs" on states' decision-making is limited, the growing visibility of such figures at Greta Thunberg has indeed been linked with demonstrable changes in public attitudes toward climate change: for example, using a nationally representative survey of U.S. adults, Sabherwal et al. show that those more familiar with Greta Thunberg possess greater intentions of participating in collective action to reduce global warming. Further research by Baiardi and Morana (2021) investigates public attitudes on climate change in Europe between 2009 and 2019. Using data from the Eurobarometer surveys on Climate Change, they find that environmental concern is directly related to the share of young people in the European country's total population. Such evidence reveals the powerful role that norm entrepreneurs, including activists, play in initiating the norm lifecycle and ultimately changing attitudes and behavior globally. Yet as Finnemore and Sikkink later clarify, the completion of the life cycle is not inevitable, providing a partial explanation for why some environmental norms may gain broad international support but fail to generate collective, global action in a way that is consistent with the scale of climate change.

Some have argued that Finnemore and Sikkink have failed to sufficiently account for norm diffusion where it concerns local and nonstate actors. For example, Dauvergne (2018) examines the emergence of the anti-microbead norm since the early 2010s to argue that emerging environmental norms diffuse more quickly when scientific evidence of harm consolidates, activism intensifies, and political and corporate resistance to the norm is relatively weak. The alignment of these trends have put the world on track to eliminate the use of plastic microbeads entirely by 2028. Yet the phaseout of microbeads from cosmetic and hygiene products also "reveals innate weaknesses of bottom-up, ad hoc norm diffusion as a way of reducing the total amount of plastic making its way into the oceans" (3). As Dauvergne writes, microbeads comprise only a tiny fraction of the microplastics polluting marine environments. Moreover, the governance of plastic pollution is largely unequal and uncoordinated across political jurisdictions; efforts to reduce marine pollution are further weakened by high economic stakes, costly solutions, and stronger resistance to environmental norms (14). These weaknesses obstruct the elimination of microplastic pollution; like many other scholars, Dauvergne concludes that addressing marine plastic pollution may instead entail the negotiation of an international treaty. Dauvergne's analysis thus suggests that environmental norms, while powerful, are by themselves insufficient for constraining consumer, corporate, and political behavior toward the environment; further, his writing reveals the important role of nonstate actors such as scientists and corporations in determining the future and prominence of a norm.

Alger and Dauvergne (2020) later elaborate upon the reasons why environmental norm diffusion and compliance varies so widely across states. They question Finnemore and Sikkink's description of

the norm's life cycle, drawing on Acharya (2004) to argue that "norm scholars following in the tradition of Finnemore and Sikkink tend to see norms as doing 'good,' underestimating how often people, especially in developing countries, see these same norms as little more than Western displays of ignorance, arrogance, and imperialism" (155-156). Alger and Dauvergne argue that understanding the diffusion of environmental norms globally requires examining the consequences of local politics, economics, and culture, and the ways that local power struggles influence norm diffusion--what they call the translocal politics of environmental norms. Examining local cycles of contestation over natural resources helps explain which norms gain global prominence, why some environmental ideas fail to evolve into norms, and why norm diffusion may be uneven or irregular across states (156). Alger and Dauvergne further argue that international relations literature tends to assume a process of diffusion flowing from the global North to the global South. "Yet more often than not," they write, "norms shift meaning during cycles of contestation within local settings [...] to better serve the interests of those with power and money." These cycles suggest that norms are "dynamic, often gaining or losing traction globally with shifting meanings across jurisdictions as these translocal politics play out" (157-159). In contrast to previous scholarship that understands norms as emerging either through a "life cycle" or a process of contestation between global norms and local practice, Alger and Dauvergne offer an alternative typology of environmental norms (Table 1). In this schema, low local consistency paired with low global adoption produces multilateral norms (the authors cite the adoption of large marine protected areas, or MPAs, as an example). Meanwhile, low local consistency paired with high global

adoption produces fragmented norms; sustainable forestry and tropical forest preservation being two examples particularly important for this paper.

		Global adoption	
		Low	High
Local consistency	High	Multilateral norms	Global norms
	Low	Marginalized ideas	Fragmented norms

Table 1. "Typology of environmental norm diffusion," in Alger, Justin and Peter Dauvergne, "The Translocal Politics of Environmental Norm Diffusion." *Environmental Communication* 14, no. 2 (2020): 160, table 1.

While the literature on environmental norm diffusion is growing, relatively few scholars have examined whether and for what reason the process of diffusion and socialization might not only flounder, but actually backfire. Here Epstein's contributions become especially salient. Epstein (2012) examines the international politics of whaling to leverage her critique of the ways that socialization has been mobilized in international relations scholarship and policymaking. She argues that socialization "carries with it a unilinear, liberal understanding of progress" that "purports to cast as universal what is always necessarily a localized and historically specific set of values" (136). She further contends that socialization often silences the socializee by infantilizing it, as in the case of global efforts to reduce whaling by Japan--efforts that Epstein shows have been characterized by language that "implicitly cast Japan in the position of the child in need of learning the norms of 'good' whaling behavior" while simultaneously delegitimizing the country's ancient whaling past (141). In the end, such rhetoric proved to be a failure: Japan continued whaling under the scientific research provision of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling until withdrawing from the International Whaling Commission altogether in early 2019.

Drawing from the human rights literature, one can further hypothesize that efforts to promote compliance and exert pressure on states in violation of international norms might resemble "naming and shaming" campaigns, which have had mixed success in changing states' behavior with respect to human rights (Hafner-Burton 2008; Lebovic & Voeton 2009). Recent scholarship on denunciation has revealed its declining effectiveness and its tendency to provoke backlash by the violating party. In particular, shaming non-elite or disadvantaged groups carries risk of engendering backlash, particularly when the group or individual doing the shaming is perceived as a cultural outsider (Snyder 2019, 121-122). However, shaming can be effective if the shamer and shamed share a social identity, leading the shamer to "point out an inconsistency between their shared identity norms and the shamed actor's deeds, and the shamer can credibly claim that the target's misbehavior is making the ingroup look bad in the eyes of outsiders" (120). Terman (2020) elaborates upon the dynamics of shaming and backlash by showing that deviance and stigma serve important social and strategic functions for backlash movements. In particular, transgressing norms in ways that provoke mainstream rebuke allow backlash movements to cultivate a shared identity, instill feelings of unjust status deprivation within the community, and enter public discourse to further advance their political goals (624). Rather than de-escalate the actions of a transgressive group, shaming can instead fortify and perpetuate them, making it "a risky strategy when dealing with those who revel in stigma" (628).

Yet strategies such as shaming and denunciation are typically studied in the context of states who choose to respond to the violation of a *firmly established* norm (one that has already been "internalized", to use the language of Finnemore and Sikkink). This paper instead concerns itself with

understanding the second stage of the norm "life cycle", in which a norm "cascades" through a process of socialization and resultant compliance or contestation. Why do some efforts to socialize states to become environmental norm followers succeed while others provoke retaliation? Responding to this question will help establish why some efforts to collectively address global ecological crises not only produce uneven policy implementation, but actually result in regressive state behavior.

III. Hypotheses and Scope

This project leverages its claims through qualitative case studies of Bolsonaro's Brazil and Morrison's Australia. Both represent nations that have recently suffered similar ecological crises (deforestation and increasingly unpredictable wildfires in the Amazon and the Australian bush, respectively). Both have also been confronted with strong international pressure to respond. Yet each nation took very different approaches to the socialization they encountered. Brazil is a developing middle power governed by Jair Bolsonaro, who minimized the scale of the 2019 Amazon wildfires, rejected offers for international aid, and indicated no intention of addressing this ecological disaster in response to international scrutiny (Anderson 2019). Australia, by contrast, is a developed middle power governed by Scott Morrison, who has similarly refused to acknowledge the gravity of climate change but who nonetheless accepted international aid to respond to the 2020 bushfires. What led to this souring of diplomatic relations with Brazil but not with Australia? In addition to examining *how* states socialize others to become norm followers, this paper will also evaluate the varying outcomes of such efforts.

I hypothesize that the primary strategy differentiating efforts to socialize these states is the claim of communal land ownership. In both cases, socialization was characterized by the language of collective action, appeals to shared values, offers of international aid, and criticism of NDCs that were perceived to lack sufficient ambition. Yet in the case of Brazil, socialization also took the form of laying claim to the Amazon as a shared resource in ways that echoed Brazil's history as an extractive colonial economy and were perceived to undermine its territorial sovereignty.

The scope of my claims encompass (1) violating states conventionally classified as "middle powers" that (2) have recently (post-Paris) confronted major domestic ecological crises. Small powers are excluded by my framework because their own domestic ecological crises are often believed to contribute in negligible ways to the climate problem. The principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", first introduced at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, recognizes these states' limited historical contribution to the threat of climate change and limited capacity for responding to it. Their efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, and the resultant response by the international community, thus lie outside of my universe of cases. Meanwhile, great powers frequently possess a uniquely dominant share of global economic, political, and defense resources. For this reason, they are often more resilient in the face of international pressure and socialization and thus lie outside the scope of this paper. Note, however, that the community of states exerting international pressure can comprise great, middle, or small powers (it is not isolated to great powers alone).

IV. Methodology and Case Selection

To respond to my research question, I will conduct two case studies based on policy documents, international reporting, statements by heads of state, and material from international conference proceedings such as the 2019 G7 Summit. The first case study is of Brazil, a middle-power developing country and the nation encompassing the largest share of the Amazon Rainforest, the world's largest rainforest and a biome increasingly threatened by deforestation, agribusiness growth, and wildfires. In particular, I focus on the international response to the wildfires that led to a loss of 10,700 sq. kilometers of rainforest between July 2018 and July 2019 (Watts 2019). I examine the strategies that the international community employed to encourage Brazil's compliance with the norm of forest conservation. I also examine Brazil's response to these strategies and its approaches to environmental governance following the crisis. This case is advantageous because it clearly demonstrates an instance in which efforts to socialize a state into compliance with international norms led to contestation and re, rather than merely produced uneven or irregular policy implementation. My analysis of the diplomatic conflict that resulted from this process of socialization also lends new dimension to the study of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon, a region of high interest to policymakers and scholars of international development, environmental politics, and political ecology alike.

My second case study centers upon the international response to fires that burned more than 103,310 sq. km. of the Australian bush in late 2019 and early 2020. I examine the strategies that the international community employed to encourage Australia to address this ecological crisis. I also examine the resultant response to international pressure on part of Australia. The use of this case is

advantageous for a few reasons. Australia continues to experience the highest rate of deforestation of any developed nation, yet its efforts to combat deforestation have primarily taken place abroad--for example, in Indonesia. In addition to being understudied and thus a compelling case in its own right, Australia also allows me to control for the effect of populist politics in the Brazilian case. Jair Bolsonaro first gained notoriety internationally on the basis of his strongman demeanor and a policy agenda frequently characterized by pro-military and authoritarian sympathies. His belligerence awarded him the informal title of "the Trump of the Tropics", given the resemblance between his own behavior and that of former U.S. President Donald Trump. While Scott Morrison does not boast an ignominious reputation to the same degree, during his tenure he has exhibited a disregard for coalition-building, general skepticism toward mainstream media, and an isolationist attitude similar to those of his Latin American counterpart. My decision to include Morrison's Australia in this analysis thus helps to diminish the effect of populist politics as an alternative explanation for the backlash engendered by socialization in the Brazilian case.

V. Brazil (2019 Amazonian wildfires)

In this section I describe the wildfires that devastated the Brazilian Amazon in 2019, a year that saw roughly 10,700 square kilometers of the biome (an area about the size of Jamaica) lost to deforestation (Assis et al. 2019). I first contextualize the wildfires by examining challenges to implementation of the Brazilian Forest Code under Jair Bolsonaro's presidential administration. I then examine the resultant international response to wildfires in the Amazon and the diplomatic conflict

that ensued in the two years that followed. I conclude by describing the impact of the crisis on the country's climate pledges in the context of the 26th Conference of Parties.

Crisis context and 2019-2020 fire season

While Brazil has struggled to curb deforestation of the Amazon since the 1970s, the nation observed marked improvements in forest conservation throughout the early 2000s, particularly during the presidency of Inacio Lula da Silva. As recently as 2014, four years prior to the election of Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil was recognized for making massive contributions to curbing deforestation and reducing emissions: for example, Nepstad et al. (2014) showed a 70% decline in deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon as a consequence of interventions in soy and beef supply chains, only half a decade prior to the crisis this paper describes. However, the enforcement of logging and land clearing restrictions during the Brazilian dry season has become increasingly lax under the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro, who has generally favored pro-agribusiness policies during his tenure. Brock et al. (2021), for example, find that full implementation of the 2012 revisions to Brazil's Forest Code (which limits deforestation and requires restoration of illegally deforested areas) would contribute significantly to conserving biodiversity in Brazil's forests. Yet the Bolsonaro administration has undermined the power and reach of the government agencies that would otherwise accomplish the monitoring that Brazil's Forest Code demands: in Bolsonaro's first year in office, for example, the budget of IBAMA, the administrative arm of the Ministry of the Environment, was reduced by 25% (Spring & Eisenhammer 2019). The same year, Marcelo Xavier da Silva, a figure known to be sympathetic to Brazil's

agribusiness sector, was appointed the president of FUNAI, the federal agency responsible for protecting the country's Indigenous population. Collectively, these decisions weakened the ability and the will of the federal government to monitor and penalize illegal activity in the Amazon in ways consistent with Brazilian agribusiness interests. As a consequence, fires in 2019 were more abundant and harder to control than usual, peaking between the winter months of June-August and primarily affecting the northern Brazilian states of Roraima, Acre, Rodonia, and Amazonas as well as parts of Bolivia and Peru. Data from PRODES, the deforestation monitoring system employed by Brazil's National Institute of Space Research, later showed that deforestation in the Amazon had reached a 12-year high, encompassing 10,700 sq. km. of land in 2019 compared to 4,800 sq. km. just five years earlier (Assis et al. 2019).

International response to wildfires

At the height of these seasonal fires, Global North nations expressed dissatisfaction with Jair Bolsonaro's policy response to the crisis. In mid-August, for example, the two largest donors to the Amazon Fund--Norway and Germany--announced their plan to cease donations after Bolsonaro dissolved the Fund's board and technical committee (Reuters 2019). Since the Fund's establishment in 2008 by former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Norway had donated over USD $1.2 billion, while the Federal Republic of Germany donated over USD $68 million. Other nations offered a combination of criticism and financial support: a week following the announcement of Norway and Germany, French President Emmanuel Macron expressed dismay at the state of the Amazon, tweeting: "Our

house is burning. Literally. The Amazon rain forest - the lungs which produces 20% of our planet's oxygen - is on fire. It is an international crisis. Members of the G7 Summit, let's discuss this emergency first order in two days! #ActForTheAmazon" (Macron 2020a). Bolsonaro soon responded with criticism of this invitation to discuss the fate of the Amazon without the inclusion of any Amazonian countries, arguing that to do so reflects "a colonialist mentality unreasonable for the 21st century" (Bolsonaro 2020).

Despite this admonition, climate change emerged as a priority issue at the G7 Summit that week, with the Amazon surfacing as a prominent motif throughout the event. For example, in a joint press conference with President of Chile Sebastian Pinera, the host of COP25, Macron confirmed that the Amazon had indeed been a primary concern in discussions among G7 states. The President opened his statements with reflections on the Amazon's importance for reducing global emissions, citing its role as a carbon sink as well as the direct impact to nine nations affected by wildfire, including French Guiana (Macron 2020b). In doing so, Macron diverted Bolsonaro's criticism of employing a colonialist mentality by asserting France as an Amazonian country with material stakes in the fate of the rainforest. Following the G7 Summit, Bolsonaro rejected the group's offer of $20 million in aid for combatting fires in the Amazon, saying that his acceptance was contingent upon Macron apologizing for previous comments that questioned Bolsonaro's trustworthiness (France 24 2019).

While Bolsonaro had previously found a kindred spirit in U.S. President Donald Trump, relations with the U.S. soon strained under pressure as well. In June 2020, for example, the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee opposed the Trump administration's plan to expand economic ties with

Brazil, citing Bolsonaro's record on the environment and human rights (Reuters 2020). Relations shifted markedly following the election of Joe Biden, whose campaign platform articulated the most progressive climate agenda of any American president. In January 2021, Biden signed an executive order for the U.S. to rejoin the Paris Agreement after the country officially withdrew the previous year under Trump's leadership (Biden 2020b). A week later, Biden signed an additional executive order containing guidelines for the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of State, the Administrator of USAID, and the CEO of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation to develop a plan to protect the Amazon rainforest and other global carbon sinks (Biden 2020a). The executive order thus elevated the deforestation of the Amazon to a central matter of U.S. climate diplomacy. Faced with few options and fewer friends in the face of strong international criticism, Bolsonaro ultimately issued a 60-day decree banning the national population from lighting fires in the Amazon and deployed military personnel to contain the fires and enforce environmental law (van Wagtendonk 2019).

Brazilian climate policy and government response to the wildfires

Despite some action to combat deforestation in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, subsequent efforts to reduce the risk of future wildfires and address growing emissions have otherwise stalled. When Brazil submitted its first Nationally Determined Contribution in December 2020, policymakers and climate experts expressed dismay at what seemed to be the only instance of a nation proposing less ambitious commitments than it did in its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution in 2015. At that time, Brazil's INDC indicated a commitment to reducing greenhouse

gas emissions by 37% below 2005 levels in 2025 and 43% below 2005 levels in 2030 (Federative Republic of Brazil 2015). The country's most recent Nationally Determined Contribution proposes achieving the same targets by 2025 and 2030, respectively; however, the NDC does not identify the absolute emission targets in tons (Federative Republic of Brazil 2020). This, coupled with methodological changes in the emissions inventory since the release of Brazil's INDC in 2015, effectively permits Brazil to emit hundreds of millions more tons of carbon dioxide by 2030 than under its previous commitments (WWF-Brazil 2020).

Brazil thus finds itself in violation of the Paris Agreement's principle of non-regression. Enforcement of environmental policies locally remains lax, and the behavior that led to uncontrollable wildfires in 2019--logging, ranching, and agricultural land clearing--persists. The year after diplomatic tensions erupted, deforestation in the Amazon was comparable to 2019, with 10,300 sq. km. affected. Wildfires also created harmful conditions for other Brazilian ecosystems: a lack of rainfall in the Brazilian Pantanal during the summers of 2019 and 2020 were caused by reduced transport of warm, humid summer air from the Amazonia region into the Pantanal (Marengo et al. 2021). The excessively dry conditions that resulted ultimately facilitated the spread of wildfires in the Pantanal, further endangering the world's largest tropical wetland and one of the most biologically diverse environments on Earth. Despite regressing on its climate commitments in 2020, Brazil appeared to affirm the goal of ending domestic deforestation when Bolsonaro joined more than 100 other world leaders at COP26 who promised to end global deforestation by 2030, with the group collectively comprising 36.5 million sq. km. of forested area ("Glasgow Leaders" 2021). Yet despite Brazil's nominal endorsement of the

deal, activists and environmental leaders have already cast doubt upon the country's trustworthiness by characterizing the promise as little more than "greenwashing" (Watts 2021).

VI. Australia (2020 bushfires)

The section that follows examines the Australian bushfires that burned over 103,000 sq. km. of land area (roughly the size of Cuba) during the 2019-2020 fire season, 82% of which was forested (Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment 2021).

As in the preceding case, I first contextualize this domestic ecological crisis and briefly describe its human, ecological, and economic impacts within Australia. I then describe the international response to this disaster, including offers of aid by developed nations and governments across the Pacific. Finally, I conclude with an analysis of the Australian government's response to the crisis in the two years following the bushfires and evaluate its impact upon Australia's climate commitments in the context of COP26.

Crisis context and 2019-2020 fire season

Beginning in the summer of 2019, the 2019-2020 fire season ultimately affected all Australian states; however, the crisis proved especially devastating to the states of Victoria, Western Australia, and New South Wales. Fires peaked in December 2019 and January 2020; by late April, fires had burned over 80,000 sq. km. of forested land (Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment 2021). The human, ecological, and economic impacts of the 2019-2020 fire season

are well documented: in addition to at least 33 individuals who perished in the fires, hundreds more fatalities were linked to smoke in their aftermath (Pickrell 2020). The fires were also linked to extensive ecological and archaeological damage. By mid-January, 80% of the Blue Mountains world heritage area and 50% of the Gondwana world heritage rainforest had burned; by the season's end, it was estimated that the area burnt by bushfires would have contained almost 3 billion native vertebrates, including 143 million mammals, 2.46 billion reptiles, 181 million birds, and 51 million frogs (Cox & Evershed 2020; Van Eeden et al. 2020, 7). The majority of these are predicted to have died either from the flames or from the loss of food and shelter. Wittwer and Waschik (2021) further consider the economic impact of extreme drought between 2017-2019, as well as the bushfires of the 2019-2020 season. They estimate that during this period, Australia experienced a national welfare loss of $63 billion, split between $53 billion in losses from drought and an additional $10 billion from bushfires. In New South Wales alone, the decline in real GDP (relative to forecast) was $6.9 billion in 2018-2019 and $10.2 billion in 2019-2020. For many Australians, the crisis evoked memories of the 2009 bushfires that killed 173 people in the state of Victoria. This event, often remembered as "Black Saturday", was the deadliest natural disaster in Australian history and reveals the country's persistent struggle to manage seasonal bushfires across time.

Climate scientists widely agree that the bushfires' severity is due to the excessively dry conditions resulting from climate change. For example, van Oldenborgh et al. (2021) estimate that anthropogenic climate change increased the likelihood of bushfires by at least 30%, a finding that authors later characterized as "conservative" (Ghosh 2020). Additionally, Swann and Ogge (2020) use data from 70

weather stations across Australia between 1950 and 2018 to estimate that Australian summers are now one month longer than in the mid-20th century (meaning the average temperature on December 1 between 1950-1969 now arrives two weeks earlier, while the average temperature on March 1 during the same period now arrives two weeks later). The 2019-2020 bushfire season has since become known colloquially as "Black Summer".

International response to Australian bushfires

In a February speech at the Parliament of Australia, Scott Morrison briefed the public on the extent of the bushfires' devastation and recognized the contributions of allies that had provided material support and personnel against the bushfires, noting that 70 nations had volunteered assistance (Scott 2020). In December and January, for example, the U.S. sent 100 American firefighters as well as 65 forest service and wildfire personnel. The U.S. Agency for International Development later provided an additional $100,000 for immediate relief (USAID 2020). In January, Canada also deployed nearly 100 fire management personnel to Australia, with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau saying: "When wildfires spread through our communities, Australia answered our call for help. Now, Canadians are doing the same. Our two countries are close allies, and so many Canadians have connections to Australia. We're going to help our friends get through this." (Trudeau 2020) In addition to the developed nations that offered assistance, many of Australia's neighbors across the Pacific provided support in the wake of the disaster, including those with limited resources. In October, New Zealand sent 157 firefighters and personnel, as well as an additional 22 firefighters and

three helicopters at the fires' peak in January. Heads of State of other Oceanic countries offered additional aid via social media: Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea James Marape offered to send 1,000 soldiers and firefighters at Scott Morrison's request; in another Facebook post, Acting Prime Minister of Vanuatu Jotham Napat committed 20 million vatus, or nearly USD $250,000, to assist bushfire victims. (Roy & Lyons 2020)

Australian climate policy and government response to bushfires

At the time of the 2019-2020 fire season, much of the strongest criticism of Scott Morrison's government and its environmental policies emerged not from within the international community but from Australian citizens, many of whom were directly affected by the fires' reach and expressed rage over Australia's status as the world's largest exporter of coal and natural gas (Larnaud 2020). Even while facing domestic unrest, the Australian government rejected calls to reduce economic reliance on coal and natural gas and diverted discussions of climate change in interviews with reporters (Pandey 2020). Morrison's policy response to the bushfires instead focused on disaster recovery, resilience, and adaptation: on January 6, the Australian federal government announced the establishment of the National Bushfire Recovery Agency, which later became the National Recovery and Resilience Agency. Since its establishment, the NRRA has financed economic, ecological, and infrastructural recovery projects worth over AUD$1.6 billion (National Resilience & Recovery Agency 2021).

Despite some rhetorical maneuvering, Australia's climate-related commitments have remained consistent over time. In August 2015, Australia's intended Nationally Determined Contribution

proposed reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28% below 2005 levels by the year 2030 (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2015). In December 2020, Australia submitted its first Nationally Determined Contribution, in which it reiterated the same commitment while also indicating that the state sought to "overachieve" on this target (Australian Government 2020). While Australia was not in violation of the Paris Climate Agreement for reiterating the targets articulated in its 2015 intended NDC, it was widely criticized by policy and climate experts who anticipated the country would commit to gradually accelerating its targets, as most developed nations were expected to do (Readfearn 2021). Facing increased criticism on his government's climate record--both at home and abroad--and citing his obligation to guide Australia toward recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Scott Morrison even suggested he might choose to forgo attendance at COP26 altogether (Scarr 2021). Morrison ultimately did attend, and in the days before the start of the climate summit, also announced a 2050 net-zero target that was panned for both not being ambitious enough and lacking sufficient planning to realistically achieve, especially given the plan's reliance on technological solutions with unclear promise, such as carbon capture and storage (Morrison 2021).

VII. Discussion

Considering the absence of legal mechanisms constraining state behavior that contributes to climate change, this paper brings attention to the alternative ways that governments with an interest in reducing global emissions promote compliance with environmental norms among states facing

ecological crises domestically. What distinguishes cases of successful socialization from those where socialization has been known to produce contestation and even retaliation? I argue here that claims of communal land ownership, often leveraged in an effort to emphasize humanity's shared responsibility for its future and its natural resources, can instead be perceived as violations of the principle of national sovereignty, creating resistance to environmental norms.

For example, in a year when deforestation in Brazil reached a 12-year high, French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron's characterization of the Amazon as "our house" and his invitation to other leaders of developed nations to develop a solution prompted the Brazilian government to reject millions of dollars of aid that would otherwise have helped strengthen domestic forest monitoring and environmental conservation mechanisms. Macron's effort to solidify France's claim to the Amazon by emphasizing the crisis' impacts upon French Guiana served only to underscore the continued afterlives of European expansion and colonialism. Offers of aid, public shaming and criticism, and appeals to collective values amounted to little in the face of Macron's prior invocation; Brazil's subsequent response to the wildfires took the form of a haphazard military deployment that did little to limit deforestation after months of blaze. Two years following the crisis, the Bolsonaro administration has not provided any long-term plans for limiting deforestation and preventing future spread of wildfires in the Amazon.

By contrast, amid a devastating bushfire season, Australia's diplomatic allies volunteered material and personnel support to mitigate the impact of the fires while also casting Australia as one of anthropogenic climate change's earliest victims. A combination of shaming, public support, and

appeals to shared values helped generate urgency around the issue and the creation of the National Resilience & Recovery Agency, which continues to provide aid to Australian citizens affected by the 2019-2020 bushfire season. In addition to encouraging an earnest government response to the wildfires, socialization strategies also helped to strengthen the nation's diplomatic ties with a number of Global North and South Pacific states (whose offers of aid implicitly cast shame upon Australia for its inability to rein in wildfires despite ample financial resources, which its Pacific neighbors lacked). In the two years following the 2019-2020 fire season, however, climate and policy experts have grown increasingly disillusioned with the Morrison government's lackluster policy response to the climate crisis. Citizens have also struggled to reconcile the Morrison government's increasing economic reliance on coal exports with the devastation wrought by the wildfires. In the weeks precipitating COP26, the Australian government generated further criticism based on its failure to comply with the Paris Agreement's ratchet mechanism by committing to reducing its emissions by a greater measure than it did in 2015. The case of Australia thus suggests that while socialization might encourage states to address domestic ecological crises nominally, this does not necessarily translate to a long-term commitment to emissions reductions and progressively more ambitious climate pledges.

Future research might more closely consider the role of populist rhetoric in emboldening state backlash to socialization. Both cases considered in this paper feature populist heads of state with histories of opposition to progressive climate policy. Would the results of this research hold in cases where populist rhetoric does not dominate national politics? Past research suggests that they might; Epstein's (2012) examination of whaling in Japan shows that socialization can fail as a result of the

socializee's sense of infantilization. What Epstein calls "infantilization" echoes the fears of silencing and domination evidenced by Brazil's behavior in the case described here; future research might more closely investigate this relationship in both populist and non-populist contexts.

VIII. Conclusion

In August 2021, thousands of Indigenous people chanted, danced, and camped outside of the Supreme Court in Brasilia, Brazil in protest of a measure that would use the year 1988 as a cut-off date for Indigenous land claims. Passing the measure would affect 230 pending land claims, including in Amazon territory, leaving them vulnerable to agribusiness expansion and further ecological degradation in addition to jeopardizing the rights of the country's Indigenous tribes (Reuters 2021).

The precarity of Indigenous land ownership in Brazil puts the peculiarity of Bolsonaro's objections to European interference in matters of the Amazon into stark relief. This paper has argued that efforts to pressure nations to address domestic ecological crises such as wildfires and deforestation are likely to fail when the principle of national sovereignty is perceived to be violated by claims of communal land ownership. In the case of Brazil, the cosmopolitan discourse of Global North nations claiming shared stakes in and responsibility for the future of the Amazon emboldened President Jair Bolsonaro to reject the financial aid that would otherwise help Brazil protect its rainforests and strengthen its ability to meet its climate goals. It weakened Brazil's relationships with key diplomatic allies and preceded the country becoming the only nation to introduce a weaker NDC compared to its INDC. I have further compared this case to that of Australia, where pressure on the government to

address domestic wildfires did not take the form of communal land claims and helped create a sense of urgency around the wildfires as well as an earnest government response, albeit one that did not necessarily translate to climate commitments consistent with allies' expectations.

The results of this paper raise questions about the ways in which the legacies of extractive imperialism echo within the domain of contemporary climate politics, preventing effective cooperation and creating hazardous conditions for all. Yet the 2021 demonstrations outside of Brazil's Supreme Court reveal that not all parties stand to lose equally in the climate "game". Bolsonaro's efforts to exercise sovereignty over Amazon territory by weakening environmental protection measures and forest monitoring systems are not only an affront to the controlling hand of the Global North; they also serve the interests of Brazil's agribusiness sector, in large part at the expense of the rights and socioeconomic wellbeing of Indigenous groups, smallholder farms, and poor and marginalized Brazilians. As Ostrom wrote nearly three decades prior to the events described in this paper, the commons dilemma is frequently characterized by the persistence of powerful individuals who stand to gain from the status quo, blocking efforts by the less powerful to change the rules of the game (1990, 21). In the study of climate cooperation, the field of international relations stands to benefit from better understanding the ways that domestic and international interests collide to render unequal life in a warming world.

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