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NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR THE
STUDY OF TERRORISM AND RESPONSES TO TERRORISM

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Escalation Management in International Crises:

The United States and its Adversaries

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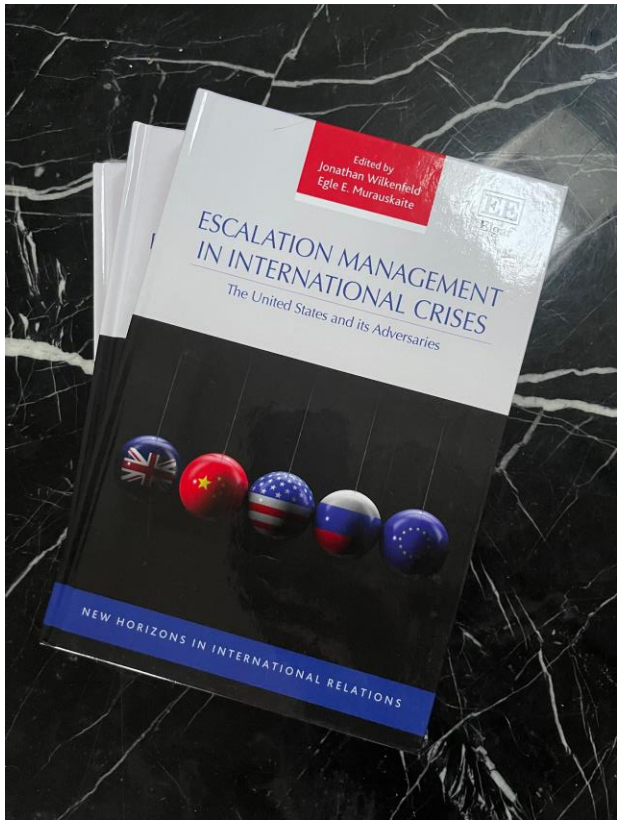
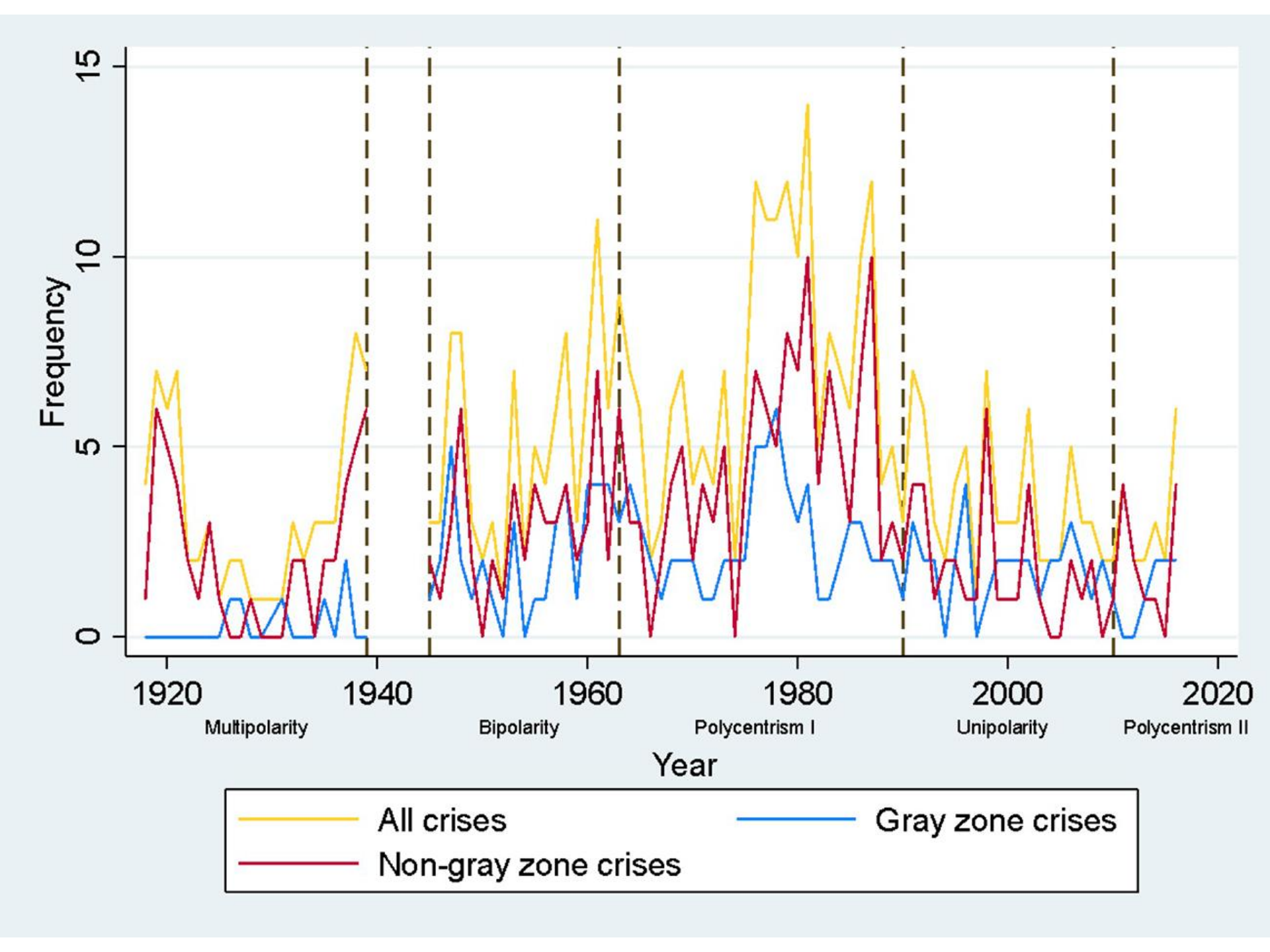
About the book

- Interdisciplinary team
- Product of 3 years of Minerva research
- Classic academic theories, ICB and surveys to test them, added practitioner insights
- What tools do major powers typically use and why?
- U.S., China, Russia focus




Frequency
0
5
10
15
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
2020
Multipolarity
Bipolarity
Polycentrism I
Unipolarity
Polycentrism II
Year
All crises
Gray zone crises
Non-gray zone crises

When do states choose gray tools in international crises?

- Autocratic challengers – gray tactics trigger crises
  - Strong normative impact against the use of force
- Used in near-peer crises
  - Violence - tool of the weak
- Overall, state capacity seems to be key in determining propensity to use force to initiate or to escalate a crisis - suggesting a strong state-level explanation for international behavior.

Does proxy use decrease P (violent response)?

- Proxy use is associated with a higher probability of defender violence, regardless of whether the initial crisis trigger was itself violent.
- When the trigger is violent, defenders are more likely to respond in a tit-for-tat manner when a proxy does the triggering; more violent against weaker challengers.
- Proxy usage actually leads to violent escalation - challenging the notion of cost minimization.

Gray Zone Security Survey on Threat Perceptions (March 2021)

- Support for NATO has increased as Russia invades a neighbouring country
- Americans consider the rise of China to be a much greater threat than Lithuanians or Britons do.
- At the time of the survey, Americans and Britons viewed Russia's territorial ambitions with moderate concern
- 30-40% of respondents have no clear preference between siding with China, the U.S., or the EU

How does U.S. choice of tools impact crisis outcomes?

- Timed Influence Net modeling on gray zone crises in South China Sea (Second Thomas Shoal)
- For the Philippines to maintain a military presence
  - U.S. has to take strong highly visible actions
  - Otherwise China is emboldened to increase pressure

…This is how Ukraine played out in Feb 2022 …

What are the key challenges to U.S. information operations?

- Online crisis simulations on South China Sea (June 2021)
- Difficult to implement the whole of government approach and delegate appropriately
- U.S./Western reactivity
- Figuring target audience and proper metrics

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Esclation Ladder

Thank you

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