

LIAM P. D. STOCKDALE

# Taming an Uncertain Future

TEMPORALITY, SOVEREIGNTY, AND THE  
POLITICS OF ANTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

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# Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
<b>1</b> Introduction: Temporality, Futurity, and the Political	1
PART ONE	
<b>2</b> The Politics of Temporal Control	17
<b>3</b> “To Kill Him Who Is Making Ready to Kill”: The Anticipatory Governance of (In)security	39
PART TWO	
<b>4</b> Anticipatory Political Timescapes	73
<b>5</b> Preemptive Security and the Politics of Exceptionalism	95
<b>6</b> Precarious Subjectivities, Drone Warfare, and Autoimmunity	133
<b>7</b> Conclusion: Anticipatory Governance, Liberal Democracy, and the Politics of the Future	157
Bibliography	167
Index	181
About the Author	189



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*Liam Stockdale  
Hamilton, Ontario  
November 2015*

## *Chapter One*

# **Introduction**

## **Temporality, Futurity, and the Political**

In one of the more memorable passages from his *Confessions*, Saint Augustine muses perplexedly about the nature of time. “What, then, is time?” he asks, before proceeding to offer what is perhaps the pithiest articulation of the paradoxical relationship between human subjectivity and temporality found in the canon of Western philosophy: “if no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not” (1968, 40). This at once simple and profound observation captures well the point that while all human subjects are in some way fundamentally aware of time, it remains perpetually beyond our capacity to fully grasp, and thus eludes cogent conceptual articulation. Indeed, even a cursory parsing of the voluminous philosophical literature on the subject reveals that, on the one hand, time is recognized as central to the most basic questions of intellectual inquiry and human existence— “[it] is a fundamental aspect of all that occurs, a boundary condition on phenomena” (Turetzky 1998, xi). On the other hand, it also becomes apparent that there likely exist as many temporal understandings as there are philosophical orientations; as many theoretical articulations of time as there are theorists to articulate them (see, for instance, Adam 2004; Bender and Wellbery 1991; Elias 1992; Gale 1968; Grosz 1999; Koselleck 1985; McClure 2005; McCumber 2011; Turetzky 1998). Thus, although humanity is unlikely to develop a universally accepted understanding or conceptualization of time, the point remains that our relations to time form a fundamental part of the human condition. As Kimberly Hutchings, paraphrasing Kant, puts it, “Time . . . conditions all our experience of ourselves” (2008, 3).

Yet our interactions with time are by no means wholly harmonious. Quite the contrary, as it is our status as beings in time that is a primary source of

the difficulties and insecurities that in many ways define the human experience. As Bonnie Honig argues, “Time and man . . . are agonistically related,” in that the free activities of human subjects “interrupt would-be time sequences,” while the vicissitudes of time in turn impinge upon human freedom (Honig 2008, 108). In the context of this agonic relationship between humanity and temporality, the desire to manage the latter by exerting some degree of influence over it emerges as a critical imperative in human affairs. Thus, what social theorist Barbara Adam refers to as a “quest for time control” can be detected to varying extents across all forms of social and cultural production—from philosophic, to religious, to political activity—such that the social world as we know it is constituted to a significant extent by concepts and practices that are intimately concerned with the management, governance, and even mastery of time itself (Adam 2004, 19–20, 124, 152; see also Luhmann 1982, 274). Time is thus fundamental to shaping the human experience, and the imperative to control, or at least govern, time can be understood as a crucial undercurrent in the ongoing constitution and operation of the social world.

These two insights might initially appear to relate primarily to broad philosophical questions about the character of existence and the nature of being; however, they also serve as a point of departure for this book—a study whose subject matter is not the phenomenological or eschatological but the political. Indeed, in the chapters that follow, I am interested in critically exploring how temporality more broadly—and the imperative to control the unfolding of the future in particular—is embedded in the epistemic foundations and practical operations of contemporary rationalities and mechanisms of societal governance.

## A TEMPORAL LENS

The analytical importance of time has long been recognized across the disciplines of the social sciences and humanities, whose primary subject matter is the realm(s) of human affairs. Indeed, prominent works from the past several decades in anthropology (such as Johannes Fabian’s *Time and the Other* [1983]); sociology and social theory (such as Barbara Adam’s *Time and Social Theory* [1994]); history and historiography (such as Hayden White’s *Metahistory* [1973]); and (continental) philosophy (such as Paul Ricoeur’s *Time and Narrative* [1990])—among many others—have all dealt explicitly with humanity’s relationship to time in their respective disciplinary contexts. In the study of politics more specifically, theorists have long recognized the centrality of temporal questions to the elemental issues of societal governance with which they are concerned. Major works of political theory such



as John Gunnell's *Political Philosophy and Time* (1987) and Sheldon Wolin's *Politics and Vision* (2004) directly address the relationship between time and how we think about the political. To be sure, interest in time has ebbed and flowed with the intellectual currents of disciplinary inquiry, but an underlying sensitivity to the importance of taking time seriously has nonetheless characterized the scholarly ethos of these areas of study whose subject matter is the world created by humanity.

Moreover, we are currently witnessing a resurgent interest in questions of time more broadly, and futurity more specifically, among scholars in these and related fields. Most often prompted by normative concerns relating to such issues as the perceived acceleration of life in late modernity (Hassan and Purser 2007; Rosa and Scheuerman 2009), the specter of ecological collapse wrought by the increasingly unsustainable lifestyles many now take for granted (Atwood 2008; Bastian 2012), or the emergence of other ostensibly new threats whose catastrophic potentialities seem to destabilize our traditional relationships to the future (Beck 2002, 2008), a wide variety of authors are beginning to train their gazes upon the temporalities of the social world by adopting what can be termed a "temporal lens" that "puts time . . . front and centre" in their analyses thereof (Ancona et al. 2001, 645). This scholarly trend is particularly constructive for examinations of contemporary politics, in that some of the most significant political dynamics of the current moment stem from shifts in the broader political imagination which have brought explicitly temporal questions very much to the fore (see Agathangelou and Killian 2016; Lundborg 2012; Hutchings 2008). For instance, the growing influence of narratives proclaiming the onset of a "world risk society"—characterized by the erosion of our ability to control the unfolding of the future to an extent that affords us an adequate degree of ontological certainty in the present, and exemplified by such inherently global problems as climate change, financial crises, and transnational terrorism—suggests that time in general, and the irruptive contingency of the future in particular, have become discursively framed as pressing problems that must be actively addressed through political channels (Beck 1999). This discourse is mirrored in practice by the widespread emergence of societal governance strategies that are explicitly oriented toward taming an uncertain future through anticipatory action in the present (Anderson 2010a; de Goede and Randalls 2011). Such strategies—which are often described in terms of "risk management," "prevention," "preemption," and so forth—can thus be understood as "attempts to control time," and are becoming increasingly prevalent in myriad areas of human affairs across the globe (Kessler 2011, 2181). This combination of an epistemic shift toward a focus on overtly temporal problems and a concurrent practical shift toward future-oriented governmental logics has thus in many

ways “reconfigured the politics of space into a politics of time,” such that the temporal has (re-)emerged as a primary site and subject of governance (Kessler 2011, 2181).

Of course, the novelty of this emergent “temporalization” of the political should not be overstated, as the political realm has been concerned with controlling the unfolding of time and taming the contingency of the future since long before Machiavelli exhorted his prince to master *fortuna*. Yet this ongoing (re-)framing of temporal contingency as a political problem—and the attendant proliferation of strategies and mechanisms of government developed more explicitly for this purpose—suggests the need for in-depth engagement with the politics of time and futurity in general, and logics of anticipatory governance in particular. A growing number of scholars across multiple disciplines have begun to critically interrogate certain specific elements of these wider issues; however, there is still much work to be done with respect to theorizing the *idea* of anticipatory governance in primarily abstract, conceptual terms—particularly regarding its attendant implications for the organization and exercise of political power in the liberal democratic polities that are at the forefront of its enactment. A primary contribution of this study, therefore, is to provide a book-length engagement with precisely such questions.

The remaining chapters thus develop a sustained exploration and critique of the logics underlying the anticipatory political rationalities whose global proliferation has made it increasingly important to foreground questions of temporality and futurity in political analysis. The term “political rationality” is used here to denote a “discursive field within which the exercise of power is conceptualised,” which combines “justifications for particular ways of exercising power” with “notions of the appropriate forms, objects, and limits of politics” (Rose and Miller 1992, 175). A political rationality can thus be understood as the epistemic framework that guides political action in a certain context by both articulating the sort(s) of problem(s) to be addressed and providing a program for action through which political power can be mobilized toward these ends. This book seeks to explore and explain the sort of politics that anticipatory rationalities aimed at taming an increasingly uncertain future make possible when deployed as mechanisms of societal governance. In this respect, the core argument hinges on a claim that the practical implementation of anticipatory political rationalities requires a paradigm of political power closely reminiscent of that which is associated with a politics of “exceptionalism,” as theorized most notably by Carl Schmitt, Giorgio Agamben, and their subsequent interlocutors. Political exceptionalism describes a condition in which juridical limitations on the actions of a sovereign authority are diminished to the point of practical irrelevance. In other

words, it signifies a political circumstance characterized by “serious distortions in the restraining effects that the rule of law . . . [has] on the arbitrary exercise of power,” such that those with the capacity to deploy sovereign power are effectively placed beyond the law (Huysmans 2004, 327). This book develops the argument that such a form of political authority is enacted by anticipatory rationalities of governance because the latter are concerned with controlling time by acting upon *potential* futures, and since these futures are inherently unknowable, a highly arbitrary form of political decision-making that relies upon imagination and speculation is required to make acting upon them practically possible. The chapters of part II in particular emphasize that the paradigm of political power required by such preemptive logics of action conspicuously resembles that which underlies a politics of exceptionalism, thus suggesting that mechanisms of anticipatory governance have the potential to significantly alter the character of political subjectivity, particularly when implemented in a liberal democratic polity. In short, therefore, this book foregrounds temporality and futurity by developing a critical theorization of the exceptional forms of political power that are enacted by the logics of anticipatory governance whose global proliferation makes such a foregrounding of temporality and futurity important in the first place.

An in-depth engagement with the politics of anticipatory governance requires extensive analysis of particular instances in which these sorts of strategies and mechanisms are enacted in practice. While any attempt to explore all the areas of human affairs in which they have become prevalent could not be accomplished in a single volume, it is nonetheless possible to develop conceptual insights relevant to a broader critique of anticipatory governance through a more detailed examination of one particularly prominent manifestation thereof. This is the path followed by this book, as the subsequent chapters develop a thorough engagement with perhaps the most conspicuous example of anticipatory governance in the contemporary global political context: the widespread deployment of “preemptive” strategies toward the governance of (in)security. Indeed, the post-9/11 rise of transnational terrorism as the dominant issue in the global security imagination has placed temporal questions more generally, and the taming of the future’s contingency more specifically, at the core of the contemporary politics of (in)security (Anderson 2010b). This is because the specter of terrorism has become largely framed as a radically irruptive, catastrophic potentiality inhabiting an ultimately unknowable security future that can thus only be adequately governed through anticipatory interventions aimed at stopping the proverbial “next attack” before it occurs. The proliferation of such future-oriented rationalities thus constitutes perhaps the most notable development

in the post-9/11 global security climate (Dershowitz 2006; Ericson 2008), and also represents an archetypical example of the future-oriented “temporalization” of the political discussed above. Accordingly, this book’s wider concern with highlighting the importance of foregrounding temporality and futurity in political analysis and more specifically exploring what is at stake with the rise of anticipatory governance rationalities will be pursued through an in-depth critique of how the problem of temporal contingency has been prioritized within the global security imagination and responded to through the development of security strategies premised upon governing the future through preemptive interventions in the present.

To put all of this another way, the project developed in this book is oriented around three principal tasks, which can be understood as follows: (1) emphasizing that questions of temporality and futurity should be given greater attention in the study of (global) politics, and providing a book-length illustration of how this might be done which especially highlights the critical potential of doing so; (2) establishing a foundation for a thorough conceptual critique of anticipatory governance rationalities, whose global proliferation provides a primary analytical impetus for taking temporality and futurity more seriously; and (3) offering a comprehensive critical interrogation of one particular manifestation of such rationalities in practice—namely, the preemptive regime(s) of (in)security governance that have emerged within the context of the post-9/11 global War on Terror. That all three tasks are principally concerned with conceptual questions is indicative of the primarily theoretical character of the book, as the subsequent chapters collectively represent an attempt to critically think through how questions of temporality and futurity—and the imperative to exert agentic control over both—are crucially embedded in contemporary modes of societal governance. It should also be noted that these three tasks do not directly correspond to the book’s chapter divisions, but rather are interwoven throughout the various arguments developed therein.

Framing this book in the preceding way is useful because it helps to highlight its key contributions. In this respect, the concern with demonstrating how we might take temporality and futurity more seriously in political analysis contributes to broader disciplinary debates in political science and international relations (IR) regarding the proper subject and scope of scholarship. Indeed, this book seeks not only to show what adopting a “temporal lens” for the study of the political might look like but also to emphasize that doing so is both methodologically prudent—since questions of temporality and futurity increasingly underpin the key dynamics of contemporary (global) politics—and analytically productive—since doing so enables the development of innovative readings of key conceptual and practical issues. This hints

at the contributions embodied by the second and third tasks mentioned above, which relate to the critical potential of foregrounding temporality and futurity in this way. In this regard, the book's attempt to think through the implications of the ongoing "temporalization" of the political through the rise of anticipatory governance mechanisms elicits significant critical insights into the way political power is organized and exercised in the contemporary moment. Specifically, by tracing how the resurgent imperative to govern time through future-oriented political rationalities requires what amounts to a politics of exceptionalism in order to be functionally implemented, the arguments developed in this book provide the epistemic basis for a thorough critique of anticipatory governance as an idea on both conceptual and normative grounds. Moreover, because these arguments are developed through a sustained engagement with the realm of global (in)security governance, the book also contributes to the critical literature in IR and security studies in two notable ways. First, by suggesting that exceptionalist politics are presupposed by the logic of anticipatory governance itself, it offers an innovative, conceptually oriented intervention that contributes to explanations for the widespread proliferation of exceptionalist practices in the post-9/11 era—a topic that has been of paramount interest to critical security scholars over the past decade (Neal 2009). Secondly, by arriving at these insights through an in-depth theorization of how anticipatory rationalities have been applied to the governance of (in)security in particular, this study develops a highly comprehensive conceptualization of what has been termed "preemptive security" in the context of contemporary global politics (de Goede 2008, 162; Stockdale 2013; Sullivan and Hayes 2010). My understanding and use of this term follows the existing literature on the subject, in which "preemptive security" refers generally to "security practices that aim to act on threats that are unknown and recognized to be unknowable, yet deemed potentially catastrophic, requiring security intervention at the earliest possible stage" (de Goede, Simon, and Hoijsnik 2014, 412). While much critical security scholarship has been concerned with problematizing the various state practices and policies that fall under this classification (Amoore 2014a), the extant literature has devoted less attention to describing and unpacking this approach to (in)security governance in more general or abstract conceptual terms. Filling this gap thus represents a key contribution of this book.

The book's aims should thus be broadly understood in the spirit of self-identified "critical" scholarship, which seeks to "re-open assumptions that have grounded our political thought" and develop alternative understandings of pressing political issues and concepts in the contemporary context (Edkins and Vaughan-Williams 2009, 2). However, it is particularly important to recognize that the critical insights developed in the following chapters are in

many ways ultimately the result of the analysis being conducted through an explicitly temporal lens. In this respect, this book shows that a move to take temporality and futurity seriously is demanded by the emergent dynamics of the current (global) political moment, and doing so will also productively facilitate criticality in the study thereof.

## A NOTE ON METHOD AND APPROACH

As is perhaps already clear, the chief contributions this book seeks to make are almost entirely conceptual in nature. Indeed, the subsequent chapters consist primarily of in-depth exercises in theoretical argumentation and conceptual analysis that are the result of sustained critical reflection upon the issues in question. With respect to questions of method, therefore, this book deliberately draws upon the precedent set by Hedley Bull when he prefaced *The Anarchical Society*—which would become one of the most important works in the history of IR scholarship—by describing it as “an attempt to deal with a large and complex subject simply by thinking it through” (Bull 1977, xiii). While I have no pretensions about this book achieving a similar level of renown to Bull’s, my effort to grapple with how questions of temporality and futurity, and logics of anticipatory governance embedded in the constitution and operation of contemporary (global) politics should be understood as employing his “method” in this respect.

Yet, while principally concerned with conceptual problems and arguments, there is also an empirical component to the analysis, as I make references of varying depth throughout the text to practical manifestations of anticipatory governance strategies in the context of contemporary global security. It should be stressed, however, that these direct engagements with such instances are undertaken not for the purpose of developing any detailed empirical account thereof, but rather to further flesh out conceptual arguments relating to how anticipatory governance mechanisms—of which these practices are prototypical examples—operate. In other words, the purpose of the empirical components is to provide a degree of concrete grounding for the conceptual claims that comprise the core of the book’s contribution, and should thus be understood as a series of illustrative examples that have been chosen on the basis of their explanatory capacity. It is worth briefly identifying some of the more prominent examples with which I engage to better demonstrate how they are utilized in this way.

- Chapter 3’s discussion of the qualitatively unique character of post-9/11 applications of preemption to questions of (inter)national security

is partially illustrated through the Obama administration's use of "predictive assessments" in the creation of flight "watchlists" that ban individuals from travelling by air in the United States. Subsequently, what I describe as the inherently productive aspects of this contemporary politics of preemptive security are illustrated in part through an examination of the American FBI's counterterror strategy which uses paid informants to recruit individuals suspected of terrorist sympathies for the purposes of goading them into devising plots that can then be preemptively foiled.

- Part of chapter 4's conceptual analysis of the logic of preemption as a political rationality considers how it compresses the temporal window of political decision-making. This point is illustrated with reference to both the character of American political debate around the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the 2005 killing of Jean Charles de Menezes in London's Stockwell underground station. The latter example is also used to illustrate the role of affect as a driver of anticipatory decision-making, particularly in the security context.
- Chapter 5's examination of the relationship between the logic of preemption and the politics of exceptionalism utilizes several illustrative examples to flesh out core conceptual claims. In this respect, the chapter opens with an in-depth parsing of US Attorney General Eric Holder's important 2012 speech aimed at justifying the Obama administration's targeted killing policy. The subsequent discussion of the epistemic centrality of imagination to a politics of preemption is fleshed out through an examination of Somali-Canadian Mohamed Hersi's preemptive arrest and ultimate conviction in Canada for the offense of "attempting to participate in a terrorist activity." The subsequent discussion of "counter law" as an illustration of how preemptive security suspends the juridical order considers several examples, including the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1373, the European Union's financial "blacklisting" regime used to target suspected channels of terrorist financing, and the anti-democratic character of certain provisions of India's core counterterrorist legislation. Finally, the discussion of how preemptive security enacts a "decisionist" paradigm of sovereign authority examines the George W. Bush administration's promotion of the "unitary executive" doctrine—typified by Bush's unprecedentedly frequent use of presidential "signing statements" and subsequently continued in important ways by the Obama administration—and the indefinite detention regime that served as a primary element of the immediate American response to the 9/11 attacks.

- Chapter 6 includes the most in-depth examination of one particular case, as it uses the 2011 targeted killing via drone strike of Anwar al-Awlaki—an American citizen and al-Qaeda militant—to illustrate the chapter’s conceptual arguments about the precarious subjectivities enacted under a preemptive security regime.

These are the most prominent illustrative examples employed in the text, though additional references to other events and practices can also be found in the subsequent chapters. And again, while certainly not insignificant to the overarching arguments, these components should be understood as secondary to the conceptual claims and insights that constitute the book’s primary contribution.

### **Time, Space, and Space/Time**

Finally, at this point, readers may be skeptical as to whether my intended focus upon futurity and the temporal must come at the expense of a sensitivity to the spatial. Some may go even further and contend that it is illegitimate to speak of space and time as discrete categories, in that the two are so “inextricably interwoven” that we must “insist on . . . the necessity of thinking in terms of space-time” instead (Massey 1994, 261, 269). Such a line of thinking might thus imply that any attempt to analytically prioritize the temporal in the manner attempted by this book is potentially problematic, on both methodological and theoretical grounds.

While I recognize that such arguments are compelling and appreciate the importance of maintaining an adequate sensitivity to the spatial in any analysis of the social world, I do not believe such concerns necessarily undermine the legitimacy of the book’s temporally focused analytical approach. Indeed, despite issuing the above invocation, critical geographer Doreen Massey also makes room for such an approach, saying of space and time that “it is not that we cannot make any distinction at all between them, but that the distinction we do make needs to hold the two in tension” (1994, 261). In other words, it is possible to accept the fundamental theoretical point about the inexorable interconnectivity of space and time—and the productive, mutually constitutive tensions between the two in the context of the social world (Crang 2007, 62)—while still prioritizing one over the other for analytical purposes. This should be understood as the approach of this book with respect to the above concerns.

In other words, while an underlying aim is to further emphasize the importance of foregrounding questions of temporality and futurity, in no way should this be construed as an eschewal of the importance of the spatial to



the questions and problems that will be examined in the following chapters. The subsequent analysis thus certainly recognizes that the issues considered—which range from the abstract conceptualization of sovereignty to the practical politics of drone warfare—are also intimately bound up with questions of space, and it is not my intention to deliberately play down the significance thereof. In this sense, I am not interested in making the negative case *against* prioritizing the spatial in the study of contemporary societal governance and/or the post-9/11 global governance of (in)security; rather, I am interested in adding to the positive case *for* more prominently foregrounding the temporal more broadly and futurity more specifically.

## STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The remainder of the book is divided into two parts. Part I, which includes chapters 2 and 3, considers broader theoretical questions about the relationship between temporality, futurity, and the political, particularly pertaining to the proliferation of anticipatory governance more broadly and preemptive approaches to problems of (in)security more specifically. Part II, which includes chapters 4–6, develops an in-depth conceptual critique of the latter by exploring how the logic of preemption has been deployed in the context of the post-9/11 War on Terror. It is worth outlining each chapter in further detail before proceeding.

Chapter 2 opens the analysis by considering the politics of temporal governance from a broader perspective, and thus begins by reading the fundamental political concept of sovereignty through a “temporal lens.” Particular emphasis is placed on highlighting the logic of temporal control that is crucial to sovereignty’s coherence as a normative political principle, and that has served as a dominant “solution” to the “problem” of contingency in the modern political imaginary. I then consider how this solution is becoming increasingly challenged by the shifting dynamics of the contemporary human experience. Here the discussion takes up the point already mentioned in this introduction that time more generally, and the imperative to govern the future in particular, is occupying an increasingly prominent place in the contemporary sociopolitical imagination, with one result being the proliferation of anticipatory modes of societal governance. After a detailed examination of the similar but importantly distinct concepts of “risk” and “precaution” which underpin the conceptual architecture of such governance rationalities, I consider how the practice of sovereign politics is shifting to reflect a more active and direct approach to temporal control rooted in these and related

ideas. The chapter concludes by asserting that this rise of anticipatory governance rationalities has significant implications for the organization and exercise of political power in the contemporary global political context, particularly in the case of the liberal democratic societies that are in the vanguard of this trend. This latter point is the focus of the remaining chapters, which explore what is at stake in this respect by developing an in-depth theorization of the “preemptive security” strategies that characterize the post-9/11 global War on Terror.

This process begins in chapter 3, which examines how the logic of anticipatory governance is manifested in the contemporary global security realm by elaborating on what the idea of “preemptive security” can be understood to mean in the post-9/11 context. Answering this question requires that the idea of preemption be situated historically and conceptually in relation to the realm of (inter)national security. To do so, the discussion contrasts how preemption has been articulated and conceptualized in the more traditional discursive context of international law with the way it has been articulated and manifested in post-9/11 counterterrorism discourses. Through this comparison, it is argued that the contemporary conceptualization of preemption is qualitatively different from previous understandings, primarily in the way it frames radical *uncertainty* about the future as the basis for, rather than an impediment to, anticipatory action. The remainder of the chapter then establishes the analytical parameters for the rest of the book by outlining an epistemic framework through which to think critically about the political implications of this formulation of preemption. The question of ontology is addressed first, where it is contended that the post-9/11 idea of preemptive security can be best understood as the sort of “political rationality” discussed earlier in this introduction. The discussion then considers how the relationship between agency and structure operates within the context of such preemptive political rationalities, before moving on to outline the particular understanding of “sovereignty” that is required to adequately comprehend the way political power operates in this context. It is argued that Judith Butler’s (2006) notion of “sovereignty within governmentality” and the associated idea of the “petty sovereign” are of particular importance to both of these considerations, and these ideas are discussed in detail. The chapter then concludes part I by speaking to the scope of the analysis undertaken in the remainder of the book, specifically addressing issues related to potential charges of Eurocentrism vis-à-vis the sort of general conceptual analysis to which it aspires. Having thus laid the foundation for an in-depth theorization of preemptive security as an exemplar of anticipatory governance, this task is undertaken in part II.

Chapter 4 opens part II by developing a detailed examination of how preemption operates as a political rationality, using its mobilization in the contemporary security context as an exemplar. The central argument here returns more overtly to the theme of temporality by contending that a politics of preemption functions by manipulating our experiences of time itself. In particular, it is argued that by constructing all future possibilities as potentially imminent and thus subject to anticipatory action, the logic of preemption fundamentally rearticulates our subjective relation to the future. In other words, a preemptive politics “makes the future present” by granting the merely potential, virtual future a significant degree of causal purchase in the decision-making of the actual, lived present. These points are then further unpacked by exploring their implications for questions of concrete political praxis. Here it is argued that the logic of preemption compresses the timescape of political decision-making by demanding immediate action to avoid an always potentially imminent catastrophe. This process of temporal compression in turn prioritizes the affective responses, or “gut feelings,” of designated decision-makers over broader public deliberation, thus enacting anti-democratic modes of governance. This suggests that there are further significant implications for the organization and exercise of political power under a regime of anticipatory governance.

Chapter 5 unpacks this idea in much greater detail by exploring how preemptive approaches to (in)security governance in particular enact a form of sovereign authority that conspicuously resembles a paradigm of political “exceptionalism.” The argument once more hinges on questions of temporality and futurity, as the key point is that a political rationality premised upon anticipatorily governing the future must rely upon an epistemic foundation of speculative knowledge created through the exercise of the imagination rather than the analysis of empirically verifiable fact. This has the effect of vesting within the designated authority a radically enhanced degree of discretionary subjectivity, since the necessity of dealing in speculation about potentialities that may never come to pass precludes the straightforward application of mechanisms of juridical oversight and democratic negotiation to a politics of preemption. Such an emancipation of decision-making from the circumscriptions of legal and political norms—and the attendant creation of a “decisionist” paradigm of sovereignty—are also defining characteristics of political “exceptionalism,” thus suggesting an originary connection between anticipatory governance and exceptionalist politics. As described above, these conceptual claims are fleshed out in considerable depth through a number of illustrative examples taken from the post-9/11 prosecution of the global War on Terror.

Chapter 6 then considers the implications of the originary link between preemption and exceptionalism for the experience of political subjectivity, as it is argued that a preemptive security regime brings into being a political condition characterized by a pervasively precarious subjective condition. This is because the exceptionalist paradigm of sovereign authority that it presupposes effectively eliminates any juridical mediation between sovereign and subject, thus rendering the latter perpetually vulnerable to what amounts to arbitrary interventions by the former. This argument is developed through a discussion of the Obama administration's drone warfare program, with a particular emphasis upon the 2011 targeted killing of al-Qaeda operative and US citizen Anwar al-Awlaki. This is a particularly instructive case, since it represents precisely the sort of exceptional practice whose continual possibility is a necessary condition for enacting preemptive approaches to (in)security governance. The discussion then takes a step back to consider how the arguments developed thus far undermine the conceptual coherence of preemption as a political/security rationality. Here it is argued that the precarious subjectivities enacted by the exceptional politics of preemption closely resemble the sort of condition that it is normatively premised upon diminishing. I then conclude by arguing that these constitutive tensions can be productively understood through the lens of Jacques Derrida's concept of "autoimmunity."

The seventh and concluding chapter brings the book to a close by considering how the preceding analysis of preemptive security in particular suggests that the proliferation and normalization of an exceptionalist politics and its attendant precarious subjectivities constitutes precisely what is at stake with the rise of anticipatory governance more broadly. It is argued that this poses potentially serious ethicopolitical problems for the liberal democracies that are implementing such strategies across a variety of policy areas beyond the security realm, since the anticipatory logic upon which they are based appears manifestly incompatible with certain fundamental principles of a democratic society. The modifications to the organization and exercise of political power that are presupposed by the constitutive logics of anticipatory governance must therefore be given serious consideration in public policy debate relating to the implementation of such strategies, with a proper weighing of these implications against the powerful imperative to tame an increasingly uncertain future.

## *Part One*

Time is a sort of river of passing events, and strong is its current; no sooner is a thing brought to sight than it is swept by and another takes its place, and this too will be swept away.

—Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, Book IV

Make use of time, let not advantage slip.

—Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*

Always in motion is the future.

—Yoda, *The Empire Strikes Back*



## *Chapter Two*

# **The Politics of Temporal Control**

As discussed in the introduction, our relation to time conditions all aspects of the human experience to at least some degree—human being is being in time. While neither this chapter nor this book are explicitly concerned with the philosophical treatment of time as such, the centrality of time and attempts to control it to the conceptual architecture of the social world provides something of a foundational point for the subsequent analysis. Indeed, as Niklas Luhmann suggests, questions of time are fundamentally integral to the processes by which the social world is both created by and rendered intelligible to human subjects—time is a crucial “aspect of the social construction of reality” (Luhmann 1982, 274; Opitz and Tellmann 2015, 109). It thus follows that concepts central to that constructive process might be (re-)read to emphasize their temporal inflections in such a way that opens up critical space for productively rethinking their role in the organization of human affairs. This chapter begins by following such a trajectory, with a particular focus on a concept that is crucial to the ordering of contemporary society: sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, the first section employs a self-consciously “temporal lens”<sup>2</sup> to develop a conceptual reading of sovereignty that highlights how its constitutive normative promises are premised upon a logic of temporal control that has provided a powerful “solution” to the “problem” of temporal contingency in the governance of human affairs. While certainly not a novel claim, this is an important point to consider as a departure point for exploring the politics of anticipatory governance, since the apparent challenges posed to this solution by the emergent exigencies of late modern societies have been crucial to the widespread proliferation of explicitly future-oriented political rationalities. The remainder of the chapter considers this point in more detail by exploring how shifts in the contemporary political imagination have led to the (re-)emergence of temporal contingency as a significant political problem, with a key consequence being the

development of a more overtly “temporalized” politics characterized by the integration of the logic of risk and its more radical offshoot precaution into mechanisms of societal governance. This discussion thus lays the foundation for the remainder of the book, which critically interrogates the implications of these developments for the organization and exercise of political power, particularly in the context of the liberal democratic polities at the forefront of these trends.

## SOVEREIGNTY AND THE GOVERNANCE OF TIME

The concept of sovereignty as a principle of political organization is most easily understood in terms of space. Indeed, the spatial demarcation of a parcel of territory over which a particular figure or entity wields ultimate political authority is the conceptual core of the idea of sovereignty (Kurtulus 2005, vii), while the spatialized image of a clearly delineated border definitively separating a politically controllable “inside” from a contingently anarchic “outside” comprises its most paradigmatic concrete representation (Walker 1993). Moreover, the spatiality of sovereignty has been crucial to its entrenchment as a conceptual foundation for modern thinking about the political in that, from the birth of Western political thought at the Athenian *polis*, the very idea of politics has been bound up with the attendant need for a space in which its practice can properly take place. As Scott Nelson puts it, “Western political theory has consistently developed political ideals on the basis of political conceptions pertaining to a well-bounded space where an accepted, unquestioned practice of politics was thought to rightly locate itself” (2010, 7). When considered as a spatial concept, therefore, sovereignty provides a compelling response to this fundamental topological necessity of politics.

However, as many notable contemporary theorists of sovereignty have emphasized (see Walker 1991, 1993, 2001), an understanding of the concept developed primarily through a spatial lens is inadequate, since sovereignty also embodies a logic that is inherently temporal in nature. A key consideration in this respect is the rather basic point that the impetus for spatially demarcating a sovereign boundary—which stems from its ostensible capacity to create a secured space within which a progressive, potentially emancipatory politics becomes possible—also implies that this space be maintained and protected *through time* since, to put it bluntly, “politics takes time” (Manning 2004, 65; Wolin 1997). In other words, the more overt, normatively grounded spatial aspects of sovereignty rely upon more implicit imperatives



relating to the governance of time. The following discussion explores this idea in more detail by reading the concept of sovereignty in a manner that highlights the importance of a particular logic of temporal control to its conceptual constitution and coherence as a political principle.

It is useful to begin this process by considering what might be understood as the normative foundations of sovereignty. Indeed, by addressing elemental questions of social organization, sovereignty is a fundamentally normative concept that does not so much describe an extant condition as prescribe an ongoing course of action. Notably writing “in defense of sovereignty,” W. J. Stankiewicz affirms that the concept consists of “premises [and] assertions about the direction that man chooses (rather than is compelled) to follow . . . about man’s beliefs about what ‘ought’ to be, what is possible, and the steps necessary to realize his beliefs” (1969, 31). It is these premises and assertions that constitute the normative foundations of sovereignty—since they are what have enabled the idea of sovereignty to become attractive as a political principle—and they are rooted in the *promises* that theories of sovereignty make regarding the capacity to bring into being the best possible world through the arrangement of human social relations along the prescribed lines.

In this respect, at the core of sovereignty’s normative foundation is a claim to offer a practical framework for the establishment and maintenance of a stable socio-political order (Stankiewicz 1969, 4, 10, 14–15). As Stankiewicz emphasizes, “[W]hat cannot be ignored is the function of sovereignty in maintaining social order: it is this function which creates the obedience that makes sovereign power and its exercise possible” (1969, 10). Put slightly differently, most theorists of sovereignty recognize it as a social technology concerned with taming the forces of contingency and anarchy that are alleged to characterize human existence through the vesting of ultimate political authority in a supreme locus of power within a bounded space (Hoffman 1998, 4; Schmitt 2005; Stankiewicz 1969, 15). This can be seen most simply, for instance, in the use of various state-of-nature thought experiments in classic contractarian theories of sovereignty, or in Carl Schmitt’s reference to the unpredictability of what he calls “real life” when outlining his authoritarian theory of sovereign decisionism (Schmitt 2005, 14–15). International relations theorist James Der Derian articulates the normative basis of sovereignty pithily: “It falls upon the sovereign state to protect us from the turbulence of nature and anarchy that permanently lies in wait offshore and over the horizon” (2008, 282). A central assumption is that by cordoning off a rigidly bounded enclave from a dangerous outside, sovereignty makes possible the pursuit of the good life on the inside by creating and maintaining a climate of secure, controlled stability (Jackson 2007, 114; Walker 2010, 66; 1993, 42). The normative foundation of sovereignty is thus premised on a claim

contingency under control within the domain of his political authority (Pocock 2003, 156, 178). This is further emphasized in chapter III of *The Prince* itself, where Machiavelli rejects the received wisdom of passively “tak[ing] advantage of the passage of time” in the context of establishing a cohesive and governable polity, asserting instead the importance of following the example of the Romans, who “looked ahead and took action to remedy problems before they developed” (Machiavelli 1995, 11; Pocock 2003, 161, 198–99). He also later contends that “a ruler who depends entirely on his good fortune will be destroyed when his luck changes”—an occurrence that is itself necessarily a function of the passage of time (Machiavelli 1995, 75–76). Importantly, Machiavelli’s perspective on these questions is grounded in his broader conceptualization of time as radically contingent and thus in need of governance through “strength [*virtù*] and prudence, for *in time, anything can happen*, and the passage of time brings good mixed with evil and evil mixed with good” (Machiavelli 1995, 11, emphasis added). Pocock also emphasizes this point by speaking to Machiavelli’s belief that “the world is unstabilized and the unexpected a constant threat,” and thus that *fortuna* “would destroy you if you did not . . . act in time” (2003, 178, 166). For Machiavelli, then, the unfolding of time is characterized by a radical contingency, and the capacity to tame this contingency is a key element of a successful polity as guided by the *virtú*-ous prince. Indeed, only then can the sort of stable social order that, in his famous discussion of the relative virtues of cruelty and compassion, Machiavelli identifies as necessary for fulfilling the potentials of human existence become possible (Machiavelli 1995, 51).

Machiavelli’s political temporality thus suggests that “men are not predisposed to accept a world of becoming”—implying an existence plagued by the uncertainties of the open, unknown future—“but are instead more at home in the world of stasis”—implying a condition in which socio-political stability makes possible a thriving existence premised upon more than mere survival (Nelson 2010, 39). A primary struggle of the prince and the polity he embodies is thus against the vicissitudes of time itself, and a failure to adequately confront and potentially master its contingencies will lead to the breakdown of political order and thus ruin for both (Bartelson 1995, 113; Nelson 2010, 22; Walker 1993, 39). However, that such a mastery of time through the *virtú*-ous actions of the prince is carried out within the boundaries of his domain of power is also crucial. Indeed, while the most powerful forces against which the prince’s political agency is to be mobilized are embedded in the flow of time, the successful mobilization of this agency necessarily requires a defined area in which the prince’s authority is paramount—in other words, a spatially demarcated territorial unit. Thus, while they emerged after his own time, explicit theories of sovereignty express Machiavelli’s own

perspective, as described by R. B. J. Walker, that “time is understood as a problem to be overcome . . . by fixing a home for man in space—the state” (Walker 1993, 40). This is, in essence, the logic of temporal control that underpins the normative foundations of sovereignty.

The vicissitudes of *fortuna* against which Machiavelli’s prince must prevail in order to create an enduringly stable polity are thus closely analogous to the elements of temporal contingency against which later theories of sovereignty claim to insulate human subjects. Both lines of thought imply that this can be most effectively achieved through the vesting of ultimate power in a particular figure within a bounded political community over which this figure exercises primary authority. Machiavelli’s theorization of political temporality thus helps to illustrate that sovereignty’s normative promises are inherently reliant upon a degree of temporal control manifesting as the capacity to endure through time, and the very forces against which these promises claim to protect are themselves fundamentally embedded in the process of time’s unfolding. Indeed, “[s]overeignty is the concept that performs the work of precision amidst considerable ambiguity and flux” (Nelson 2010, 146), and it is based on a core assumption that “temporality can be fixed and tamed within the spatial co-ordinates of territorial jurisdictions” (Walker 1993, 14). It is this taming of temporality through the parcelling off of a space from the recurrently anarchic, contingent, uncertain temporalities of pre- or non-sovereign human existence that ultimately enables the emergence of a controllable, progressive temporality on the inside and thus ostensibly facilitates the realization of the emancipatory political project implied by the normative claims of sovereignty (Bartelson 1995, 101; Hutchings 2008, 30; Nelson 2010, 93; Walker 2010, 66). The sovereign border can therefore be understood not only as a spatial demarcation but also as a temporal boundary, as its inscription promises to provide a means through which time itself can be sufficiently governed and controlled by human subjects.

While perhaps making no novel revelations about the logic of sovereignty as such, focusing on the temporal underpinnings of its normative foundations in this way can help us think productively about broader global political processes specifically related to the changing dynamics of sovereignty. For instance, as a number of prominent social and political theorists have argued at length, the emergent exigencies of late modern societies are fundamentally disrupting many of the established certainties and regularities previously made possible by the organization of human affairs in accordance with such fundamental sociopolitical concepts as sovereignty (Beck 2008, 2005; Virilio 2010). With respect to the latter in particular, these disruptions are rooted in an apparent undermining of sovereignty’s logics of control by such spatio-temporally “de-bounded” hazards as financial crises wrought by globally

mobile capital, environmental destruction wrought by anthropogenic climate change, the rapid worldwide transmission of infectious disease, and catastrophic irruptions of violence wrought by transnational terrorism (Beck 2002, 41). Indeed, the forces and dynamics at the source of such potential catastrophes operate explicitly beyond the neat topological contours of the logic of sovereignty, transcending and traversing the lines of demarcation that have heretofore acted as apparent bulwarks of certainty and stability against irruptions of contingency. By highlighting the importance of temporal control to sovereignty's normative foundation and thus broader conceptual coherence, the reading of sovereignty developed in this section helps bring into focus how the problems associated with these sorts of emergent hazards stem in particular from their disruption of sovereignty's logic of *temporal* governance, in that they compromise our capacity to tame the contingencies embedded in the unfolding of time through the rigid demarcation of a particular space. The next section expands upon this point by pursuing a more detailed discussion of these trends in contemporary world politics—including, in particular, an exploration of how the concept of risk and associated rationalities of anticipatory governance have arisen in response to an emergent desire to recapture a degree of the temporal controllability and attendant ontological certainty promised by the logic of sovereignty.

## POLITICS AT THE END OF CERTAINTY

We have thus far seen how “sovereignty can . . . be used as a tool to manage an uncertain future” (Aalberts and Werner 2011, 2185), and in this sense offers a compelling “solution” to the “problem” of temporal contingency in the organization and governance of human affairs. Again, this solution is found in sovereignty's foundational normative claim that the creation, control, and zealous defense of an explicitly delineated spatial domain enables humanity to effectively govern the irruptive excesses of time's unfolding. Sovereignty as a political principle thus comprises an explicitly spatial mechanism for governing temporal contingency, and this somewhat paradoxical solution to the “problem of time” has profoundly influenced modern understandings of political possibility.

Indeed, as Opitz and Tellmann, following Luhmann, contend, “Modernity is linked to an intense *futurization* of the future,” which “implies an unbinding from the past” and “an opening towards what is to come”; however, this “intense futurization that characterizes modernity . . . does not occur without a simultaneous rise of modes of temporal control,” of which, as the above discussion has shown, the concept of sovereignty is a prominent exemplar

(2015, 111, emphasis original). The conceptual primacy of sovereignty within the modern political imagination (Onuf 1991) has meant that “modern political thought has *depended* on the claim that temporality can and must be tamed by the spatial certainties of sovereign states” (Walker 1993, 178, emphasis added). In other words, sovereignty’s logic of temporal control has constituted a fundamental tenet of modern thinking about the political, which has had especially important implications for the way temporality and futurity are understood and addressed as political problems. Most notably in this regard is that the rise of state sovereignty as the dominant principle of political organization (Spruyt 1996) led the question of temporal governance to become largely coextensive with the question of spatial control (Bauman 2000, 110–118). Indeed, sovereignty’s constitutive normative claim that time could be adequately tamed through the demarcation and defense of a sovereign boundary—that “spatial order [was] the condition within which temporality might be controlled” (Walker 2010, 254)—emerged as a dominant way of understanding and approaching problems of temporal contingency within the modern sociopolitical imaginary. This meant that such problems did not need to be directly confronted through explicitly temporally inflected or future-oriented political rationalities, since the logic of sovereignty implied that they could be adequately managed—and the mastering of *fortuna* that Machiavelli associated with the singularly *virtù*-ous actions of his ideal prince could be accomplished—simply by upholding the territorial integrity of the sovereign state. In other words, the preeminence of state sovereignty within the modern political imagination served to fold the question of temporal control into the question of spatial governance, thus diminishing temporal contingency as a distinct political problem via the implication that it could be adequately governed through the spatial logics of sovereignty alone.

To be sure, this account of modern political temporality is rather basic, but the point is simply to emphasize that, as a consequence of sovereignty’s undisputed emergence as the dominant ordering principle of modern politics, the logic of temporal control through the governance of space upon which it is premised became entrenched as the prevailing response to the “problem” of time in the political management of human affairs. This point is important in the present context because there is a persuasive argument to be made that sovereignty’s mode of governing time is becoming increasingly untenable, and thus that matters of temporal contingency are (re-)emerging as discrete and urgent political problems that must be actively confronted in more direct ways. Indeed, it has been widely argued that in the face of the emerging exigencies of what has been variously termed “late modernity” (Giddens 1991), “postmodernity” (Harvey 1991), “new modernity” (Beck 1992), “liquid modernity” (Bauman 2000), and so on, “the hope that temporality

that the earlier “preponderance of space over time” in modernity is being “inverted and ultimately replaced by the dominance of time” is of particular relevance to the contemporary global political climate, since the erstwhile consensus, in which questions of temporal governance could be effectively folded into questions of sovereign spatial governance, appears to be coming undone in the face of the accelerative exigencies of the current moment (Rosa and Scheuerman 2009, 10).

Consequently, it appears that a new politics of time is in the process of materializing, whereby the more active governance of temporal contingency constitutes a primary imperative, and overtly future-oriented, *anticipatory* rationalities of governance are replacing the spatially oriented, reactive strategies that characterized the political ethos of an earlier modernity (Baumann 2000, 110–18). In other words, because they are increasingly perceived to be inadequate for controlling the potentially catastrophic contingencies ostensibly immanent to the present condition, prevailing governmental concepts and mechanisms—such as the logic of sovereignty—are being increasingly reformulated and supplemented by more temporally oriented rationalities premised explicitly upon governing the future through anticipatory interventions in the present. In this respect, we are witnessing the emergence of “a redefined concept of politics, where the observation of political processes has less to do with [sovereign] states per se, but with the management of uncertainty and contingency” (Kessler 2011, 2165–66). This shift in the political imaginary has served to “reconfigure the politics of space into a politics of time” to such an extent that the legitimacy of political authority is increasingly associated not merely with the assertion and successful exercise of power within a particularly bounded space, but with the demonstrable success of “attempts to control time” itself (Kessler 2011, 2181).

Perhaps the clearest indication of this reconfiguration is found in the conspicuous diffusion of the concept of “risk” across the realm of the political. To be sure, the praxis of societal governance has always been concerned with confronting and managing “risks,” understood in the colloquial sense as largely synonymous with hazards or threats (Gardner 2009). However, “risk” has a more specific meaning in the context of contemporary social and political theory, referring to a particular governmental approach to the questions of uncertainty and contingency that is premised upon recovering a degree of temporal control in the face of an increasingly uncertain future. The concept of risk, in other words, denotes both a broader conceptual orientation toward the problem of time (and its associated uncertainties) and a specific rationality for action in the face of an unknowable future. Accordingly, as the exigencies of late modernity are perceived to be destabilizing sovereignty’s

more overtly oriented toward imperatives of temporal control rather than merely spatial governance—a point evidenced by the widespread proliferation of governance strategies and practices explicitly rooted in the logics of risk and precaution. Understanding what is at stake in this ongoing reorientation of the political from the spatial to the temporal, from the reactive to the anticipatory, requires coming to terms with the fundamental implications of such a shift in political imagination for the organization and exercise of political power. This is the animating concern of the remainder of this book, as the focus narrows to one particular issue area in which the emergence of such anticipatory political rationalities has been particularly conspicuous: the post-9/11 global governance of (in)security.

## NOTES

1. At this point, it is worth clarifying that my concern here is with the notion of *state* sovereignty—referring to the political principle most basically characterized by the establishment of a supreme political authority within an explicitly bounded territorial space. However, I follow Robert Jackson (2007) and use the shorter term “sovereignty” to signify this meaning in the present context. I am not unaware of the potential problems with such a move—as highlighted by the work of Prokhovnik (2007) among others. However, as R. B. J. Walker asserts, “As far as most contemporary forms of political analysis are concerned, sovereignty is quite obviously a shorthand for state sovereignty” (2010, 100). As such, I will employ these terms interchangeably in the context of this discussion. It should also be noted, however, that this orientation will change in subsequent chapters, as I shift to a broader understanding and use of the term sovereignty in recognition of the fact that, in the context of contemporary world politics, actors other than titular state executives often exercise powers that can be understood as sovereign within certain domains of action (see chapter 3).

2. Once again, this term is appropriated from Ancona et al. (2001, 645), in which the authors, albeit in the very different context of management theory, posit the analytical value of a “temporal lens [that] puts time . . . front and centre.”

3. Although it should be noted that speculation *is* often marshalled as the primary basis for anticipatory action; however, such practices are more accurately associated with the idea of “precaution,” on which more below.

## *Chapter Three*

# **“To Kill Him Who Is Making Ready to Kill”**

## The Anticipatory Governance of (In)security

As indicated in the conclusion of the preceding chapter, much of the remainder of this book will explore the implications of the proliferation of anticipatory governance by focusing specifically upon how this trend has manifested in the context of (inter)national security. Such a focus is apposite, since the ongoing shift from a primarily spatially focused, reactive orientation to a temporally inflected, future-oriented concern with taming uncertainty through anticipatory interventions is a major feature of the contemporary global security landscape. Indeed, the international security environment has in recent years taken on many of the characteristics described by the narrative of diminishing temporal control discussed in the previous chapter, in that “security issues have increasingly been defined in terms of uncertain, potentially catastrophic threats” (Aalberts and Werner 2011, 2191). The post-9/11 preoccupation with transnational terrorism is at the root of this development, as terrorism operates largely beyond the familiar territorial logic of state sovereignty (Aalberts and Werner 2011, 2188; Kessler 2011, 2168) and has accordingly been problematized as a novel type threat that is uniquely “unpredictable in occurrence, characteristics, and effects” (Anderson 2010b, 228). The result is that security strategies are no longer conceived primarily in the spatialized terms of traditional “high politics”—whereby the defense of the sovereign state’s territorial integrity against armed incursions from the outside is prioritized. Rather, the ostensibly ever-present specter of *potential* catastrophe—epitomized by the proverbial “next terrorist attack” (Aradau and van Munster 2011)—has inscribed the radically uncertain, potentially catastrophic future itself as the primary threat against which security action



must be taken. This has led the very idea of “security” to become framed in explicitly temporal terms and equated with the taming of this future’s putatively dangerous contingencies through targeted anticipatory action in the present. A key consequence has been the widespread proliferation of security strategies premised upon the notion that adequately securing a particular space now requires a measure of sovereign control over the vicissitudes of time—a direct inversion of the logic of sovereignty’s spatialized solution to the problem of temporal contingency discussed in the preceding chapter. This is illustrated, for example, by the way the explicitly spatial idea of “Homeland Security” is now directly associated with the overtly temporal activity of preempting future catastrophic events through doctrines, strategies, and practices rooted in logics of risk (US Department of Homeland Security 2011). In short, then, this marked “shift from a reactive security politics to a precautionary politics” (Aalberts and Rijdsdijk 2011, 2157) constitutes perhaps the defining element of the post-9/11 global security climate, and also represents a clear illustration of the inversion of the erstwhile primacy of the spatial over the temporal described by Rosa and Scheuerman (2009, 10). Indeed, these developments have placed the problem of temporal control at the very core of the contemporary global politics of (in)security.

It is for these reasons that focusing specifically on the governance of (in)security can provide significant insight into what is at stake in the ongoing proliferation of anticipatory governance more broadly. This study’s interest in the latter question will thus be pursued through an in-depth interrogation of how the problems of temporal contingency and radical uncertainty have been both prioritized within the global security imagination and responded to through the development of temporally inflected, future-oriented security strategies premised upon what can be best termed a “logic of preemption” (Anderson 2010a, 790).<sup>1</sup> The remaining chapters will be devoted to developing a comprehensive conceptual account and attendant critique of such strategies—which I will collectively refer to as “preemptive security.”<sup>2</sup>

The present chapter begins this process by discussing what preemptive security can be understood to mean and establishing some conceptual and analytical parameters within which its critical interrogation can take place. Toward this end, the first section places the contemporary politics of preemptive security in historical and conceptual context to illustrate how it can be considered something of a unique political phenomenon. This is done by contrasting how preemption has been conceptualized post-9/11 to the treatment of the idea in the established canon of international law—which has heretofore been the most prominent context in which the anticipatory notion of preemption has been applied to problems of (inter)national security. In this respect, it is argued that the post-9/11 conceptualization of preemption

# Index

- [7/7](#) London bombings, 87–88, 90
- Aalberts, Tanja, 114, 117
- abstract future, 79–83
- acceleration, [3](#), 26, 27, [29](#)
- actual, virtual compared to, 76–77
- Adam, Barbara, [2](#)
- Adey, Peter, 110
- affect: abstract compared to imminent future in, 79–83; anticipatory measures driven by, [9](#), [13](#), 74, 103; anxiety and fear in, 80; gut feelings in, [13](#), 74, 89–91, 92, 103, 158; imminence and, [13](#), 78–84; memory and trauma in, 93n6; in preemption, 81–84
- affective facts, 90–91, 92
- affective politics, 89–91
- Agamben, Giorgio: on “bare life,” 108, 137, 140, 141, 143; “camp” of, 137, 140, 143, 144, 145, 154n1; on exceptionalism, [4](#), 49, 99, 106, 108–9, 133
- agency-structure, [12](#), 58–64
- American Bar Association, 124–25
- American Civil Liberties Union, 50
- Amoore, Louise, 130n6, 162
- The Anarchical Society* (Bull), [8](#)
- anarchy, 19–21
- Ancona, Deborah, 38n2
- Anderson, Ben, 76, 110
- anticipatory measures: affect driving, [9](#), [13](#), 74, 103; anti-democratic implications of, 163, 165; in Cold War, 160; for control of future, [3](#), [4](#); critique needed for, [6](#); decisionism in, 135; in environmental governance, 161; examples of, 8–10; exceptionalism in, 4–5, [7](#), 160; governance of (in)security linked to, [7](#); imagination in, 135; juridical order suspended in, 135; and liberal democracy, [4](#), [5](#), [12](#), 158, 159–63; post-[9/11](#), 51–52; potential violence in, 147–48, 151, 153; proliferation of, [11](#); risk and, 29–30; seismologists and, 162–63, 166n1; sovereignty and, [5](#); speculation in, 31, 38n3; for transnational terrorism, [5](#); uncertainty as basis compared to impediment to, [12](#), 41, 42, 49, 73, 163
- anti-democratic implications: of anticipatory measures, 163, 165; of preemptive security, [13](#), 37, 74, 83–84, 85–87, 158
- Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act (UK), 67
- anxiety, 80
- Aradau, Claudia, 59, 103, 105, 130n5
- Arar, Maher, 146
- asset freezing, 51, 110, 115
- Augustine (Saint), [1](#)
- autoimmunity, [14](#), 134, 148–53, 154, 155n4; in al-Awlaki killing, 153; immunizing gesture in, 149–50, 151; in

- liberal democracies, 155n5; as medical term, 149, 152, 155n3; preemptive security as, 150–53
- aviation security: no-fly watchlists as, [9](#), 50, 111, 116, 126; PNR as, 142
- al-Awlaki, Anwar: autoimmunity process and, 153; due process lacking for, 139–40, 141–42, 144; exceptionalism and, 98, 138–40; precarious subjectivity in killing of, [10](#), [14](#), 134, 138, 141, 144–45; spatial domain in drone strike on, 142–44; as US citizen, 95, 97, 98, 138, 141–42, 144
- Baluevsky, Yuri, 68
- “bare life,” 108, 137, 140, 141, 143
- Bauman, Zygmunt, 27
- Beck, Ulrich, 27, 32, 33
- Benhabib, Seyla, 86
- Bernstein, Peter, 30
- Beslan hostage crisis, 68
- Betts, Richard K., 52
- blacklisting. *See* financial blacklisting
- Blair, Tony, 66
- Bodin, Jean, 20, 60, 107
- Brennan, Jim, 139
- Brookings Institute, 50
- Bull, Hedley, [8](#)
- Bush, George W.: preemption and, 66, 67, 96; signing statements of, [9](#), 124–25; truthiness of, 90; unitary executive doctrine of, [9](#), 123–27, 128
- Bush Doctrine, 51–52, 78, 98
- Butler, Judith, 131n8, 131n10; on indefinite detention, 127–28; petty sovereigns of, [12](#), 61–64; on sovereignty-governmentality, 58–61
- calculations, of risk, 31–32, 33–34, 37, 131n6; imagination in, 103, 104–6, 130n5; by seismologists, 162–63, 166n1
- “camp,” 137, 140, 143, 144, 145, 154n1
- Canada: *Caroline* case in, 45, 47; War on Terror of, [9](#), 103–5, 146
- Caroline* case, 45, 47
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 95, 97, 130n1, 138
- certainty, end of, 24–30
- Chechnya, 64, 67–68
- Cheney, Dick, 49, 85, 87
- CIA. *See* Central Intelligence Agency
- citizens, targeted killing of, 95, 97, 98, 138, 141–42, 144
- climate change, [3](#), 23–24, 32, 33, 161
- Clough, David, 43, 44–45
- Colbert, Stephen, 90
- Cold War, 160
- Collier, Stephen, 160
- Common Security and Defense Policy (EU), 66
- compression, of time/temporality, [13](#), 84–89
- Confessions* (Augustine), [1](#)
- conjecture, [5](#), 35, 100, 103, 130n5, 131n6; in Hersi case, 104–5; in indefinite detention, 127
- Connolly, William E., 91
- contingency: Machiavelli on, 21–23, 165–66; sovereignty taming, 19–21
- continuum of risk, 136
- control: of future, [2](#), [3](#), [4](#); of time/temporality, [2](#), [3](#), 17–38
- Cooper, Melinda, 74–75
- Copenhagen Criteria, 161
- counter law, [9](#), 69n7; exceptionalism in, 113–19; of FBI, 115, 118; financial blacklisting as, 115–16, 117; in India, 116–17, 118; no-fly watchlists as, 116; UN Security Council Resolution 1373 as, 114, 117; USA Patriot Act as, 114
- Daley, William, 140
- decisionism: in anticipatory measures, 135; in al-Awlaki killing, 139–41; in drone strikes, 139–40; in exceptionalism, 100, 108–10, 119–29; in indefinite detention, 127–28; of petty sovereigns, 119, 158, 162; preemption and, 122–23; in preemptive security, 119–29; Schmitt on, 109, 120–21, 122, 123, 124; sovereignty and, 98, 120–22; unitary executive doctrine in, 123–27, 128

- Declaration on Environment and Development* (UN), 34–35
- de Goede, Marieke, 112, 115, 117, 130n5
- deliberation: affective facts and, 91; in liberal democracy, 86; preemption lacking, 85–89
- democracy. *See* anti-democratic implications; liberal democracy
- Der Derian, James, 19
- Derrida, Jacques, 119; on autoimmunity, 14, 134, 148–53, 155n4, 155n5
- detention: preventive, in India, 67. *See also* indefinite detention
- Doty, Roxanne Lynn, 70n9
- drone strikes: decisionism in, 139–40; exceptionalism in, 154n1; executive authority in, 97, 98; by Obama administration, 95, 97, 130nn1–2, 137–45; as preemptive security, 138, 154n1. *See also* al-Awlaki, Anwar
- Due Process Clause, of Fifth Amendment, 95; al-Awlaki denied, 139–40, 141–42, 144; judicial process compared to, 97
- earthquake risk, 162–63, 166n1
- Earth Summit (UN), 34
- Ehrenberg, John, 126
- Elmer, Greg, 90
- The Empire Strikes Back* (film), 15
- environmental governance, 28, 163, 165; climate change in, 3, 23–24, 32, 33, 161
- Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium* (Seneca), 71
- Ericson, Richard, 113–14, 115, 117, 118, 136
- EU. *See* European Union
- Eurocentrism, 12, 41
- European Union (EU): blacklisting by, 9, 115–16; Common Security and Defense Policy of, 66; Copenhagen Criteria in, 161; PNR of, 142; precautionary principle of, 34–35, 82, 161–62
- Evans, Gareth, 46
- Ewald, François, 34, 36, 37
- exceptionalism: Agamben on, 4, 49, 99, 106, 108–9, 133; anticipatory measures linked to, 4–5, 7, 160; in al-Awlaki case, 98, 138–40; blacklisting as, 117; core elements of, 106–10; counter law in, 113–19; decisionism in, 100, 108–10, 119–29; defined, 4–5; of drone strikes, 154n1; executive authority in, 107; in indefinite detention, 127–28; juridical order suspended in, 100, 108–19; of Obama administration, 131n7; of petty sovereigns, 107, 131n8; politics of, 95–129; in [post-9/11](#) global security climate, 7, 159; preemption and, 98–100; preemptive security as, 110–29; Schmitt, on, 4, 99, 106–7; time/temporality in, 99–100, 158; unitary executive doctrine in, 123–27, 128; of War on Terror, 96
- executive authority: drone strikes decided by, 97, 98; exceptionalism of, 107; of Obama administration, 131n7; speculation in, 158
- expert/layman controversy, 32
- Fabian, Johannes, 2
- FBI. *See* Federal Bureau of Investigation
- fear, 80, 93n3
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI): counter law of, 115, 118; informants of, 9, 53–55, 69n6; no-fly watchlists and, 50
- Feingold, Russ, 87
- Fifth Amendment. *See* Due Process Clause, of Fifth Amendment
- financial blacklisting, 9, 115–16, 117; asset freezing and, 51, 110, 115
- financial crises, 3, 23–24; fiscal austerity doctrine after, 102
- financial regulation, 28, 165
- fiscal austerity, 102
- Fisher, Philip, 79–83, 90, 93n3
- flight watchlists, 9, 50, 111, 116, 126
- force of law, 109, 119
- fortuna*, 4, 21, 22, 23, 25, 41, 165
- Foucault, Michel, 56, 60
- future: abstract compared to imminent, 79–83; actual compared to virtual, 76–77; anticipatory measures for, 3, 4; control of, 2, 3, 4; imagination and, 100–106, 159, 165; in international

- relations, [6](#); in modernity, 24–25; in politics, 157–58, 163–64; [post-9/11](#) production of, 53; as present, [13](#), 74–79, 158, 164; prioritizing of, 75, 101–3, 106, 164; production of, 53; in transnational terrorism governance, 159
- Garland, David, [33](#)
- Gelev, Filip, 115, 117
- globalization: of preemption, 64–68; uncertainty linked to, 26–27, 48
- global security climate. *See* [post-9/11](#) global security climate
- governance of (in)security: anticipatory measures linked to, [7](#); preemption linked to, [7](#); trends in, 28
- Graham, Stephen, 110
- Grotius, Hugo, 43–45, 47
- Guantánamo Bay, 143
- Gunnell, John, [3](#)
- gut feelings, [13](#), 74, 89–91, 92, 103, 158
- Habibov, Abror, 53
- Hahn, Robert, 162
- Heisenberg, Werner, 77
- Hersi, Mohamed, [9](#), 103–5, 111, 146
- High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change (UN), 45–46, 47
- Hobbes, Thomas, 20, 60, 93n3
- Holder, Eric, [9](#), [95–98](#), 99, 130n1, 131n7
- Homeland Security, [40](#)
- Honig, Bonnie, [2](#)
- Human Rights Watch, 54, 69n6
- Hume, David, 80
- Hussein, Saddam, 49, 77, 85, 93n2
- Hutchings, Kimberly, [1](#)
- imagination: in anticipatory measures, 135; future and, 100–106, 159, 165; in Hersi case, 104–5, 111; for knowledge, 103, 130n5; in sovereignty, 105–6, 120
- imminence: affect and, [13](#), 78–84; in [post-9/11](#) global security climate, 97; preemption and, 81–84
- imminent future, abstract compared to, 79–83
- immunizing gesture, 149–50, 151
- indefinite detention, 51, 78, 147; decisionism and exceptionalism in, 127–28; by petty sovereigns, 127; [post-9/11](#), [9](#); as preemption, 110, 127–28, 131n10
- India, [9](#), 64; counter law in, 116–17, 118; preemptive security in, 67–68
- informants, FBI, [9](#), 53–55, 69n6
- international law: *Caroline* case in, 45, 47; Grotius on, 43–45, 47; preemption and, [12](#), 43–48, 56, 69n3; War on Terror and, 41–56
- international relations (IR): Bull on, [8](#); future and time/temporality in, [6](#)
- Iraq War, 77–78, 93n2, 98
- Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), 54
- Jackson, Robert, 38n1
- James, Henry, 71
- Johnson, Samuel, 30
- judicial process, due process compared to, 97
- Juraboev, Abdurasul, 53
- juridical order, suspension of: in anticipatory measures, 135; in al-Awlaki killing, 138–39; counter law in, 113–19; exceptionalism and, 100, 108–19; imagination, speculation and conjecture in, 112; in preemptive security, 111–19
- Kant, Immanuel, [1](#)
- Keynes, John Maynard, 33
- Killing Program, 95, 97, 130n1, 138
- knowledge: imagination for, 103, 104–6, 130n5; risk, 31–32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 51
- Lakoff, Andrew, 160
- law. *See* counter law; international law; juridical order, suspension of
- Leese, Matthias, 75, 142
- liberal democracy: anticipatory measures and, [4](#), [5](#), [12](#), 158, 159–63; autoimmunity in, 155n5; deliberation in, 86; precaution and, 36–37
- Luhmann, Niklas, [17](#), [24](#)

- Machiavelli, Niccolo, 28, 71; on contingency and time/temporality, 21–23, 165–66; *fortuna* of, 4, 21, 22, 23, 25, 41, 165
- Mackenzie, William Lyon, 45
- MacNab, Allan, 45
- Marcus Aurelius, 15
- Massey, Doreen, 10
- Massumi, Brian, 59, 82, 85, 93n4; on affective facts, 90, 91, 92; on preemption, 53, 75–76
- Mate, Manoj, 118
- medical autoimmunity, 149, 152, 155n3
- Meditations* (Marcus Aurelius), 15
- memory, 93n6
- Menezes, Jean Charles de, 9, 87–90, 146, 147
- Merriam-Webster dictionary, 90
- Metahistory* (White), 2
- Miller, Peter, 41, 56–58, 73
- Minutemen militia groups, 70n9
- modernity: acceleration in, 3, 26, 27, 29; future in, 24–25; spatial domain compared to time in, 29; time/temporality in, 27, 29
- Naseemullah, Adnan, 118
- Nassehi, Armin, 27
- National Investigation Agency Act (NIA), 67, 116, 117
- National Security Strategy* (US), 82, 85, 98, 130n3, 131n9
- natural disaster management, 28
- Nelson, Scott, 18, 21
- neuroticism, 49
- Newton, Isaac, 26
- NIA. *See* National Investigation Agency Act
- Niagara River, 45
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 93n4
- no-fly watchlists, 9, 50, 111, 116, 126
- normative foundations, of sovereignty, 11, 19–24
- Nyers, Peter, 93n4
- Obama administration: drones, targeted killings and, 95, 97, 130nn1–2, 137–45; executive authority, exceptionalism and, 131n7; predictive assessments of, 9, 50; watchlists of, 9, 50, 111, 116, 126
- O'Malley, Pat, 31
- On the Duty of Man and Citizen According to Natural Law* (Pufendorf), 44
- On the Law of War and Peace* (Grotius), 43–44
- Opel, Andy, 90
- “Operation Kratos,” 88
- Opitz, Sven, 24, 86
- Panetta, Leon, 97
- passenger name record (PNR), 142
- passions. *See* affect
- petty sovereigns, 12, 70n9, 111–12, 162; decisionism of, 119, 158, 162; exceptionalism of, 107, 131n8; indefinite detention by, 127; preemption by, 105, 131n10; in preemptive security agency-structure, 61–64; RCMP as, 105; speculation by, 158; temporal manipulations of, 78
- Philosophy in a Time of Terror* (Derrida), 149–50
- PNR. *See* passenger name record
- Pocock, J. G. A., 21–22
- Political Philosophy and Time* (Gunnell), 3
- political rationality, 4; preemption as, 9, 13, 73, 75, 99–100, 101, 133; of preemptive security, 56–59, 62, 145
- Political Theology* (Schmitt), 107
- politics: affective, 89–91; end of certainty in, 24–30; future in, 157–58, 163–64; of risk, 32–33; spatial domain compared to time in, 3–4; temporal lens for, 2–8, 78, 129, 157, 163–64
- Politics and Vision* (Wolin), 3
- post-9/11 global security climate: abstract future in, 81; anticipatory measures in, 51–52; deliberation lacking in, 87–89; exceptionalism in, 7, 159; FBI's counterterrorism strategies in, 9, 53–55; imminence in, 97; indefinite detention strategy of, 9; in international law, 41–56; *National Security Strategy* in,

- Time and Social Theory* (Adam), [2](#)  
*Time and the Other* (Fabian), [2](#)  
 “time-slips,” [77](#), [79](#), [82](#)  
 time/temporality: compression of, [13](#),  
   84–89; control of, [2](#), [3](#), [17](#)–[38](#); in  
   exceptionalism, [99](#)–[100](#), [158](#);  
   Homeland Security associated with, [40](#);  
   in international relations, [6](#); Machiavelli  
   on, [21](#)–[23](#), [165](#)–[66](#); in modernity, [27](#),  
   [29](#); in [post-9/11](#) global security climate,  
   [51](#), [101](#); in preemption, [46](#)–[47](#), [73](#)–[74](#),  
   [99](#)–[101](#); risk and precaution linked to,  
   [37](#)–[38](#); risk in, [29](#)–[30](#); scholarly trends  
   in, [2](#)–[3](#); social world tied to, [17](#); sover-  
   eignty governing, [18](#)–[24](#); spatial  
   domain compared to, [3](#)–[4](#), [10](#)–[11](#),  
   [24](#)–[25](#), [29](#); spatial domain reoriented to,  
   [37](#)–[38](#), [40](#); subjectivity of, [1](#)–[2](#); theories  
   of, [1](#)–[2](#); “time-slips” in, [77](#), [79](#), [82](#)  
 torture, [124](#)  
 transnational terrorism, [3](#), [23](#)–[24](#), [158](#);  
   future in governing, [159](#); [post-9/11](#)  
   narrative of, [5](#)–[6](#), [39](#)–[40](#)  
 transtemporal, [77](#)  
 trauma, [93n6](#)  
 truthiness, [90](#)  
 Turing, Alan, [131n6](#)
- UAPA. *See* Unlawful Activities Prevention  
 Act  
 UK. *See* United Kingdom  
 UN. *See* United Nations
- uncertainty: acceleration linked to, [3](#), [26](#),  
   [27](#), [29](#); as basis compared to imped-  
   iment, [12](#), [41](#), [42](#), [49](#), [73](#), [163](#);  
   globalization linked to, [26](#)–[27](#), [48](#); in  
   [post-9/11](#) global security climate,  
   [48](#)–[51](#), [53](#); preemption and, [43](#)–[47](#);  
   risk’s relationship to, [32](#)–[33](#); society’s  
   production of, [33](#)–[34](#)  
 unitary executive doctrine, [9](#); in al-Awlaki  
   killing, [139](#); in decisionism, [123](#)–[27](#),  
   [128](#)
- United Kingdom (UK): Anti-terrorism,  
 Crime and Security Act of, [67](#); and  
 “Operation Kratos,” [88](#); Stockwell  
 station of, [9](#), [87](#)–[90](#), [146](#), [147](#)
- United Nations (UN): *Declaration on Envi-  
 ronment and Development*, [34](#)–[35](#);  
 High Level Panel on Threats, Chal-  
 lenges, and Change of, [45](#)–[46](#), [47](#); on  
 preemption, [45](#)–[46](#), [69n4](#); Security  
 Council Resolution 1373 of, [9](#), [114](#), [117](#)
- United States (US): *National Security  
 Strategy* of, [82](#), [85](#), [98](#), [130n3](#), [131n9](#);  
 USA PATRIOT Act of, [9](#), [67](#), [87](#), [114](#).  
*See also* Bush, George W.; drone  
 strikes; Obama administration  
*United States v. Cromitie*, [54](#)  
 Unlawful Activities Prevention Act  
 (UAPA), [67](#), [116](#), [117](#)  
 urban planning, [28](#)  
 US. *See* United States  
 USA PATRIOT Act, [9](#), [67](#), [87](#), [114](#)
- van Munster, Rens, [59](#), [103](#), [130n5](#)  
 Vaughan-Williams, Nick, [88](#)  
*The Vehement Passions* (Fisher), [79](#)  
*Venus and Adonis* (Shakespeare), [15](#)  
 violence, potential, [147](#)–[48](#), [151](#), [153](#)  
 Virilio, Paul, [27](#), [49](#), [147](#)  
 virtual, actual compared to, [76](#)–[77](#)  
 vital systems security, [160](#)
- Walker, R. B. J., [22](#)–[23](#), [27](#), [38n1](#)  
 War on Terror: of Canada, [9](#), [103](#)–[5](#), [146](#);  
   exceptionalism in, [96](#); international law  
   and, [41](#)–[56](#); precaution and, [37](#);  
   preemption and temporal manipulations  
   in, [78](#); preemption in, [96](#), [98](#)–[99](#),  
   [130n3](#), [131n9](#), [157](#)  
 watchlists, [9](#), [50](#), [111](#), [116](#), [126](#)  
 weapons of mass destruction (WMD), [77](#),  
   [85](#), [93n2](#)  
 Webster, Daniel, [45](#)  
 Werner, Wouter, [114](#), [117](#)  
 White, Hayden, [2](#)  
 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, [131n6](#)  
 WMD. *See* weapons of mass destruction  
 Wolin, Sheldon, [3](#), [85](#), [86](#)
- Yemen. *See* al-Awlaki, Anwar  
 Yoda, [15](#)