The Impact of stress on the British statesmen of the July Crisis.

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Michael Thomas Smithson

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Supervisors: Daniel Hucker, Spencer Mawby, John Young

School of History, Faculty of Arts

University of Nottingham

Abstract

The July Crisis of 1914 was the diplomatic prelude to the outbreak of the First World War. Such is the significance of the First World War in shaping modern European history, the July Crisis has received a significant amount of scholarly attention since its outbreak. Historians have often sought to find the cause of the wars outbreak, whether it be through long or short-term causes such as militarism, nationalism, or societal factors. However, this thesis is focused not on the causes of the war, but rather examining the impact of stress on the British statesmen during the July Crisis. This means, in practice, how stress, which was omnipresent throughout the latter stages of the crisis, influenced individuals and events with the British Government. It will focus on key events such as the split within the Cabinet over whether to intervene in the upcoming European war, the curious behaviour of the Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, as well as how some of the Cabinet members used the stress of crisis to exploit their colleagues and further their own aims. To do so, this thesis will employ an interdisciplinary methodology, similar to that used within the history of emotions. In practice, this will involve the application of findings from cognitive neuroscience into the impact stress has upon humans more generally, and then applying it to historical figures using available primary evidence. In this case, the members of the British Government of 1914. It is hoped that by employing an interdisciplinary approach, new questions will arise on the July Crisis, and diplomatic crises more generally.

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Introduction

Following the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo, on the 28 June 1914, a diplomatic crisis ensued among the Great Powers of Europe that led to the outbreak of the First World War. It was the, now, well-known prelude, or spark, that caused the outbreak of the First World War. This event has since become known as the *July Crisis*. The First World War would cost millions of lives and irrevocably change European society forever. As such, it has been referred to as 'the great seminal catastrophe of the twentieth century.'[1] No side that entered the conflict left it unscathed. The Austro-Hungarians, led by the Habsburg dynasty, saw the accelerated collapse and break up of their empire into several nation states due to defeat on the battlefield.[2] The French, though victorious, suffered irreversible demographic decline following the bloody battles on the Western Front.[3] Russia's participation in the war led to the fall of the Romanov dynasty, the Bolshevik Revolution and subsequent civil war, and the rise of the Soviet Union.[4] The Second German Reich was toppled, and the Weimar Republic replaced Prussian autocracy.[5] The British Empire, though victorious, was financially ruined, while the subsequent rise of the Labour Party and demise of the Liberals altered the British political landscape forever.[6]

Because of the vast loss of life and far-reaching consequences of the war, the study of its origins of has resulted in one of the most extensive and complex historiographies within the field of diplomatic history. Such is the extent of the of the secondary literature available that historians have taken to producing detailed accounts that map the historiography of the 'great debate'.[7] Historian James Joll, in 1983, labelled the list of books and articles as

1 George F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismark's European Order: Franco-Russian Relations 1875-1890* (1979), 3.

2 Manfried Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-1918* (2014), 1013-1018. Dalibor Rohac, "Why Did the Austro-Hungarian Empire Collapse? A Public Choice Perspective", *Constitutional political economy* 20.2 (2009): 160–176. Michał Baczkowski, "The Disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Army in 1918", *Folia historica Cracoviensia* 25.2 (2019): 69–87.

3 F.Héran, "Lost generations: The demographic impact of the Great War", *Population & Societies*, No 510(4) (2014), 1-4.

4 Joshua A Sanborn, *Imperial Apocalypse: The Great War and the Destruction of the Russian Empire, The Greater War* (2014), 243-262.

5 Eric D.Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (2018), 7-39.

6 Nicholas Crafts, *Walking wounded: The British economy in the aftermath of World War* I, 27 Aug 2014. www.cepr.org/voxeu/columns/walking-wounded-british-economy-aftermath-world-war-i., Gordon Phillips, *The Rise of the Labour Party, 1893–1931* (1992), 26-54.

7 See Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and consensus* (2002). John W. Langdon, *July 1914: The Long Debate 1918-1990* (1991). Annika Mombauer, "Guilt or responsibility? The hundred-year debate on the origins of World War I", *Central European History*, Vol.48 (2015) 541-64. William Mulligan, The Historiography of the Origins of the First World War, *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, and "The trial continues: new directions in the study of the origins of the First World War", *English Historical Review*, Vol. CXXIX, No.538 (2014), 639-66. Keith Neilson, "1914: The German War?", *European History Quarterly*, (July 2014) Vol.44(3), 395-418.

'apparently endless', and that it would 'take a lifetime to read them all'.[8] It is testament to the intricacies and nuances of the subject that so much scholarly work has been produced. Nonetheless, whereas in other European capitals the study of the July crisis more specifically has on the complex interaction between either a monarch or elected government and the heads of the military, from a British perspective the July Crisis was primarily played out within the Cabinet of the Asquith Government. To be sure, there were other actors, outside of Cabinet, who played some part in the crisis, as will be examined later in this thesis. However, it was to be primarily the nineteen men who sat around the Cabinet room table, almost in perpetuity, in late-July and early-August 1914 that would be responsible for the decision as to how to proceed during the unfolding diplomatic crisis that was engulfing all of the major European capitals.

It is with these nineteen men and their experience of the July Crisis, that this thesis is focused upon. Of course, there were groups and individuals outside of Cabinet that sought to influence events, as will subsequently touched upon and later examined. Nevertheless, the nature of Cabinet Government in Britain meant that the decision making and responsibility for the July Crisis fell primarily upon the Asquith Cabinet. The nation expected them, as any nation does of its leadership, to maintain a stiff upper lip and to deal with this crisis in a rational and calculating manner. Thus these men were expected to perform at their best under extreme duress, in order to achieve the most beneficial outcome for the people of Britain. However, what is so often forgotten during such crises is that these were nineteen human beings. In reality, these men were just as subject to the range of psychological and physiological factors that occur as a result of stress as we all are. Stress is, as chapter one will demonstrate, so often part of a modern, everyday life. Even daily strains faced by many, such as high workload or long working hours, sleep deprivation, concerns about one's health, dietary concerns, or even a less than harmonious personal life, do not simply disappear during times of crisis. However, this thesis is primarily concerned with the extreme stress, that was brought on and accentuated by the July Crisis, that the British statesmen faced.

Among these men, some immediately recognisable names are present. Herbert Henry Asquith, the Prime Minister, had been in power for around six years prior to the July Crisis, and had been a well-known figure in British politics for much longer. Consequently, several biographical works on Asquith exist. These works include those of Roy Jenkins and

8 James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (1984), preface x.

Stephen Koss, as well as the more recent works of Stephen Bates and Markham Lester.[9] Second to Asquith in terms of name recognition, at the time, was the Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey. Grey had been in his post even longer than Asquith, around nine years, and was a well-respected figure across the benches of the House of Commons. Though fewer biographical works exist on Grey, the two most significant are Grey's own autobiography, as well as Thomas Otte's recent, detailed account of Grey's life.[10] Two other instantly identifiable names are David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. Lloyd George, who at the time held the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer, was the charismatic and firebrand politician who would later usurp Asquith as Prime Minister and lead Britain in the peace talks of 1919. Significant biographical works include those by Stephen Constantine and Roy Hattersley, as well as Lloyd George's own memoirs.[11] Lloyd George's then protege was the First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill, who was just thirty-nine years old at the time of the crisis. A world-renowned figure whose image and words are still recognisable to so many globally, Churchill would later go on to become Prime Minister twice, as well as one of the most polarising figures in international history. Understandably, Churchill's life has resulted in a vast historiography of its own. The most thorough being the 28 volumes by Churchill and Martin Gilbert, which provides enormous detail on his life and career. Included in this is the well-known *The World Crisis*, which focuses on the years before and during the Great War.[12]

Of the remainder of the Cabinet were other perhaps not instantly recognisable figures to the general public, but well-known among historians. These included Herbert Samuel, then President of the Local Government Board and a relatively junior minister at the time of the July Crisis, who would later be influential in the establishment of the state of Israel.[13] The Cabinet also contained several influential, experienced, and respected politicians such as Reginald McKenna, who oversaw the construction of the dreadnought battleships in the years before the Great War.[14] Viscount Morley, who was seen as the last surviving link to Gladstone.[15] Richard Haldane, who was instrumental in ensuring that crucial reforms to the British army, before the war, were carried out.[16] John Burns, one of the first working-

9 Roy Jenkins, *Asquith* (1964). Stephen Koss, *Asquith* (1985). Stephen Bates, *H. H. Asquith* (2006). Markham Lester, *H. H. Asquith: The Last of the Romans* (2019).

10 Lord Grey, Viscount of Fallodon, *Twenty Five Years 1892–1916* (1925). T.G. Otte, *Statesman of Europe: A Life of Sir Edward Grey* (2019).

11 Stephen Constantine, *Lloyd George* (1992). Roy Hattersley, *David Lloyd George : The Great Outsider* (2010). David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George Vol. 1 and 2* (1933).

12 Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911-1918* (2007). The most relevant to this study being Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A life* (2000).

13 See Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs* (1945). Bernard Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel: A political Life* (1992).

14 Martin Farr, *Reginald McKenna 1863-1916: Financier Among Statesmen* (2007).

15 D. A. Hamer, *John Morley: Liberal Intellectual in Politics* (1968).

16 John Campbell, *Haldane: The forgotten Statesman who shaped modern Britain* (2020).

class politicians elected to Westminster.[17] Sir John Simon, who would later be the Foreign Secretary during Hitler's early years in power.[18] The Liberal Cabinet of 1914 contained much of the past, present, and future of not only the Liberal Party, but also British politics.
It was upon the men of this Cabinet that the most significant decision in British political history, to date, fell upon. Over the course of just under two weeks, the responsibility as to whether Britain was to enter a general European war was to be decided by them. The magnitude and importance of the responsibility that weighed down on them was undoubtedly not lost upon them. Britain had not been at war with a European power since the Crimean War, nearly sixty years before. Furthermore, a general European war had not taken place since the Napoleonic Wars nearly a century beforehand. More widely, the statesmen of Europe, despite the bluster of the generals, viewed war as 'obsolete', with international courts being viewed as a more efficient way to manage disputes.[19]And, yet, the decision they faced was not simply a question of whether or not to enter a European war. It was one which was incredibly complex, with several mitigating factors to be considered. Moreover, they faced pressure from a multitude of different sources.

Keith Wilson states that considerable pressure from the opposition benches was present.[20] Douglas Newton, in his work *Darkest Days*, goes into great detail on the pressure brought upon the government from the Liberal's own backbenches.[21] There was the difficult task of maintaining popularity amongst the public, especially in an age when the rise of the newspaper meant that public opinion could swing from one side to the other. Lloyd George being the prime example of this, with his connections to public opinion through newspaper barons, with his colleague Harcourt noting that he oscillated almost daily, due to swings in public swings.[22] All of these factors are noted as weighing down on the statesmen throughout the crisis. To compound all of these issues, there were the complexities of decades of Great Power politics that the statesmen had to contend with. For example, Wilson highlights the importance of maintaining Russia as an ally, and so joining the war as a way to protect British interests India.[23] Zara Steiner and Keith Neilson both emphasise the significance of maintaining continuity of over a decade of commitment to

17 William Kent, *John Burns: Labour's lost leader* (1950).
18 Viscount Simon, *Retrospect: The memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Viscount Simon* (1952). C. E. Bechoffer Roberts, *Sir John Simon: Being an Account of the Life And Career of John Allesbrook Simon* (1938).
19 Margaret MacMillan, *The Road to 1914: The war that ended peace* (2014), introduction xxxii.
20 Keith M. Wilson, *Policy of Entente: Essays on the determinants of British foreign policy, 1904-1914* (1985), 146-147. Douglas Newton, *The Darkest Days* (2014) 125-133.
21 Douglas Newton, *The Darkest Days,* 95-106.
22 John W. Young, "Lewis Harcourt's Journal of the 1914 War Crisis", *The International History Review*, (2018) VOL. 40, NO. 2, 436–455.
23 Keith M. Wilson, *Decisions For War 1914* (1995), 184-186.

the Entente with France.[24] This is not even to mention the significance of Belgium neutrality being violated by Germany, which will be examined in detail later. Finally, not only would they have to deal with the external factors surrounding them, they would also have to deal with the internal situation within Cabinet itself. The Cabinet was deeply divided over whether or not to intervene in a European war, with several resignations being handed in. This division, Newton argues, was something totally unique to the British experience of the crisis.[25]

Even immediately following the outbreak of the First World War a scholarly conflict between state-funded historians to ascertain *war guilt* and responsibility for the war's outbreak emerged. The focus on Britain's role in the July Crisis received significant attention from British historians, who made use of access to the British diplomatic dispatches and Cabinet notes that were first released in the British *Blue Book*, and later made more readily available for the publication of *British Documents on the Origins of the War*.[26] However, a key aim of these publications was to assign war guilt to the Central Powers and thus absolve Britain of any responsibility for the war's outbreak. Accordingly, the archival evidence was presented in such a way as to best prove the guilt of the Central Powers for the war's outbreak. Therefore, although the works made use of access to archival material, albeit restricted access, there was a distinctly political and patriotic slant to the works that were produced.[27] Arguably, this dilutes the value of these studies when compared with more balanced, modern interpretations of the war's outbreak..[28]

It was not only historians who sought to present their views on the events of the July Crisis. Many of those who were directly involved, predominantly the politicians and diplomats of the inner circles of power, published memoirs that gave accounts on the

24 Zara Steiner and Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (2003), 257.

25 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 5.

26 Her Majesty's Stationary Office (printed by Harmison and Sons), *Great Britain and the European Crisis: The Blue Book* (1914). For works that made use of the *coloured books* (so-called, because each state named there's a different colour), see E. Baker et al, *Why We Are at War* (1914). E. Baker, *Britain's Reasons for Going to War* (1915). J.W Headlam-Morley, *The History of 12 Days* (1915) and *The German Chancellor and the Outbreak of War* (1917). Gilbert Murray, *The Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey 1906-1915* (1915). G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperely, *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914: 11 volumes* (1926-1938).

27 This phenomenon was not uncommon throughout Europe at the time, as similar works were published throughout (with the exception of Soviet Russia, that sought to use the Tsarist regimes archives in order to show that imperialism had caused the war). With the loss of millions of lives during the conflict, economic ruin, and the controversial *War Guilt* clause in the Versailles Treaty as a major part of the need to pay reparations, it is clear that a balanced assessment of the outbreak of the war was a difficult task to undertake politically. See Mombauer, *Controversies and Consensus*, 21-78 for a detailed explanation.

28 Not all of the works during this period were motivated by patriotism. Some of the earliest, revisionist works included E. D. Morel, *Truth and the War* (1916). Morel was a Liberal MP who had resigned following the July Crisis, and spent the following years arguing against German war guilt, blaming secret diplomacy and alliances for the outbreak of the war.

details of the July Crisis and the reasons for the outbreak of war. From a British perspective, the most notable publications were those of Herbert Asquith, David Lloyd George, Sir Edward Grey and Prince Lichnowsky.[29] In what became known as the *battle of the memoirs*, those directly involved attempted to, much like historians, admonish or assign blame for the outbreak of the war. Yet, for all the insight and knowledge gained from these personal accounts, their value to understanding the British decision for war in 1914 is limited, mainly due to their personal agendas obscuring and extending true events to fit their own self-serving narratives of the crisis.[30] For example, Lloyd George was particularly scathing of Grey's handling of the crisis and his general suitability for his role as Foreign Secretary.[31] German politicians such as former Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg and Foreign Minister von Jagow were also scathing of Britain and Grey.[32] In both cases, an element of self-preservation appears to be present, as well as a shifting of blame. It is hardly surprising, considering the millions of lives that were lost during the war, that politicians would seek to play the blame game and in the process rescue or prolong their careers. Nevertheless, despite the lack of access to the extensive primary source material available to their successors, and despite the obvious limitations with regards objectivity, these early Twentieth century works still have some influence to the current day and are often quoted by modern historians.

Of all the aforementioned factors that have been the focus of historians since the war's outbreak, little attempt has been made to explore more human factors. For example, John Young's work on the relationship between emotions and the British decision for war, stands alone as the only substantial piece that seeks to humanise the statesmen of 1914.[33] However, this is a more general theme within diplomatic history. Human factors, such as emotions, are often brushed aside, or seen as aberrations or temporary states that the actors experienced but were, in the end, subservient to strategic or political concerns. This is not to say that forays into examining factors away from the comfort of archival evidence. The works of Frank Costigliola and Barbara Keys have been influential in humanising

29 Herbert Henry Asquith, *Memories and Reflections* (1928), 2 volumes. David Lloyd George, *War Diaries* (1933). volume 1. Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-five Years: 1892-1916* (1925). Karl Max Lichnowsky, *My Mission to London 1912-1914* (1914) and *Heading for the Abyss: Reminisces* (1928).

30 For a study concerning not only the politician's and historian's views, but also those of the press and their influence on the great debate, see Nathan N. Orgill, 'Reawakening the Nation', *Journalism Studies*, (2016) 17:4, 517-531.

31 Lloyd George, *War Diaries*, 57-60.

32 Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, *Bethrachtungen zum Weltkrieg* (1919), 2 volumes. Gottlieb von Jagow, *Ursachen und Ausbruch des Weltkrieges* (1919) and *England und der kriegsausbruch* (1925). Both Bethmann-Hollweg and von Jagow added to the debate on Grey, and subsequently raised the contention that if Britain had asserted its true intentions from the outset of the July Crisis, then this could have aborted the outbreak of war.

33 John W. Young, "Emotions and the British Government's Decision for War in 1914", *Diplomacy and statecraft*,29.4 (2018): 543–564.

historical figures, as well as demonstrating that how emotion impacted upon decision makers in positions of power.[34] There have also, been a number of notable studies have been produced that focus on the issues of gender and sexuality within diplomacy, and their influence on the conduct and decision-making of policy makers.[35] By seeking to remove the separation between the 'public and the private' that 'have long defined' diplomatic history discourse and the field itself, these historians have attempted to extend the boundaries of what can be included in a diplomatic history study.[36] Nevertheless, even during the 1990's and into the 21st century, diplomatic historians have balked at a potential diversification of approach that could took the discipline away from its roots.[37] During a conference that discussed the significance of the recent work of Emily Rosenberg, Bruce Kuklick intransigently remarked that it was 'intellectual junk, the mental equivalent to eating at McDonald's', and that it was 'emblematic of a scholarly politics … founded on the quest for personal fulfilment.'[38] This example, although somewhat extreme, does help to illustrate the reluctance of some diplomatic historians to entertain the irrational.

Despite the increasingly recognised entanglement and enmeshment within modern society of the private and the public spheres, as well as emotions and decision-making, diplomatic history remains somewhat aloof. The study of the July Crisis remains particularly focused on portraying those involved as rational actors. Meaning, that they were seemingly able to circumvent the human experience and make their decisions based purely on strategic considerations. For example, Wilson explains away the lack of resignations from Cabinet at protest to Britain's entry into the war as being due to the fact that we 'dealing, after all, with professional politicians.'[39] Steiner and Neilson make little mention of emotions, stating that the decision for war was made under the constraints of the 'broader political, bureaucratic and military frameworks which restricted the number of options when the

34 For example, see F. Costigliola, "I React Intensely to Everything": Russia and the Frustrated Emotions of George F. Kennan, 1933–1958. *The Journal of American History*, 102(4),(2016) 1075–1101. F. Costigliola, "I had come as a friend": Emotion, culture, and ambiguity in the formation of the cold war, 1943-45. *Cold War History*, 1(1), (2000) 103–128. B. Keys & C. Yorke, Personal and Political Emotions in the Mind of the Diplomat. *Political Psychology*, 40(6), (2019) 1235–1249.

35 For a review of several significant studies of the relations between decision-making, emotion, sexuality and gender in political histories, see Robert Dean, "The Personal and the Political: Gender and Sexuality in Diplomatic History", *Diplomatic History*, Volume 36, Issue 4, (September 2012), 763–767.

36 Emily S. Rosenberg, "'Foreign Affairs' After World War II: Connecting Sexual and International Politics", *Diplomatic History* 18 (1994): 60.

37 Thomas Zeiler has expressed fears that by increasing diversification of methodologies diplomatic historians run the risk of diplomatic history losing sight of itself, and that scholars may lose the essence of the field. See Thomas W. Zeiler, 'The Diplomatic History Bandwagon: A State of the Field', *The Journal of American History*, 1 March 2009, Vol.95(4), 1053. For a critique of Zeiler, that sees merit in an interdisciplinary approach, see Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, "What Bandwagon? Diplomatic History Today", *The Journal of American History*, 95, no. 4 (2009): 1083-86.

38 Laura McEnaney, "Personal, Political, and International: A Reflection on Diplomacy and Methodology", *Diplomatic History*, Volume 36, Issue 4, September 2012, 769.

39 Wilson, *Policy of Entente*, 146-147.

moment for decision came.[40] However, some historians do make mention of emotional or physical factors. For example, Douglas Newton documents that emotions were running high on the evening of 2 August, during a Cabinet meeting, and that the participants were physically exhausted.[41] Similarly, Christopher Clark, in *Sleepwalkers*, notes that by the 1 August Grey was 'under extreme pressure', and 'was getting very little sleep'.[42] Nevertheless, as both of their analyses of the crisis are from a diplomatic historians standpoint, such observations are made more for the purpose of setting a scene in the readers mind, than actually examining how physical or emotional factors may have been affecting the making of policy.

Another explanation for the focus on the rational is the contextual framing of the debate on the war's origin and outbreak. From the moment the First World War began, and right up until the modern day, historians have often fallen into the trap of assigning blame to a single nation state for its outbreak. In part, this is due to the initial debates on the subject that took place immediately after the war's conclusion, within the politically and morally charged atmosphere of the time. The question of war guilt was the foundation of the Treaty of Versailles.[43] This was accentuated in the 1920's, as the questions of Germany paying reparations frequently arose from both sides.[44] Furthermore, the huge loss of life, on all sides, increased pressure for a guilty party to be found.[45] Therefore, the origins of the war's outbreak are often presented as if they were a court case being presented against a defendant.[46] This, in turn, leads to a predisposition of over-emphasising the rational over the irrational or emotional, as it can be used to strengthen the case against an accused. Just as in a court of law, the *smoking gun*, rational factors or archival evidence, help prove the guilt of the accused. Intangibles, such as emotion, are perceived as vague and lacking in weight.[47] Curiously, the over reliance on the rational does not extend to collective memory of the war itself. When juxtaposing the collective memorisation of the First World

40 Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and the Origins*, 257.

41 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 187-189.

42 Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers : How Europe Went to War in 1914* (2013), 270.

43 For detailed accounts of the early debates, see Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and consensus* (2002) 33-69. And, John W. Langdon, *July 1914: The Long Debate 1918-1990* (1991).

44 Mombauer, *Controversies and consensus*, 21-104.

45 Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory*, *Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (1995), 2. Indeed, to Michael Gove, the former education secretary (2010-2014), the origins of the First World War are quite simple and rational. Michael Gove, "Why Does the Left Insist on Belittling True British Heroes?" *Daily Mail*, January 2, 2014.

46 William Mulligan "The trial continues: new directions in the study of the origins of the First World War", *English Historical Review*, 2014, Vol. CXXIX, No.538, 639-66.

47 Although the debate about what constitutes *rationality* in a legal system continues, its importance as an underpinning fundamental of a legal system is more certain. For a presentation of the role of rationality in law, and its philosophical foundations, see Ronald J. Allen, "Taming complexity: rationality, the law of evidence and the nature of the legal system", *Law, Probability and Risk*, 2013, 12, 99–113.

War with a study of the origins, there is a clear difference in the presence of emotive language in the former. [48]

A prime example of the need to find a smoking gun are the works of Fritz Fischer.[49] In 1961 Fischer published his *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, which was highly critical of German policy before and during the war, assigning blame for its outbreak to the policy makers in Berlin.[50] This caused considerable anger amongst conservative German politicians, who were actively seeking to admonish Germany of responsibility for the First World Wars outbreak, as a means of reintegrating Germany into the global order.[51] Annika Mombauer states that because Fischer scoured the archives of East and West Germany so extensively, and that because his arguments were based on so much primary evidence, his arguments carried extra weight and 'shattered accepted images'.[52] Fischer, to this day, remains a key figure in any debate on the wars origins or the July Crisis. Paul Kennedy stated that it was that it is 'flaccid' to avoid assigning blame to one group or another, for the war's outbreak.[53] However, the centennial releases have shown that there are tentative steps taken away from the aforementioned approaches, in that the study of the war's origins doesn't need to focus on finding a guilty party. Take, for example, Christopher Clark's *Sleepwalkers*. Of all the centennial releases, Clark's work accumulated the most accolades and was the best-selling of the centennial releases in Germany.[54] Although Clark, as with Fischer, is praised for his scouring of primary sources to support his work, his argument contends that there was no one guilty party.[55] The decision makers in Europe were, as Clark puts it, the protagonists of 1914 were 'sleepwalkers, watchful but unseeing, haunted by dreams, yet blind to the reality of the horror they were about to bring into the world'.[56]

48 Dissemination of emotive language to describe the conflict itself has, seemingly, reached the UK schooling system. For a detailed analysis of the teaching in UK schools on the events of the First World War itself, and how emotional language is present in its teaching (although, the author does criticise a lack of diversity in other areas of the wars teaching such as race and gender), see Catriona Pennell, *History & Memory*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016), 36-70. Alan Kramer, within in his study of the cultural trauma of the First World War, uses frequent examples of strong, emotive language that have been employed in explaining its conduct, since it's outbreak. See Alan Kramer, 'The First World War as Cultural Trauma', within *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (2010), ed. R. J. B. Bosworth. For a detailed presentation of collective memorisation of the First World War, see Bart Ziino, *Remembering the First World War* (2015).

49 Fritz Fischer, War of Illusions : German Policies from 1911 to 1914 (1975) (English translation).

50 Jennifer Jenkins, "Fritz Fischer's 'Programme for Revolution': Implications for a Global History of Germany in the First World War." *Journal of contemporary history* 48.2 (2013): 397–417.

51 Mombauer, *Controversies and Consensus*, 133-138.

52 Ibid, 127-131.

53 Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism* (1980), 467.

54 Ralph Menning, "Christopher Clark. The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914", *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods*, 2014: 109.

55 Gordon Martel, "The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914", *The American historical review*, 2015: 951–953.

56 Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, 283.

The need to assign blame has somewhat subsided. A move away from treating archival sources as a 'smoking gun', is still lacking. The statesmen of the July Crisis are often portrayed as one-dimensional characters, despite the wealth of readily available biographical sources. This is an issue Margaret MacMillan flagged in her work on the July Crisis.[57] One way to address this issue, is to recognise and accept that the actors of the July Crisis were human, subject to all of the psychological and biological processes that human beings experience. Emotions are, and always have been, a constant within the human experience. William Reddy, a key figure in the field of the history of emotion, posits that emotions, and the effect they have on human behaviour, have been omnipresent throughout human history.[58] Moreover, advances in cognitive neuroscience show the inability of human beings to make purely rational decisions devoid of emotion.[59] This discovery has already led to some modern legal systems adapting their practices to include the irrationality of human decision-making.[60] This is especially evident with regards to the issue of insanity and accountability for crimes committed.[61] If the law is adapting to these new discoveries, the study of diplomatic history should, too.

What this all means to this study, is that there is scope for a diversification of methodology, within diplomatic history, to examine the impact of emotions on politicians. More generally, the emergence of the history of emotions has led the way for the study of emotions from a

57 Margaret MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace: The Road to 1914* (2014), Introduction xxxiv.

58 Paul Ekman and W. V. Friesen, "Constants across cultures in the face and emotion", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 17 (1971), 124-129. Although many have critiqued Ekman's and Friesen's work on the grounds of basic emotions being universally represented facially, or that their triggers may differ culturally, the idea of their existence has not been questioned. For examples of such critiques, see R. Leys, 'How did fear become a scientific object and what kind of object is it?", *Representations*, 110 (2010), 66-104. L. Feldman Barrett, "Solving the emotion paradox: Categorization and the experience of emotion", *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10 (2006): 20-46. Even William Reddy, who questions the existence of basic emotions, does not question the existence of emotions nor the impact they have on cognition. See William R. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (2001), 15.

59 The term being *cogmotion*, coined by Douglas Barnett and Hilary Horn Ratner, "The Organisation and Integration of Cognition and Emotion in Development", *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 67/3 (1997), 303-16.

60 The relationship between emotion and cognition is becoming increasingly prescient. See, Susan A. Bandes and Jeremy A. Blumenthal, "Emotion and the Law", *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, December 2012, Vol. 8, 161-181. For a stimulating statistical study on the analysis of the use of language within the Supreme Court, and how intentions can be denoted from use of emotional language, see Ryan C. Black, Sarah A. Treul, Timothy R. Johnson and Jerry Goldman, "Emotions, Oral Arguments, and Supreme Court Decision Making", *The Journal of Politics*, May 13, 2011, Vol. 73, No. 2, 572-581.

61 For a discussion on the increasingly closer links between law and psychology, see William Douglas Woody, "Psychology and the Legal System: An Interview with Edie Greene", *Teaching of Psychology*, 2003, Vol. 30(2), 174-180. For a detailed presentation of the scholarship on the relationship between psychology and law, see Edie Greene, Kirk Heilbrun, Anna Heilbrun, *Psychology and Law* (2013). More specifically relating to insanity and prosecution, see Marina L. Costanzo and Mark A. Costanzo, Teaching Clinical (and Nonclinical) Psychology Through Applications to the Legal System: Violence Risk Assessment and the Insanity Defence, *Teaching of Psychology*, July 2013, Vol. 40(30, 252-256.

historical perspective. Since the so-called ‘emotional turn’, the history of emotions has become a burgeoning sub-field within history, where an interdisciplinary approach has been utilised to better understand emotions.[62] Studies within international relations which utilise psychological theories to establish patterns of behaviour amongst leaders during crisis also exist, with New Lebow even using the July Crisis as a case study.[63] The Cuban Missile Crisis has been a focus of international relations scholars for decades. However, in both cases, these studies tend to be focused on pattern building and rational actors, and thus downplay the irrational.[64] Nonetheless, there are studies that examine the link between a leader’s health and decision making. Some have questioned whether Prime Minister Anthony Eden’s battles with his health impacted his decision making during the Suez Crisis.[65] These pieces, though, tend to be from a medical perspective, and lack the depth of a historians approach. The closest approach towards examining how irrational factors influence leaders during times of crisis is within the field of political psychology. Jerrold Post, who developed the field of political psychology, applied modern psychological research in conjunction with biographical information to garner fresh insights into the behaviour and decision making of politicians.[66]

The foundation of this thesis is its interdisciplinary approach. By applying findings from cognitive neuroscience, new insights into the July Crisis become possible. As was briefly shown in the introduction, other studies have attempted to employ a similar approach to better understand politicians and their behaviour in history. However, there are similar approaches currently being used within the study of politics. In particular, the work of Ashley Weinberg is the most similar, in terms of methodology, to this study. Weinberg has produced, and been involved in, several pieces not only on the psychology of modern

62 Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (2018), 2. Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions; An Introduction* (2017), 1-9. For more on the emotional turn, see also Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, “Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards”, *American Historical Review*, 90/4 (1985), 813-36. Jan Plamper, “The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns”, *History and theory: Studies in the philosophy of history*, 49.2 (2010): 237–265. For recent assessment of the history of emotion more generally, see Peter N. Stearns et al, “History of Emotions: Where Are We?”, *Emotions* (Perth, W.A.) 5.2 (2021): 331–354.

63 Ned Lebow, *Between War and Peace: The nature of international crisis* (1990), 119-147.

64 Michael Dobbs and United States Institute of Peace, “Why We Should Still Study the Cuban Missile Crisis”, *U.S. Institute of Peace* (2008), 1-12.

65 P.J. Kernahan, An Iatrogenic Injury? Anthony Eden and the Suez Crisis of 1956. *The American Surgeon TM*, 89 (6) (2023), 3002-3006. C.H. Owen, “The Effect of Prime Minister Anthony Eden’s Illness on His Decision-Making during the Suez Crisis”, *QJM : An International Journal of Medicine* 98.6 (2005): 387–402.

66 In particular see Jerrold Post, *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders: With Profiles of Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton* (2005). *Narcissism and Politics: Dreams of Glory* (2014). *Leaders and Their Followers in a Dangerous World: The Psychology of Political Behavior* (2004). Jerrold M Post and Robert S. Robins, *When Illness Strikes the Leader: the Dilemma of the Captive King* (1993). Max Taylor, “Jerrold M. Post 1934-2020”, *Terrorism and political violence* 33.1 (2021): 1–2.

politicians, but also how stress impacts upon them.[67] Within these studies, a Weinberg, and others, use modern studies in behavioural psychology and apply them better understand how stress impacts upon politicians specifically. However, these studies are focused upon contemporary politicians, not historical figures. Moreover, these studies are often searching for patterns within political behaviour, whereas this study is solely focused upon the July Crisis. Furthermore, this approach draws more heavily upon cognitive neuroscience than behavioural psychology, as it attempts to identify stress among individuals as well as groups.

Interdisciplinary approaches that fuse psychology with international history are sparse, even more so on the topic of the July Crisis. Some studies attempt to examine factors away from the rational, but stop short of applying modern research from psychology to better understand irrational concepts. For example, in the *War that Ended Peace*, Margaret MacMillan extensively examines the individual personalities involved, considers everyday life in Britain in 1914, and contemplates what concepts such as *honour* and *Great Power* status meant to those in power.[68] She does so by employing a micro-historical focus upon individuals involved within the crisis, as well as using semantics to discern the meaning of abstract concepts. Making use of biographies and personal papers to draw attention to the personal as well as professional lives of the statesmen of 1914, rather than using them solely for documenting their movements during the July Crisis, MacMillan gives the reader a glimpse of everyday life in the years up to and including 1914. She seeks to reconstruct the world these men inhabited, which aids the reader in better understanding the context behind their behaviours during the July Crisis. Nonetheless, her study does not integrate any approaches that have arisen from the emotional turn, meaning that emotions, stress, physical and mental health receive little to no mention. MacMillan explicitly leaves it up to the reader to decide how significant personalities and irrational factors were.[69] Similarly, Zachary Twamley. in his work *A Matter of Honour*, dissects the role which *honour* played amongst the British decision-makers during the July Crisis.[70] Twamley focuses, throughout, on how honour was pivotal in

67 See Ashley Weinberg, *The Psychology of Politicians* (2011). Ashley Weinberg, Cary L Cooper, and Palgrave Connect, *Stress in Turbulent Times* (2010). Ashley Weinberg, "The Mental Health of Politicians." *Humanities & social sciences communications*, 3.1 (2017): 1–4. Alexander Smith et al, "The Weight of Office? A Scoping Review of Mental Health Issues and Risk Factors in Elected Politicians across Democratic Societies." *International journal of social psychiatry* (2024). Matthew Flinders et al, "Governing under Pressure? *The Mental Wellbeing of Politicians*", *Parliamentary affairs* 73.2 (2020): 253–273.

68 Margaret MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace: How Europe abandoned peace for the First World War* (2014).

69 MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace*, 633-645.

70 See Zachary Twamley, *A Matter of Honour: Britain and the First World War* (2016). Twamley's work offers an assessment of the concept of *honour* during the July Crisis, and how it reduced the options available to the decision-makers in Britain.

reducing the options available to the British, and was thus a factor in Britain's entry into the war. However, although Twamley does unpack precisely what honour meant to the statesmen of the July Crisis, he stops short of investigating how honour could spark an emotional response.

There still exists only one true study of the July Crisis that adopts a true interdisciplinary approach. John Young went into great detail in his study on the impact emotions had upon the British statesmen of the July Crisis.[71] Young focuses upon especially upon the emotion of *anger*, and how it was evoked by the German drives for British neutrality over the issue of Belgium, with this being key to winning over members of the non-interventionist group in the divided Liberal Cabinet during the July Crisis. As he puts it, 'emotions kept the Cabinet together'.[72] Furthermore, by presenting emotions as a significant factor in the British experience of the July Crisis, Young expanded into new territory, throwing into question the focus on purely rational actor theory motives of those involved. By making use of modern advances in neurology as well as psychology, Young questions whether we can truly detach emotions and 'precise events'.[73] Therefore, new meaning can be found in the previously neglected areas of British involvement in the July Crisis, by examining the what may previously have been considered as historical fluff. This could include, for example, emotions, the state of physical and mental health of those involved, or habits and behaviours during the crisis. By focusing on such, hitherto, relatively neglected factors, new avenues of analysis are possible on a topic that has been over-saturated with diplomatic or political history approaches.

In order to judge what impact stress had upon the statesmen of the July Crisis, it is necessary to firstly define what stress is. This will aid in later identifying what causes it, what effects it has, and how it ultimately impacted on the statesmen themselves. In practice, this means getting to grips with how it functions, but also what commonalities exist with regards to the impact it has upon the physiology of human beings as well as their behaviour. This, in turn, will allow for a better identification of where stress was present during the July Crisis, as well as its impact. In essence, it allows us to spot the telltale signs of stress are through changes that are visible in both an individual's behaviour as well as their physiology. Once this is achieved, it is possible to reevaluate the primary evidence on the July Crisis from a new perspective, if we account for stress being

71 John W. Young, "Emotions and the British Government's Decision for War in 1914", *Diplomacy and statecraft* 29.4 (2018): 543–564.
72 Young, 559.
73 Ibid, 559-560.

present. Actions and behaviours that were previously criticised or maligned both by historians or the statsemen themselves, may then be seen in a different light. Later in this section, an examination of research into precisely what causes stress in human beings will presented. To be sure, a diplomatic crisis is undoubtedly a stressful event. Nevertheless, a better understanding of what causes stress more generally, will allow for a greater understanding of just how severe the stress that the statesmen were under was. This will help not only with the contextualisation of the stress the statesmen faced as a whole, but also whether some suffered more than others from the stress of crisis. Finally, the impact stress has upon decision making will also be examined using findings from cognitive neuroscience.

Stress is a word that is often used by many, to describe much.[74] The World Health Organisation defines it 'as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation'.[75] When an individual enters into such a state, as a result external factors that are perceived to be challenging or dangerous (either physical or psychological factors), the *stress response system* activates.[76] The activation of this system causes changes to occur within the human body. These changes, as one would expect, are incredibly complex, and have been the focus of scientists for over a century. The stress response system was originally theorised and developed by Walter Cannon, and later developed by Hans Selye.[77] Within diagrams 1.1 and 1.2 can be seen a broad overview of the physiological changes that occur, even down to the cellular level. However, it is the with the outwardly perceivable signs of stress that this study is most concerned with. Most notably, the key effects to note are the shutting down of digestion and mobilisation of energy listed in 1.2, as well as the behavioural response and individual differences listed in 1.1.[78]

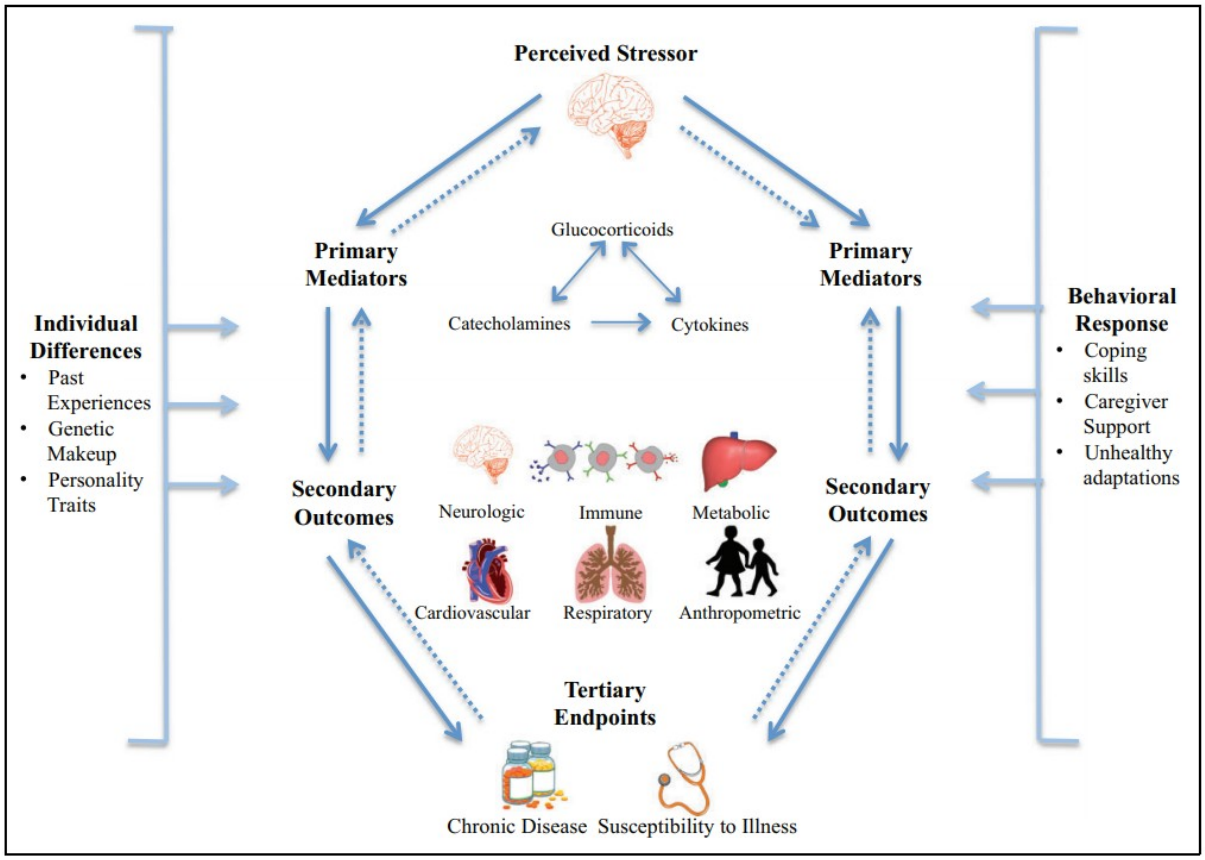
74 Karel Pacák, Miklós Palkovits, "Stressor Specificity of Central Neuroendocrine Responses: Implications for Stress-Related Disorders", *Endocrine Reviews*, Volume 22, Issue 4, (1 August 2001) 502–548.

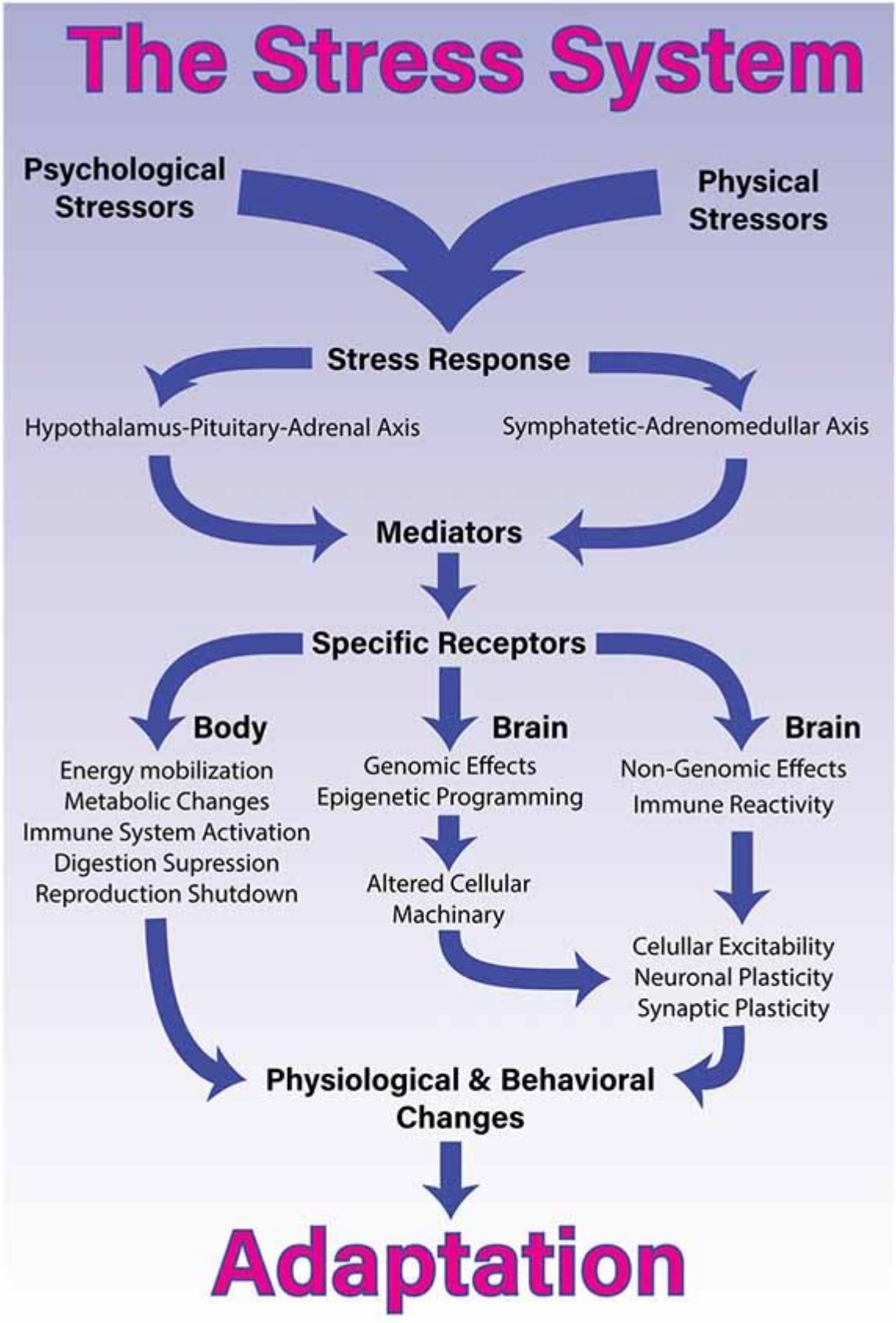
75 www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/stress

76 See Robert Murison, 'The Neurobiology of Stress', *The neuroscience of pain, stress, and emotion: psychological and clinical implications* (2016), ed. Mustafa Al'Absi and Magne Arve Flaten. Chapter 2, 33.

77 Walter Bradford Cannon, *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage: An Account of Recent Researches into the Function of Emotional Excitement* (1915). Walter Bradford Cannon, *Bodily changes in pain, hunger, fear, and rage* (1929). Walter Cannon, *Wisdom of the Body* (1932). James Campbell Quick and Charles D. Spielberger, 'Walter Bradford Cannon: Pioneer of stress research', *International Journal of Stress Management*, Volume 1, Issue 2 (April 1994), 141–143. Hans Selye, *The Stress of Life* (1956). Hans Selye, *Stress in Health and Disease* (1976). Hans Selye, 'Stress without Distress' in *Psychopathology of Human Adaptation* (1976), ed. G. Serban. S.Y. Tan, A Yip, 'Hans Selye (1907-1982): Founder of the stress theory', *Singapore Med J.*, 59(4) *(*2018). S. Szabo, "Hans Selye and the development of the stress concept. Special reference to gastroduodenal ulcerogenesis", *Ann N Y Acad Sci*, 851 (1998): 19–27.

78 1.1 www.salud-america.org/toxic-stress-and-its-lifelong-health-consequences/. 1.2 Lívea Dornela Godoy et al, "A Comprehensive Overview on Stress Neurobiology: Basic Concepts and Clinical Implications." *Frontiers in behavioral neuroscience*, 12 (2018): 127, 3.


Perceived Stressor
Primary Mediators
Glucocorticoids
Catecholamines
Cytokines
Primary Mediators
Individual Differences
• Past Experiences
• Genetic Makeup
• Personality Traits
Behavioral Response
• Coping skills
• Caregiver Support
• Unhealthy adaptations
Secondary Outcomes
Neurologic
Immune
Metabolic
Secondary Outcomes
Cardiovascular
Respiratory
Anthropometric
Tertiary Endpoints
Chronic Disease
Susceptibility to Illness


The Stress System
Psychological Stressors
Physical Stressors
Stress Response
Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis
Symphatetic-Adrenomedullar Axis
Mediators
Specific Receptors
Body
Brain
Brain
Energy mobilization
Metabolic Changes
Immune System Activation
Digestion Supression
Reproduction Shutdown
Genomic Effects
Epigenetic Programming
Altered Cellular Machinary
Non-Genomic Effects
Immune Reactivity
Celullar Excitability
Neuronal Plasticity
Synaptic Plasticity
Physiological & Behavioral Changes
Adaptation

Another key point to note is that although an individual's methods for managing and limiting the impact of stress may differ, due to factors such as life experiences or wider structural and environmental factors, the physiological and neurological changes that are taking place within the body and brain do not massively vary from one individual to another.[79] The physiological and neurological changes that occur during the stress response system have their origins in an ancient, evolutionary process that has been inherited from our ancestors. It is best suited to surviving in an environment where one is surrounded by physical stressors, such as predators.[80] As Bruce McEwen, who made several discoveries about the effect stress has on the human brain, puts it, the brain is the 'central organ of stress and adaptation because it perceives what is threatening and determines behavioral and physiological responses.'[81] For example, take the following three facets of the stress response: the increase in heart rate; the increase in activity in the amygdala (a section of the brain that largely deals with emotion, as well as recognising danger) with a concomitant sharpening of reflexes; and the shutting down of the digestive system.[82] All three would be optimal for surviving a physical encounter with a predator or, in the modern day, another human who meant physical harm to you. By increasing your heart rate, you are able to facilitate the increase of blood flow to the major muscles in the body, priming them for action. By increasing activity in the amygdala, and subsequently decreasing activity in the pre-frontal cortex (the so-called rational part of your brain), you are able to make quick and incisive decisions in a situation where hesitation could prove fatal. Finally, by shutting down your digestive system, which accounts for a large percentage of your bodies energy expenditure, you are able to prioritise energy for the functions that will ensure your short-term survival, such as your large muscle groups.

What this all means to this study, is threefold. Firstly, because research has shown that the stress response system, at the physiological level, is, to a large degree, experienced in the same way by human beings, we have the precedent required to apply modern research to historical figures. Secondly, because some of the signs of the stress response system being activated are outwardly visible it becomes easier to identify an individual who is under stress. For example, digestion issues, that are noted in diaries or letters in and

79 R.M. Sapolsky, L.M. Romero, A.U. Munck, "How do glucocorticoids influence stress responses? Integrating permissive, suppressive, stimulatory, and preparative actions", *Endocr. Rev*. 21 (2000), 55.

80 R.M. Nesse, S. Bhatnagar, B. Ellis, "Evolutionary Origins and Functions of the Stress Response System", Ed. George Fink, *Stress: Concepts, Cognition, Emotion, and Behavior* (2016), 95-101.

81 B.S. McEwen, "Central Role of the Brain in Stress and Adaptation: Allostasis, Biological Embedding, and Cumulative Change", in Ed. George Fink, *Stress: Concepts, Cognition, Emotion, and Behavior* (2016), 39.

82 For a detailed account of the stress response, see B. Chu, K. Marwaha, T. Sanvictores, et al. Physiology, Stress Reaction. [Updated 2022 Sep 12] www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK541120/

around the time of the July Crisis can tangibly be linked to stress, due to known link between the two. Finally, as was also shown above, the stress response system is woefully inadequate at dealing with modern challenges. Take, for example, the three facets listed in the previous paragraph. All three of these responses would have been ill-suited to dealing with the more psychological stress the statesmen of the July Crisis faced. Increased blood flow to the arms and legs would have done little to assuage the dilemma over the morality of a decision for or against war. Calm and considered decision making during a crisis which was rapidly evolving would have been extremely difficult, especially with an increased heart rate. As if to exacerbate this, with the engagement of the amygdala (the section of the brain that deals with fear and long held bias), to the detriment of the pre-frontal cortex (the rational section of the brain), critical thinking and adaptability would have been extremely difficult during a crisis. Historians, and the general public at large, have a tendency to judge politicians as rational actors who make decision in a calculated manner during times of crisis. However, this discounts the impact that a stressful situation can have on human, with the activation of the stress response system.

Accordingly, this study is also concerned with what causes stress, frequently known as *stressors*. For the stress response to be activated it is first necessary for a *stressor* or *stressors* to be present. A stressor is something which an individual, or group, perceive to be dangerous, adverse, detrimental, or challenging. As previously mentioned, thousands of years ago, when the stress response was developing in humans, this would have been physical external stimuli. Such as a predator or life-threatening situation. However, in more modern times, stressors can also be psychological, such as a loss of prestige within a social group, or a difficult decision that needs to be made. Furthermore, the relationship between stress and decision making has been shown to be bi-directional, in that needing to make a decision can also bring about stress.[83] What is important to note is that stressors are most acute when an individual perceives their own physical or psychological resources as insufficient to meet them. Simply put, stressors are extremely diverse, and often very subjective, and are not all created equal.

These stressors, can be ‘cumulative effects of experiences in daily life that involve ordinary events as well as major challenges’.[84] They can be work-related, such as a high workload, deadlines, a perceived lack of job security in the workplace, or a promotion or demotion.

83 Stephanie E. Wemma and Edelgard Wulferta, “Effects of Acute Stress on Decision Making”, *Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback*, Volume 42, Issue 1 (March 2017), 1–12.

84 Giovanni A. Fava, Bruce S. McEwen, Jenny Guidi, Sara Gostoli, Emanuela Offidani, Nicoletta Sonino, “Clinical characterization of allostatic overload”, *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 108 (2019), 94.

As will be examined in more detail in subsequent chapters, the July Crisis certainly increased the amount of workplace stressors for the Cabinet members. This is not to mention the nature of their work during the crisis, where they were being asked, essentially, to decide on whether or not to enter a large scale war. For example, at the height of the crisis Lloyd George claims to have worked eighteen hour days.[85] Viscount Haldane claimed that, also in early August, he had not slept for 48 hours, because of so many late night meetings and discussions about the crisis.[86] These were men who were working extremely long hours during a stressful and uncertain time. However, it was not only in the workplace that daily stressors were present. Fears over deteriorating health, less than harmonious personal lives, interpersonal relationships, all played their parts in adding to the stress of crisis. Sir Edward Grey, for example, knew that his eyesight was rapidly deteriorating, and had been recommended a period of total rest and recuperation by his doctor immediately prior to the July Crisis. Not only this, but he was forced to give up his sporting hobbies due to body, and eyesight, beginning to fail him.[87] Surely, these were stressful times for Grey, both professionally and personally.

The crisis itself was, as subsequent chapters will show, a stressor in itself. Research into stress and control shows that as perceived control of a stressor diminishes, the stress response intensifies. In essence, the more uncontrollable someone deems a difficult situation to be, the more the more stressed they become. The speed and rapidity of the July Crisis, as well as the reactive rather than proactive role Britain was placed in, meant that controllabilty over the stress of crisis was to feel limited. As Beauchamp put it, the speed of the crisis was ‘disabling’, and that events simply ‘flew by’.[88] Take, for example, the detoriation of John Burn’s behaviour throughout the crisis. As the crisis progresses, and it subsequently becomes more and more apparent that Britain is reactive to events on the continent, Burns created some extraordinary scenes in Cabinet, shouting and gesticulating at his Cabinet colleagues. Even those within Cabinet who, traditionally, would have had within their power the ability to shape events also found themselves helpless during the crisis. Grey, who’s experience of the crisis was little different to that of Burns, also felt a lack of control over events. As the crisis progresses, accounts of his appearance and behaviour become more extreme as the crisis spirals out of control in the latter stages. Historian Thomas Otte questions whether Grey suffered a nervous breakdown, of sorts, immediately following the crisis.[89]

85 Ed. John McEwen, *The Riddell Diaries* (1986), 87.
86 MSS Ashley 5738, Gosse Diary, 12.
87 T.G. Otte, *Grey*, 487-488.
88 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 253.
89 Otte, *Grey*, 539.

As was previously touched upon, stress and its impact is often referred to with a variety of daily terms, such as *good* or *bad stress, strain*, *pressure*, *turmoil*, *breakdown*, *burnt out*, *mental* or *physical fatigue*, *overload* and many, many more.[90] Thus, researchers into the impact of stress upon human beings developed the model of *allostasis*, to provide framework for future studies on stress. Many are familiar with the term *homeostasis*, which is the self-regulating process by which a living organism can maintain internal stability while adjusting to changing external conditions, but not *allostasis*. However, homeostasis, when referring to stress, has become a somewhat redundant term within the field of stress studies.[91] This is due to the focus of stress studies shifting towards how beings adapt to stress, mainly by Bruce McEwen, Peter Sterling, and Robert Sapolsky.[92]

The *allostatic model* has three core components or phases. A*llostasis*, *allostatic load* and then subsequent *overload*.[93] *Allostasis* is the process of adaptation to external stimuli that living organisms utilise in order to survive within their environment. With regards to human beings and stress, it is the continual adaption to stressors by activation of the stress response or coping mechanisms in order to maintain a state of control and well-being.[94] To simplify, this is when stress is present for an individual, but they are able to adapt and cope with it. It does not impact too severely on their ability to function professionally or socially. During allostasis, an individual is usually exposed to *acute* stressors. These are short-term in duration, usually not lasting more than a few minutes. This could be, for example, running late for a meeting and the anxiety being late for an appointment creates. Acute stress is, more often than not, manageable, daily stress. Once we react to the stress, we can adapt to it and return to a state of positive mental and physical well-being. When acute stress becomes more frequent, it becomes *episodic* stress. Interestingly,

90 For a detailed account of the work done by Selye, see Russell Viner, “Putting Stress in Life: Hans Selye and the Making of Stress Theory”, *Social Studies of Science* 29, no. 3 (1999): 391-410. For confusions over the terminology used by studies of stress, see S. Levine and H. Ursin “What is stress?” in Ed. M.R. Brown, G.F. Koob, C. Rivier, *Stress Neurobiology and Neuroendocrinology* (1991),.3-21. Seymour Levine. “Developmental Determinants of Sensitivity and Resistance to Stress”, *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 30, no. 10 (2005): 939-46.

91 Peter Sterling. “Allostasis: A Model of Predictive Regulation”, *Physiology & Behavior* 106, no. 1 (2011): 5-15.

92 See also the seminal piece by Richard S. Lazarus, and Susan Folkman, *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping* (1984).

93 For an explanation of the strengths of the allostatic model, see, Mathieu Arminjon, “Birth of the Allostatic Model: From Cannon's Biocracy to Critical Physiology”, *Journal of the History of Biology* 49, no. 2 (2016): 397-423.

94 For the original concept of allostasis, see P. Sterling, J. Eyer, “Allostasis: a new paradigm to explain arousal pathology” In: Fisher S, Reason J, editors. *Handbook of life stress, cognition and health* (1988). For a summary of the development of the concept of allostasis, see Achim Peters and Bruce S. McEwen, “ALLOSTASIS AND ALLOSTATIC LOAD”, *Physiology & Behavior*, 106, no. 1 (2012), 1-4. Barbara L. Ganzel, Pamela A. Morris, and Elaine Wethington, “Allostasis and the Human Brain”, *Psychological Review*, 117, no. 1 (2010): 134-74.

research has shown that an individual's ability to withstand stress, or stay within allostasis, diminishes with age.[95]

Episodic stress is when an individual experiences numerous bouts of acute stress over an extended period of time. Think numerous upcoming deadlines at work or extended periods of heavy workloads. Episodic stress has the potential to lead to *allostatic load*. In essence, allostatic load is when the body is unable to remain in allostasis due to the constant stacking up of stressors, and enters into allostatic load.[96] It stops adapting, and begins to take damage from the over-activation of the stress response system. When stress is present during allostatic load, physical changes occur within the body that may be externally noticeable. These physical changes are known as *biomarkers*.[97] These biomarkers may include migraines, adoption of risky behaviour towards one's own personal health, irritable bowel syndrome and indigestion, sleep disturbances and headaches.[98] They may also include depression, chronic inflammation, atherosclerosis, and memory loss.[99] Regarding behaviour, there is evidence to suggest there are links between allostatic load and increased anger or aggression.[100] Furthermore, an inability to

95 Aging and its effect on the stress response has seen much research over the years. For example, see, D.J. Dues, E.K. Andrews, C.E. Schaar, A.L. Bergsma, M.M. Senchuk, J.M. Van Raamsdonk, "Aging causes decreased resistance to multiple stresses and a failure to activate specific stress response pathways", *Aging* (Albany NY), (4) (2016 Apr 8) 777-95. Ashley Novais, Susana Monteiro, Susana Roque, Margarida Correia-Neves, Nuno Sousa, "How age, sex and genotype shape the stress response", *Neurobiology of Stress*, Volume 6, (2017) 44-56.

96 Term originally used in BS McEwen, E Stellar, "Stress and the individual. Mechanisms leading to disease", *Arch Intern Med*, 153 (18) (1993): 2093–101

97 Juster, Robert-Paul, McEwen, Bruce S, and Lupien, Sonia J. "Allostatic Load Biomarkers of Chronic Stress and Impact on Health and Cognition." *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 35, no. 1 (2010): 2-16.

98 David Borsook, Nasim Maleki, Lino Becerra and Bruce McEwen, "Understanding Migraine through the Lens of Maladaptive Stress Responses: A Model Disease of Allostatic Load." *Neuron* (Cambridge, Mass.) 73, no. 2 (2012): 219-34. Beena Suvarna et al, "Health Risk Behaviours and Allostatic Load: A Systematic Review." Neuroscience and *Biobehavioral Reviews* 108 (2020): 694-711. K. Outhoff, "Stress-related IBS: Review." *South African Family Practice* 58, no. 3 (2016): 23-28. Shin. Fukudo, "IBS: Autonomic Dysregulation in IBS." Nature Reviews. *Gastroenterology & Hepatology* 10, no. 10 (2013): 569-71. Yawen Chan et al, "The Temporal Relationship of Daily Life Stress, Emotions, and Bowel Symptoms in Irritable Bowel Syndrome—Diarrhea Subtype: A Smartphone-based Experience Sampling Study." *Neurogastroenterology and Motility* 31, no. 3 (2019): E13514-N/a. L. Chang, "The role of stress on physiologic responses and clinical symptoms in irritable bowel syndrome." *Gastroenterology*. 2011;140(3):761-765. Steven J. Linton, "Does Work Stress Predict Insomnia? A Prospective Study", *British journal of health psychology* 9.2 (2004): 127–136. Johanna Garefelt, et al. "Reciprocal Relations Between Work Stress and Insomnia Symptoms: A Prospective Study." *Journal of sleep research* 29.2 (2020): e12949–n/a.

99 Peters and McEwen, "Allostasis and Allostatic Load", *Physiology & Behavior*, 106, no. 1 (2012), 1.

100 P. Pimple, A. Shah, C. Rooks et al, "Association between anger and mental stress-induced myocardial ischemia", *Am Heart* J. 2015;169 (1): 115-21.e2. Cliff H. Summers and Svante Winberg, "Interactions between the Neural Regulation of Stress and Aggression." *Journal of Experimental Biology* 209, no. Pt 23 (2006): 4581-589. R.J. Nelson, B.C. Trainor, Neural mechanisms of aggression, *Nat. Rev. Neurosci*. 8 (2007) 536–546. Rosa De Almeida, Cabral Maria Martins, Carlos Centurion João, and Rodrigo Narvaes, "Behavioural, Hormonal and Neurobiological Mechanisms of Aggressive Behaviour in Human and Nonhuman Primates", *Physiology & Behavior*, 143 (2015): 121-35. L. Schuhmacher, "Stress Reduces Self-Control", *Science* (American Association for the Advancement of Science) 349.6252 (2015): 1067–1068.

contain outward expressions of emotion, or a maintenance of one's self-control, have long been noted as a consequence of an individual entering into allostatic load.[101] There are also strongly established links between allostatic load and internalising psychopathologies.[102] This ties in with allostatic load and depression, where there is significant evidence that suggests that there is a higher propensity for depression in individuals who are under allostatic load.[103] Depression itself has been linked to lower levels of efficiency with regards to cognitive functions, as well as diminished information processing abilities.[104]

Finally, *allostatic overload* is where the individual no longer has the capacity to deal with new stressors, as well as suffering long-term health issues from the near constant activation of the stress response system. Overload usually occurs when *Chronic* stress is present, meaning the near-constant presence of stressors and subsequent activation of the stress response over a much longer period of time, usually days, weeks and months in duration. In other words, it is the near-constant loading of stressors without any adaption taking place, with the key difference between load and overload being the long-term health implications associated with allostatic overload.[105] These long-term physical effects of allostatic overload may include cardiovascular disease, accentyuation of pre-existing health issues, premature biological aging, diabetes and cancer. [106] Furthermore, research

101 See Brian M. Galla and Jeffrey J. Wood. "Trait Self-Control Predicts Adolescents' Exposure and Reactivity to Daily Stressful Events", *Journal of personality* 83.1 (2015): 69–83. Silvia U. Maier, Aidan B. Makwana and Todd A. Hare. "Acute Stress Impairs Self-Control in Goal-Directed Choice by Altering Multiple Functional Connections Within the Brain's Decision Circuits", *Neuron*, 87.3 (2015): 621–631.

102 A. Fassett-Carman, B.L. Hankin, H.R. Snyder, "Appraisals of dependent stressor controllability and severity are associated with depression and anxiety symptoms in youth", *Anxiety Stress Coping*., 32 (1): (2019) 32.

103 T.P. Beauchaine, E. Neuhaus, M. Zalewski, S.E. Crowell, N. Potapova, "The effects of allostatic load on neural systems subserving motivation, mood regulation, and social affiliation", *Dev Psychopathol,* 23: (2011)975–99. R.P. Juster, B.S. McEwen, S.J. Lupien. "Allostatic load biomarkers of chronic stress and impact on health and cognition", *Neurosci. Biobehav. Re.,* (2010)35:2–16. B. Penninx, "Depression and Its Somatic Consequences: Allostatic Load as the Connecting Link", *European Psychiatry* 41, no. S1 (2017): S62.

104 T.E. Seeman, B.H. Singer, J.W. Rowe, R.I.Horwitz, B.S. McEwen, "Price of Adaptation—Allostatic Load and Its Health Consequences: MacArthur Studies of Successful Aging", *Arch Intern Med.*,157 (19) (1997), 2259–2268. Catharine R. Gale, G. David Batty, Sally-Ann Cooper, Ian J. Deary, Geoff Der, Bruce S. McEwen, and Jonathan Cavanagh. "Reaction Time in Adolescence, Cumulative Allostatic Load, and Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression in Adulthood: The West of Scotland Twenty-07 Study", *Psychosomatic Medicine* 77, no. 5 (2015): 493-505.

105 See, Achim Peters and Bruce S. McEwen, "Introduction for the Allostatic Load Special Issue", *Physiology & Behavior* 106, no. 1 (2012): 1-4. B.S. McEwen, "Protective and damaging effects of stress mediators", *N. Engl. J. Med.,* 338 (1998), 171–179. And, B.S. McEwen, "Physiology and neurobiology of stress and adaptation: central role of the brain", *Physiol. Rev*., 87 (2007) 873–904.

106 E.S. Epel, E.H. Blackburn, J.Lin, F.S. Dhabhar, N.E. Adler, J.D. Morrow, R.M. Cawthon, "Accelerated telomere shortening in response to life stress", *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U. S. A.,* 101, (2004) 17312–17315. T.E. Seeman, B.H. Singer, J.W. Rowe, R.I. Horwitz, B.S. McEwen, "Price of Adaptation—Allostatic Load and Its Health Consequences: MacArthur Studies of Successful Aging", *Arch Intern Med.*,157 (19) (1997), 2259–2268.

shows that there is a link between allostatic overload and anxiety related disorders, due to hypertrophy (over-training or activation) of the amygdala, the section of the brain that deals with fear, and atrophy (under training or limited activation) in the hippocampus, the section of the brain that deals with memory.[107] As leading endocrinologist Robert Sapolsky puts it, 'when we are stressed, we learn more readily to be afraid when there is no need to and less readily detect when we are safe'.[108]

The above presentation of the allostatic model of stress and adaption is a lot to process, especially with its relation to this study. Now seems like the appropriate moment to pause, and reflect on the key points from above and how they relate to this study on the British statesmen of the July Crisis. Simply put, the allostatic model deals with the process of an individual coping with stress (and staying within allostasis), or failing to cope with stress (entering allostatic load and then overload). What this means to this study, is that it is the allostatic model, as well as its accompanying vocabulary, that this study will adopt when analysing the statesmen of 1914. This is so as to prevent any confusion with regards to the stress terminology used within this study. For example, identifying evidence of biomarkers in the primary source material will be a crucial part of this study. As will be shown later, there are even references to bouts of indigestion, flu, or other ailments among the statesmen, that were linked to the stress of crisis. Moreover, later chapters will demonstrate how behaviours became more and more erratic as the crisis progressed, a further biomarker. Biomarkers will aid in assessing as to whether individuals did indeed succumb to the stress of crisis, in the absence of medical diagnosis. Furthermore, the allostatic model allows for a clear catagorising of those who remained calm, and those who did not, further aiding in the assessment of the impact of stress upon the statesmen.

As important as the allostatic model is to this thesis and its methodology, it is also important to examine the relationship between stress and decision making. When it comes to decision making psychology, the work of Daniel Kahnemann stands out. In his seminal work, *Thinking Fast, Thinking Slow*,[109] he posits that two systems of decision-making exist. System one is reactive, heuristic, laden with bias, but, crucially, is fast and not taxing for an individual to utilise. System two, is the opposite: slow, taxing, but rational and

107 Bruce S. McEwen. "Mood Disorders and Allostatic Load." *Biological Psychiatry* 54, no. 3 (2003): 200-07. Bruce S. McEwen and Robert M. Sapolsky, "Stress and Cognitive Function." Current Opinion in *Neurobiology*, 5, no. 2 (1995): 205-16.

108 Robert M. Sapolsky, "Stress and the Brain: Individual Variability and the Inverted-U", *Nature Neuroscience*, 18, no. 10 (2015): 1345.

109 Daniel Kahnemann, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, (2012).

deliberative.[110] When placed under stress, even in the short-term, studies show that individuals tend to rely more on system one.[111] This is mainly due to the increase in activity in the amygdala and the subsequent decrease in activity in the pre-frontal cortex.[112] In layman's terms, mental short-cuts are taken, and as such an individual may actually take a decision almost instantly, only later engaging in the process of post-decision justification,. This two-system theory of decision-making is more broadly known as *dual process theory*.[113] That the human mind is divided into two systems when decisions need to be made, one being fast and one being slow, has been present within the field of psychology for many years (with perhaps the most well-known precursor to dual process theory being the work of William James and his 'associative' and 'true reasoning').[114]

Failure to adapt one's decision making, particularly when under stress, is known as *cognitive closure*.[115] This is where an individual is unable to process new information that contradicts or outdates prior information and leads to an individual's bias or beliefs becoming yet more engrained. Cognitive closure, in some ways, is a precursor to Kahneman's system of one decision-making system. However, cognitive dissonance is a psychological phenomenon that occurs when a person experiences discomfort or tension as a result of holding conflicting beliefs, attitudes, or values, or when their actions contradict their beliefs.[116] This discomfort arises from the inconsistency between their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. One of the key aspects of cognitive dissonance is that it influences how people justify their actions, change their attitudes, and make choices. Cognitive dissonance is a theory that is still active today, with countless studies on its

110 See also, J.S. Evans, "Dual-processing accounts of reasoning, judgment, and social cognition", *Annu. Rev. Psychol.,* 59:(2008) 255–278. T. Gilovich, D. Griffin, D. Kahneman, *Heuristics and Biases: The Psychology of Intuitive Judgment* (2002). J.S.B. Evans, K.E.Stanovich, "Dual-process theories of higher cognition advancing the debate", *Perspect. Psychol. Sci.*, 8 (3):(2013) 223–241.

111 R. Yu, "Stress potentiates decision biases: A stress induced deliberation-to-intuition (SIDI) model. Neurobiol Stress", 3: (2016) 83–95.

112 Dibyadeep Datta and Amy F. T. Arnsten, "Loss of Prefrontal Cortical Higher Cognition with Uncontrollable Stress: Molecular Mechanisms, Changes with Age, and Relevance to Treatment", *Brain Sciences* 9, no. 5 (2019): 113.

113 See also J.S. Evans, 'Dual-processing accounts of reasoning, judgment, and social cognition'. *Annu. Rev. Psychol*., 59:(2008) 255–278. T. Gilovich, D. Griffin, D.Kahneman, *Heuristics and Biases: The Psychology of Intuitive Judgment (*2002).

114 Jonathan St. B. T. Evans, and Keith E. Stanovich, "Dual-Process Theories of Higher Cognition: Advancing the Debate", *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 8, no. 3 (2013): 223. Raymond S. Nickerson, "William James on Reasoning", *Psychological science*, 1.3 (1990): 167–171.

115 In particular, see Ap Dijksterhuis, Ad van Knippenberg, Arie W. Kruglanski, Carel Schaper, "Motivated Social Cognition: Need for Closure Effects on Memory and Judgment", *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Volume 32, Issue 3 (1996), 254-270. D. M. Webster and A. W. Kruglanski, "Individual Differences in Need for Cognitive Closure", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(6), (1994). 1049-1062. D. M. Webster, L. Richter, A. W. Kruglanski, "On leaping to conclusions when feeling tired: Mental fatigue effects on impressional primacy. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology", 32(2), (1996) 181-195.

116 See, Leon Festinger, A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (1957). See also, E. Aronson, "The Return of the Repressed: Dissonance Theory Makes a Comeback", *Psychological inquiry*, 3.4 (1992): 303–311. C. Tavris and E. Aronson, *Mistakes were made (but not by ME): Why we justify foolish beliefs, bad decisions, and hurtful acts* (2007).

effects still taking place.[117] However, psychologist Elliot Aronson perhaps summarises cognitive dissonance best, 'dissonance theory does not rest upon the assumption that man is a rational animal; rather, it suggests that man is a rationalizing animal.'[118]

Finally, the nature of a decision that is to be made can also impact on an individual's psychology. Here, two factors are crucial. Firstly, there is evidence to support the idea that deontological thinking, as opposed to making a utilitarian decision, is particularly prevalent among people who are under stress.[119] Researchers have speculated that this may be due to the presence of evolutionary structures that bias humans towards 'gut feelings' on moral issues, especially when under stress (which inhibits reasoning).[120] Therefore, as the statesmen were already under the stress of crisis itself, they were more likely to be thinking deontologically, rather than being able to process their options and adapt to the changing situation. Secondly, it has been concluded, by neuroscientists, that when individuals had acute stress induced, there was a tendency towards inaction in moral decision-making situations.[121] In essence, inaction is considered preferable to incorrect action by the individual.[122] Later on in this thesis, this is particularly relevant to the split within Cabinet, a well-studied facet of the British experience of the July Crisis. To be brief, the British Cabinet in 1914 was divided as to whether to intervene in the coming European war. This was, to many among them, a decision of a moral nature. Furthermore, evidence of stress is relatively easy to find among the non-interventionist section of Cabinet, as the subsequent chapters will show. When combining these two factors, coupled with the knowledge that acute stress may also impair cognition, as per the systems one and two

117 For a review of the most significant studies of cognitive dissonance, see April McGrath, "Dealing with Dissonance: A Review of Cognitive Dissonance Reduction", *Social and personality psychology compass*, 11.12 (2017): e12362–n/a. See also, D. Vaidis and D. Oberlé, "Approaching opponents and leaving supporters: Adjusting physical proximity to reduce cognitive dissonance", *Social Behavior and Personality*, 42, (2014) 1091–1098.

118 Article by Paul Main, *Cognitive Dissonance*, 25 June 2023. www.structural-learning.com/post/cognitivedissonance#:~:text=Pioneering%20social%20psychologist%20Elliot%20Aronson,understand%20our%20reactions%20to%20dissonance

119 K. Starcke, C. Polzer, O.T. Wolf, M. Brand, "Does stress alter everyday moral decision-making?", *Psychoneuroendocrinology,* 36(2):(2011 Feb) 210-9. K. Starcke, A.-C. Ludwig., M. Brand, "Anticipatory stress interferes with utilitarian moral judgment", *Judgment Decision Making*, 7 (2012)61–69. B. Gawronski, J. Armstrong, P. Conway, R. Friesdorf, M. J. Hütter, "Consequences, norms, and generalized inaction in moral dilemmas: The CNI model of moral decision-making", *Pers Soc Psychol*, ; (2017 Sep) 113(3): 343-376. F. Youssef, K. Dookeeram, V. Basdeo, E. Francis, M. Doman, D. Mamed, et al, "Stress alters personal moral decision making", *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 37, (2012)491–498. Renata Suter and Ralph Hertwig. "Time and Moral Judgment", *Cognition*, 119.3 (2011): 454–458.

120 Lucius Caviola and Nadira Faulmüller, "How stress influences our morality", *In-Mind Magazine*, 23 (2014).

121 B. Gawronski, P. Conway, J. Armstrong, M. Hütter, 'Effects of incidental emotions on moral dilemma judgments: an analysis using the CNI model', *Emotion* (2018) doi: 10.1037.

122 E.J. Hermans, M.J.A.G Henckens, M. Joëls, G. Fernández, (2017). 'Time-dependent shifts in neural systems supporting decision-making under stress', in *Decision Neuroscience*, eds J. Dreher and L. Tremblay (2017) 371–385. F. Cushman, L. Young, M. Hauser, (2006). 'The role of conscious reasoning and intuition in moral judgment: testing three principles of harm', *Psychol. Sci.* (2006) 17, 1082–1089.

previously examined, with the individual fearing taking the wrong decision, which in turn leads to inaction, new factors arise as to the inability of the non-interventionist section of Cabinet to prevent Britain entering the war in 1914. Therefore, later chapters will examine, in detail, just how big a role stress played in impairing the judgment and ability to act of the non-interventionist section of Cabinet.

Finally, this study is also concerned with how the statesmen themselves coped with, or tried to lesson the impact of, stress. Coping with, or lowering the effects of, stress means the deployment of *coping mechanisms*. A coping mechanism can be either adaptive or maladaptive. Well-known maladaptive coping mechanisms can include, for example, smoking, consumption of alcohol, superstitious beliefs and behaviours, or engaging in risky behaviour. Adaptive coping mechanisms may include physical exercise, mediation, therapy, or engagement in hobbies. There are several other methods an individual who is under stress can employ to blunt the effects of stress. Firstly, it is crucial to note that control and stress are intrinsically linked. Simply put, the higher one's perceived sense of control over a stressor is, the less impact the stressor has.[123] Perceived control is, of course, highly subjective.[124] It can be as simple as an individual with a fear of flying wearing a lucky pair of shoes on a plane, giving the illusion of control. Or it can be something much more maladaptive, such as sufferers of eating disorders using the amount of food they consume as a means of control over life stressors. Who or whatever offers control to someone who is under stress, dims that person's stress response.[125] Another method of controlling stress is to raise the self-esteem of an individual, thus lowering their stress response. [126] It is believed that higher self-esteem as well as higher hierarchical positions, results in dimmed stress responses.[127] A further method of coping with stress is through seeking social support. Social support can be defined as relationships between two or more people that can alleviate the impact of stressors or

123 J.P. Bhanji, E.S. Kim, M.R. Delgado, "Perceived control alters the effect of acute stress on persistence", *J Exp Psychol Gen.*, 145(3) (2016):356-365. Bruce E. Compas, Gerard A. Banez, Vanessa Malcarne, Nancy Worsham, "Perceived Control and Coping with Stress: A Developmental Perspective, Journal of Social Issues", Vol. 47, No. 4, (1991) 23-34. Kathleen Dracup et al. "Perceived Control Reduces Emotional Stress in Patients with Heart Failure", *The Journal of heart and lung transplantation*, 22.1 (2003): 90–93.

124 In particular, see the work of David H. Barlow, *Anxiety and Its Disorders: the Nature and Treatment of Anxiety and Panic* (2002), 2. ed.

125 L.P. Wadsworth and S.A. Hayes-Skelton, "Exploring Perceived Control, a Low-Control Task, and a Brief Acceptance Intervention in a Low and High Transdiagnostic Anxiety Sample", *Neurology, psychiatry, and brain research*, *35* (2020): 1–9.

126 Bruce S. McEwen, Jason D. Gray, Carla Nasca, "Recognizing resilience: Learning from the effects of stress on the brain", *Neurobiology of Stress*, Volume 1, (January 2015) 1-11.

127 G.D. Sherman, P.H. Mehta, "Stress, cortisol, and social hierarchy", *Curr Opin Psychol*, 33: (2020 Jun) 227-232.

blunt the stress response.[128] Social support can be crucial for many people as a means for blunting the impact of stressors.[129] Not only this, but it can also improve an individual's ability to maintain self-control over both their behaviour and decision-making.[130] The impact of oxytocin, the hormone that acts as a relaxant and that is released when interacting positively with other humans, is the driving force behind social support as a coping mechanism. There appears to be correlation between the amount of oxytocin released and how close the individuals are on a personal level. Succinctly, the closer you feel towards the person you are interacting with the more oxytocin released, and consequently the more relaxed you feel.[131] This process is especially strong during stressful situations, where oxytocin has been shown to suppress the impact of stressors and the stress response.[132] Moreover, the more present or accessible an individual perceives the other to be, or the closer their proximity to this person, the less impact a stressor has upon either of the individuals.[133]

The quality of social support does not just depend on how often an individual is present for another.[134] Just as important, are the actual words of support we receive. The communication skills of the person who seeks to alleviate the concerns of the other are crucial in helping an individual who is under stress.[135] There appears to be a fine line between saying the right and wrong things to someone under stress. Accordingly, if the social support offered is too verbally supportive, without allowing the individual under stress the opportunity verbalise their concerns, the social support actually can actually

128 See, J. E. Pearson, "The definition and measurement of social support. Journal of Counseling & Development", 64(6) (1986),390–395. Similarly, see James S. House, *Work Stress and Social Support* (1981).

129 See, Neal Krause, "Social Support, Stress, and Well-Being Among Older Adults", *Journal of Gerontology*, Volume 41, Issue 4 (July 1986), 512–519. F Ozbay, DC Johnson, E Dimoulas, CA Morgan, D Charney, S Southwick, "Social support and resilience to stress: from neurobiology to clinical practice", *Psychiatry* (Edgmont). (2007); 4(5): 35-40. Christenfeld, N., Gerin, W. (2000). Social support and cardiovascular reactivity. Biomedicine & Pharmacotherapy, 54, 251–257. Coan, J. A., Beckes, L., Gonzalez, M. Z., Maresh, E. L., Brown, C. L., K. Hasselmo, "Relationship status and perceived support in the social regulation of neural threat responding", *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 12, (2017) 1574–1583.

130 For a review of the effects of social support, in the form of verbalisation, see Jared B. Torre, Matthew D. Lieberman, "Putting Feelings Into Words: Affect Labelling as Implicit Emotion Regulation", *Emotion Review* 10.2 (2018): 116–124.

131 See, A. C. Kelly, D. C. Zuroff, M. J. Leybman, P. Gilbert, "Social safeness, received social support and maladjustment: testing a tripartite model of affect regulation", *Cognit. Ther. Res*. 36 (2012), 815–826.

132 See, M. Heinrichs, T. Baumgartner, C. Kirschbaum, and U. Ehlert, "Social support and oxytocin interact to suppress cortisol and subjective responses to psychosocial stress", *Biol. Psychiatry* 54 (2003), 1389–1398.

133 See, S. Cobb, "Social support as a moderator of life stress", *Psychosom. Med.* 38, (1976)
300–314. C. Kirschbaum, T. Klauer, S. H. Filipp, D. H. Hellhammer, "Sexspecific effects of social support on cortisol and subjective responses to acute psychological stress", *Psychosom. Med*. 57, (1995) 23–31.

134 N. Bolger, A. Zuckerman. R. C.Kessler, "Invisible support and adjustment to
stress", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79, (2000), 953–961

135 See, Tian, Xi, Denise Haunani Solomon, and Kellie St Cyr Brisini. "How the Comforting Process Fails: Psychological Reactance to Support Messages", *Journal of communication* 70.1 (2020): 13–24.

increase the impact of stress.[136] The most effective technique for alleviating stress through social support appears to be when an individual under stress can verbalise their perception of their stressor, whilst the other individual seeks to help them to better understand their stressor.[137] This technique results in the individual under stress perceiving that their sense of control over their stressor has increased, and thus blunts its impact.[138]

For example, in later chapters, some of the focus will be upon Sir Edward Grey's experience of the July Crisis, especially his sense of control over the crisis as it unfolded. Grey, as Foreign Secretary, was the most-involved of all Cabinet ministers in the July Crisis. Accordingly, as will be examined later, his role has come under scrutiny from his colleagues and historians alike, mainly for his perceived lack of control, action, or a grasp of the severity of the crisis. However, as later chapters will demonstrate, Grey was one of the few members of Cabinet who did not enter into allostatic load or overload. He remained in control throughout, at a great personal cost to his health. It was only post-crisis, that Grey would enter into allostatic overload. Once the allostatic model is applied to gauge Grey's levels of stress, and it is determined that Grey did remain within allostasis, inferences can be made as to how he did so. This is where Haldane, one of Grey's closest friends, plays a hitherto underappreciated role in the crisis as Grey's social support, as chapter two will show. The research contained above is crucial to underlining the role played by coping mechanisms, which allowed certain members of the Cabinet to better manage the stress of crisis, than others.

The significance of this chapter is that it lays the groundwork for subsequent chapters. The main actors of the July Crisis were briefly introduced, the subjects of this study. Additionally, it also aimed to familiarise the reader with stress-related terminology, that may be awkward or unfamiliar, so as to help with the flow of subsequent chapters. Moreover, it sketched out a clearer framework of how insights from other cognitive neuroscience could be applied to the July Crisis and to the discipline of international and diplomatic history more generally. Furthermore, there were two further aims of this chapter. Firstly, to engage with the vast historiography on the origins of the First World War, as well as a broad examination of the significant secondary works on Britain and the July Crisis. In doing so, it

136 See, E. E. Crockett and L. A.Neff, "When receiving help hurts: Gender differences in diurnal cortisol responses to spousal support", *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4, (2012) 190–197

137 Tian Xi, Denise Haunani Solomon, and Kellie St Cyr Brisini, "How the Comforting Process Fails: Psychological Reactance to Support Messages", 27.

138 Ibid, 26.

is hoped that the gap in the literature was sufficiently highlighted with regards to the lack of work on emotions and their influence on the actors of the July Crisis. Secondly, to present the relevant research within the field of cognitive neuroscience and psychology that will allow for, in conjunction with the available primary evidence on the July Crisis, an evaluation as to what impact stress had upon the British statesmen of the July Crisis.

It is now time to pause and reflect on the previous pages, as well as to present the methodology this thesis will employ. As was mentioned previously, this thesis aims to incorporate approaches from the history of emotions and the field of political psychology. To be sure, there are clear limitations of the methodological approach taken within political psychology that this study will aim to avoid. Initially, there is the contentious issue of diagnosing from afar. Within psychiatry this is known as the 'Goldwater rule', whereby psychiatrists are prevented from making speculating about the mental health of public figures. The debate over the diagnosis from afar continues to rumble on, following Donald Trump's first term as president.[139] However, it is not the aim of this study to provide clinical or psychological diagnoses, as this study is not being carried out by a psychiatrist. Moreover, no judgments as to mental state will be made beyond how stress may have affected the statesmen during the July Crisis, as this study is solely concerned as to whether stress played a role during the July Crisis. Secondly, there is the issue of availability of evidence. Even a cursory glance at the primary source material reveals little to no direct mention of stress. There is seldom any explicit reference to specific emotions, let alone stress, within the archival evidence on the July Crisis. The world these statesmen lived within was very different to today, in that we as a society are much more open to discussing how stressed we are feeling or how it is affecting us. People today are, often, more aware of how stress impacts our mental and psychical health, and how to spot the telltale signs of stress. In order to be able to use the vast amount of information and research available on the impact of stress from today's world, we must reconstruct the world of statesmen of 1914. By reconstructing and contextualising the world these men lived in, so as to recognise better identify stress and its impact, we are better placed to identify stress. This will allow the fragments of information that are present to be exploited, and insights teased out. In practice, this means the use of the ever-expanding understanding gained by cognitive neuroscience into the impact of stress upon humans, coupled with the meticulous scouring of archival source material that is a political

139 For an up to date assessment of the rule, see John Martin-Joy, *Diagnosing from a Distance: Debates over Libel Law, Media, and Psychiatric Ethics from Barry Goldwater to Donald Trump* (2020). Eric M. Plakun, "A 'Trans-Dyadic' Perspective on the Goldwater Rule", *Journal of psychiatric practice* 23.6 (2017): 431–435.

historians domain, to better understand the impact stress had upon the British statesmen of the July Crisis. By implementing this interdisciplinary approach, inferences are able to be made that are not possible with a conventional, diplomatic history methodology.

Chapter 1- Who were the statesmen?

The focus of this study will be the Asquith Government. Specifically, the Cabinet. The Cabinet was comprised of several well-known figures, as well as some not so well-known figures. They were, as follows;

Herbert Henry Asquith, Prime Minister and Secretary for War.
William Lygon Beauchamp, 7th Earl of First Commissioner of Works.
Augustine Birrell, Chief Secretary of Ireland.
John Burns, President of the Board of Trade.
Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty.
Earl of Crewe, Secretary of State for India and Lord Privy Seal.
Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary.
Viscount Richard Haldane, Lord Chancellor.
Lewis Harcourt, Secretary for Colonies.
Charles Hobhouse, Postmaster-General.
David Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Charles Masterman, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
Reginald McKenna, Home Secretary.
Thomas McKinnon Wood, Secretary for Scotland.
Viscount Morley, Lord President of the Council.
Joseph Albert Pease, President of the Board of Education.
Walter Runciman, President of the Board of Agriculture.
Herbert Samuel, President of the Local Government Board.
Sir John Simon, Attorney-General.

140

Much has been written about the political backgrounds of these men, as well as the politics of liberalism and its influence throughout their lives.[141] Because so much has already been

140 Table 1.3.

141 In particular, see, George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935). Roy Jenkins, *The British Liberal Tradition: from Gladstone to Young Churchill, Asquith, and Lloyd George-Is Blair Their Heir?* (2001). Roland Quinault, “Asquith's Liberalism”, *History* (London), 77.249 (1992): 33–49. Robert Kelley, “Asquith at Paisley: The Content of British Liberalism at the End of Its Era”, *The Journal of British*

written on the topic of pre-war liberalism, this chapter will not focus on defining a providing a detailed narrative of its history. Instead, it will provide a jumping off point that adds context to the statesmen by covering its broad themes. A broad summary is sufficient, because the vast majority of the Cabinet, with the exception of Burns and Churchill, had spent their whole political careers within the Liberal Party. However, it is also important to note that the liberalism that these men subscribed to was not a monolithic ideology, and there were variations within the movement, as will be touched upon here. Nonetheless, the main themes of their form of liberalism can be broadly summarised. Domestically, there was an historical commitment to social reforms. Key social reform measures included the introduction of old-age pensions, labour protection laws, and efforts to address poverty and unemployment. This also extended into laying the groundwork for the modern welfare state by developing programs aimed at protecting workers, improving public health, and ensuring access to education.[142] However, it is also important to note that these were men whose political careers were greatly influenced by former Prime Minister Herbert Gladstone. The former Prime Minister would shape their political beliefs, throughout their careers. Some, like Morley had even served under him.

Gladstone's ideals and politics were shaped by his own devout beliefs, which in turn influenced his politics, morals, and ideals.[143] They were also defined by his study of the classics.[144] As has been summarised, Gladstonian Liberalism was 'cognate with the statesman's attitudes as Christian believer and Homeric scholar'.[145] With regards to Gladstonian thought on foreign policy, the need to 'reduce collisions by the promotion of international law' was paramount.[146]

With regards to Empire and international relations, a marked split could be observed within the Liberal party. To be sure, free trade was a something which liberalism had a historical association with. Broadly speaking, most liberals believed that free trade policies would

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studies,4.1 (1964): 133–159. Robert Rhodes James, *The British Revolution: British Politics 1880-1939 volume I* (1978).

142 In particular, see Norman McCord and Bill Purdue, *British History 1815-1914* (2007), 434- 442. James Thompson, "Political economy, the labour movement and the minimum wage, 1880-1914", in E. H. H. Green and Duncan Tanner, *The Strange Survival of Liberal England : Political Leaders, Moral Values and the Reception of Economic Debate* (2007) 62-88.

143 In particular, see Agatha Ramm, "Gladstone's Religion." *The Historical Journal* 28, no. 2 (1985): 327-40. However, see also J. P. Parry, *Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party, 1867- 1875*. (1986).

144 See, David Gange (2009) Odysseus in Eden: Gladstone's Homer and the Idea of Universal Epic, 1850–1880, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 14:2, 190-206

145 Bebbington, *The Mind of Gladstone*, 258.

146 Bebbington, *The Mind of Gladstone*, 304. Roy Jenkins, *The British Liberal Tradition: From Gladstone Through to Young Churchill, Asquith, and Lloyd George -Is Blair Their Heir?* (2001) 24.

lead to economic growth and prosperity.[147] However, Imperialism was a topic of some debate among the members of the party. While most within the Cabinet looked, at the very least, favourably upon the idea of the British Empire, there was a divide within the movement regarding imperialism. Those who were more pro-Empire, generally speaking, tended to look at the Empire as a civilizing entity. These men were known as the 'Liberal Imperialists'. Among their number, within Cabinet, were Asquith, Grey and Haldane. They were closer to the Conservative opposition in their views on Empire, international relations, and 'for the need for empire and nation to become more efficient if they were to face the challenges of the twentieth century'.[148] Those who were less inclined to support Empire unconditionally, or were often to be found in opposition to facets of it, were known as the 'Radicals'. Though they were more prevalent among the backbenches of the Liberal Party, they were a vocal group, often advocating for more humane treatment of colonial subjects. This split over empire was magnified with regards to the direction of British foreign policy.[149] Broadly speaking, once again, the Radicals believed in diplomacy and disarmament to prevent conflicts, whilst the Liberal Imperialists were more hawkish and saw the need to strengthen Britain's military position (especially through increased spending on the Royal Navy).[150] This split will be examined in much greater detail in later chapters.

Briefly moving away from their politics, it is also necessary to examine the demographic similarities between these men. Even at first glance, a striking number are present. Firstly, their ages at the time of the July Crisis. Winston Churchill was the youngest member of Cabinet, at 39 years old, whereas Lord Morley was the oldest, at 73 years old. However, discounting these two outliers, the remainder of Cabinet were in their early 50's. Secondly, with the exception of Burns, Churchill, and Lloyd George, the remainder were all university educated. Of those who attended university, only two, Haldane and McKinnon-Wood, did not attend either Oxford of Cambridge. Thirdly, a background in law was the most popular occupation for the men of this Cabinet. Six of the Cabinet either read law at university, or practiced law prior to a life in politics, with the remainder having read for a subject in the humanities. Fourthly, with the exception of Burns, and possibly Lloyd George, the

147 See Avner Offer, "Empire and Social Reform: British Overseas Investment and Domestic Politics, 1908–1914." *The Historical journal*, 26.1 (1983): 119–138.

148 McCord and Purdue, *British History 1815-1914*, 433.

149 For example, see Mathew Johnson, "Peace and Retrenchment? The Edwardian Liberal Party, the Limits of Pacifism, and the Politics of National Defence", in, Andreas Gestrich and H. Pogge von Strandmann, *Bid for World Power?: New Research on the Outbreak of the First World War* (2017), 201–220.

150 See A. J. A. Morris, Anthony and A. J. Dorey, *Radicalism Against War, 1906-1914: the Advocacy of Peace and Retrenchment* (1972). Steiner and Neilson, *Britian and the Origins*, 150-151. Wilson, The Policy of Entente, 17-58. Matthew Johnson, "The Liberal Party and the Navy League in Britain before the Great War", *20th century British history*, 22.2 (2011): 137–163.

remainder of Cabinet were, at the very least, from upper middle-class backgrounds. These included Asquith, Hobhouse, McKenna, Samuel, Pease, and Morley. However, many also came from extremely privileged backgrounds, such as Grey, Harcourt, Churchill, Haldane, Beachamp, and Crewe, and could easily be considered as upper-class by the standards of the day. Finally, only five of the Cabinet did not attend a boarding school, with a significant number of those that did having attended prestigious public schools. As should now be evident, this is a relatively small study group with a shared background in many aspects of life. Much of their existence had significant experiential overlap.

One thing they all shared, though, was that they were all men. Modern society's impression of the Victorian or Edwardian upper middle- or upper-class man is of the stiff upper lip, a reserved and controlled demeanour, and a reverence for those who never outwardly showed emotion. Take, for example, their portrayal in film and media. Modern, instantly recognisable examples within film include Michael Caine's depiction of Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead in Cy Endfield's 1964 war film *Zulu*, or Anthony Hopkins Oscar-winning performance as Mr. James Stevens in the 1993 film *Remains of the Day*. A poignant example within literature would be A. E. W. Mason's 1902 classic *The Four Feathers*, which has led to several screen adaptions. All of these portrayals focused on the characters stiff upper lip and how they kept their emotions hidden from public view. However, merely accepting these tired tropes would be a superficial approach at best. Therefore, the following sections will explore two significant cultural influences on the lives of the statesmen, gender and masculinity. It will seek to unpack how gender and masculinity shaped their lives and behaviours, as well as how they intertwined with their class. Throughout this chapter, members of the Cabinet will be woven in and placed within the narrative, aiding an understanding of their later actions and behaviours during the July Crisis.

The one thing that all the statesmen of this study universally shared was their biological sex which in turn tied them to specific gender roles and norms. They would have all, most likely, identified as both being of the male gender, as well as biological men. Not only this, but they were men who spent almost the entirety of their schooling, university, professional, and social lives surrounded by other men. Girls were barred from entering boarding or public schools, and women almost totally excluded from universities during the mid- to late-Victorian period. Furthermore, they were absent from politics and the chambers of power in Britain at the time. Therefore, for these statesmen, feminine influences were few and far between; the masculine dominated. The influence of

masculinity in the lives of the statesmen, throughout childhood and to 1914 itself, is crucial to understanding their behaviours and decision-making during the July Crisis. To be sure, masculinity is also shaped by class.[151] However because only two members of the Cabinet were of working-class origins, the rest being from the upper middle- and upper-classes, this narrows the focus of this chapter. The focus will fall upon the upper middle- and upper-class forms of masculinity.

The influence of masculinity, for these statesmen, would likely have started during their childhoods. Childhood, for the majority of these statesmen meant attendance at a boarding or public school. During the mid- to late-Victorian period, when the majority of the Cabinet would have attended school, boarding and public schools were a staple of upper middle- and upper-class upbringings. Public schools, in particular, have been immortalised by the novel *Tom Brown's School Days*.[152] A significant amount of secondary literature on the topic of the Victorian public school exists, which highlights the commonalities of a public-school education.[153] With the exception of Morley due to age, and Lloyd George and Burns due to their working-class upbringings, the remainder of the British statesmen of this study attended either boarding schools or public schools during the mid- to late-Victorian period. During their attendance at these schools, the pupils (all boys as these were not mixed schools) were exposed to an androcentric view of the world that revolved around the praising of an ideal of masculinity that was to be strived for. The ideal of masculinity that was overtly emphasised was that which can broadly be described as 'Muscular Christianity'.[154] Within Muscular Christianity, the ideal man was disciplined, unwilling to succumb to ephemeral emotions, physically athletic, idealistic, and generally well-rounded educationally.[155] In short, they were to be 'muscular, moral and manly'.[156] Grey, for example, was known to excel at sports, and his schooling was said to be strikingly similar to *Tom Brown's School Days*.[157]

151 Stephen Heathorn, "How Stiff were their Upper Lips? Research on Late-Victorian and Edwardian Masculinity", *History Compass*, Vol.2(1) (January 2004), 1-7. John Tosh, "What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain", *History Workshop*, No. 38 (1994), 179-202.

152 Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857).

153 In particular see, J. L. Lant, "Public School: Ties That Bind: The Old School Tie: The Phenomenon of the English Public School, by Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy. Change", *The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 10(10) (1978), 56–58. Pedersen, Joyce Senders. Review of The Victorian Public School, by J. R. deS. Honey, Brian Simon, and Ian Bradley. History of Education Quarterly 19, no. 4 (1979): 467–75. P. J. Rich, *Chains of Empire: English Public Schools, Masonic Cabalism, Historical Causality, and Imperial Clubdom* (1991).

154 Ed. Donald E. Hall, *Muscular Christianity: embodying the Victorian Age* (2006). See chapter 5 for the application of muscular Christianity in Victorian public-schools.

155 Thomas E. Jordan, *Victorian Childhood: themes and variations* (1987), 172.

156 "Social Darwinism and Upper-Class Education in Late Victorian and Edwardian England", *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 27 (1–2) (2010), 78–97. J.A. Mangan, *'Manufactured' Masculinity -The Cultural Construction of Imperial Manliness, Morality and Militarism* (2013).

157 Otte, *Grey*, 13.

Gone were the days of the early Nineteeth century, when it was desirable for a man to be earnest, conscientious, charitable, pious, virtuous, and able to show sensitivity to plight. [158] Furthermore, it is important to note, that the aim of schooling was not just to educate, but to build character.[159] Muscular Christianity, it was believed, provided the future statesmen with the necessary character to one day lead the nation. Athletic endeavour was not the only method of character building for these schools. Competition was praised and actively encouraged, both academically and in sports. A competitive and, arguably, hostile atmosphere was fostered by the teachers and the boys themselves.[160] As one historian has summarised, attendance of a public school, in the second half of the nineteenth century, meant 'more often than not bullies, beatings, battles and bruises.'[161] Simon, for example, when reflecting on his schooling, many years later, wished he had taken 'more hard knocks' as well as giving out just as many to his peers.[162] Such a hostile atmosphere, devoid of significant empathy and where emotional expression was perceived as a sign of weakness, meant that these boys would likely have had to develop defense mechanisms of emotional suppression and self-control, to navigate the waters of their environment.

Moreover, as these were boarding schools, the physical and emotional support of a mother was not present. Everyone around them was male and invested in the system of masculinity which permeated these schools. Consequently, letter writing, as a means of emotional and perceptual validation, was common.[163] These letters were often addressed to their mothers, as it was not common to write to a male figure (and especially not a father), due to the learned behaviours of emotional closedness from one male to

158 In particular see Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning*, 195–239.

159 See, Rupert Wilkinson, "Political Leadership and the Late Victorian Public School", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 13, no. 4 (1962): 320-30. J. Springhall, 'Building the character of the British boy', in *Manliness and Morality*, Ed. Mangan and Walvin, 52–74.

160 For a detailed account of the use of games in Victorian and Edwardian public schools, see J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (2001)., Colm Fintan Hickey, "'A Potent and Pervasive Ideology': Athleticism and the English Elementary School", *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 28 (13): (2011), 1852–90. M. Huggins, "Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School (Review Essay)", *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 18 (4) (2001), 149–55.

161 J. Mangan, "Bullies, Beatings, Battles and Bruises: 'Great Days and Jolly Days' at One Mid-Victorian Public School", *The International Journal of the History of Sport: 'Manufactured' Masculinity -The Cultural Construction of Imperial Manliness, Morality and Militarism*, Vol.27(1-2)01 (January 2010), 30-59.

162 Simon, *Memoirs*, 23.

163 For a modern presentation of the benefits of letter writing as a means of emotional validation and perception, see James W. Pennebaker and Joshua M. Smyth, *Opening Up by Writing It Down, Third Edition: How Expressive Writing Improves Health and Eases Emotional Pain* (2016). For a study of letter writing as a form of comfort, specifically from men to women and during the First World War, see Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (2009), Chapter 1. In a similar vein, see Michael Roper, *The Secret Battle: Emotional Survival in the Great War. Cultural History of Modern War* (2009).

another.[164] Churchill's experience of school reflects this perfectly. He was in frequent contact with his mother on a range of issues, even those which concerned his father.[165] The early lives of these statesmen established patterns that continued into adulthood, namely an aversion to outward expression of emotion towards other men paired with the need for female confidants to fill the emotional void this left.

Moving on to their university experiences, fifteen of the nineteen Cabinet members attended university. Of these fifteen, thirteen attended either Oxford or Cambridge. Although many of the statesmen had not attended one of the 'great' public schools of Victorian Britain, they were now in the highly exclusive and unique environment of the late-Victorian 'Oxbridge' universities.[166] The Oxbridge universities were exclusive and elite, which meant that the social circles in which theses statesmen moved became even narrower than before, as did their perceptions of masculinity and the specific type of masculinity they were exposed to. However, with regards to precisely what they studied, law or the classices tended to be their chosen field of study. The classics, in particular, were taught extensively throughout middle- and upper-class schools, as well as at universities and their influence was to rival that of Christianity and Nationalism.[167] However, as with their schooling, perhaps the most obvious indication of the preponderance of the masculine was the near total absence of either female students or lecturers during their time at Oxbridge. Once again, these young men lacked significant female figures in their lives. Indeed, boarding at the universities meant that they were surrounded, almost exclusively, by men their own age. Evidence of encounters with women is very difficult to locate within the primary evidence from the time.

At Oxbridge, the masculine ethos of Muscular Christianity, that had been a far from subtle undercurrent in their schooling to date, became omnipresent and overt. For the young men of Oxbridge, there were clear and consistent masculine ideals, norms, and influences from their school days that were transmitted through similar methods. As with their earlier education, competition was praised and encouraged.[168] As Deslandes notes, the period

164 For a study of how Victorian fathers were perceived by their children, see Valerie Sanders, *The Tragi-Comedy of Victorian Fatherhood* (2009).

165 See Gilbert, Churchill, 19-25.

166 For social class and Oxbridge, see C. Anderson And Miriam Schnaper, *School and Society in England: Social Backgrounds of Oxford and Cambridge Students* (1952).

167 For a detailed examination of the role of the classics in the education of boys during the Victorian and Edwardian periods, see C. Stray, *Classics Transformed: Schools, Universities, And Society In England, 1830-1960* (1998). See also, Christopher Stray, "Culture and Discipline: Classics and Society in Victorian England", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3, no. 1 (1996): 77-85.

168 See P. R. Deslandes, "Competitive examinations and the culture of masculinity in Oxbridge undergraduate life, 1850 –1920", *History of Education Quarterly*, 42 (4) (2002), 544–78.

between 1850 and 1920 was 'characterized first and foremost by the triumph of the competitive ideal in British education.'[169] For those who did not excel academically, there remained intense sporting competition to pursue. Many of the statesmen excelled in highly competitive sporting pursuits at Oxbridge. For example, Sir Edward Grey was Oxford's tennis champion, Reginald McKenna was an elite rower, and Herbert Samuel was involved in several different sporting activities.[170] Even the less physically robust members of Cabinet, such as Charles Masterman, were noted to have been members of several sporting clubs at university.[171] Whether in the academic or sporting spheres, competition was encouraged. Alongside competitiveness, however, other masculine norms persisted from their pre-university education into their time at the Oxbridge universities. The importance of character was frequently stressed by men in positions of power in the education system.[172] From 1870 to the early 1900's, the Oxbridge universities were known to have promoted and encouraged traditions of anti-intellectualism. In the place of intellectualism was an emphasis on character, adventure, fortitude, the stiff upper lip, physical strength and sport.[173] As a result, many of the statesmen would likely have experienced continued emotional detachment from their fellow students, as emotion, being conflated with weakness, was to be suppressed.

Having left university, many of the statesmen entered a world that was dominated by the same masculine currents that had been so prevalent during their education. Now, however, they were its exponents as much as they were the recipients. Having previously been shaped by their environment, they were now in positions to shape it. However, these young men had omnipresent female influences in their lives, in the forms of young women they courted before marriage, their wives in later life and children. Indeed, some scholars have claimed that, particularly for men of upper-class backgrounds in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, masculine ideals learned in their formative years would seemingly be at odds with increased responsibilities as a husband and father at home.[174] Amongst upper class men, a number of studies have highlighted this feeling of increasing domesticity,

169 Paul R. Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920. Bloomington* (2005). 3.

170 Otte, *Grey*, 26. Farr, *McKenna*, 30-33. Wasserstein, Samuel, 15.

171 Hopkins, Masterman, 25.

172 Discipline and Power: University, History and the Making of an English Elite, 1870-1930: The University, History, and the Making of an English Elite, 1870-1930 Reba N. Soffer.

173 Leonard Schwarz, "Professions, Elites, And Universities In England, 1870-1970", *The Historical Journal,* 47, no. 4 (2004): 941-6. See also, Reba N. Soffer*, Discipline and Power: University, History and the Making of an English Elite, 1870-1930* (1995).

174 John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-class Home in Victorian England* (2007). John Tosh, "Home and Away: The Flight from Domesticity in Late-Nineteenth-Century England Re-visited", *Gender & History* 27, no. 3 (2015): 561-75. Stephen J. Heathorn, "How Stiff Were Their Upper Lips? Research on Late-Victorian and Edwardian Masculinity", *History Compass* 2, no. 1 (2004): 1-7.

which was not present in the days of their fathers.[175] Men were increasingly being expected to parent and nurture, as well as provide.

To be sure, a frequent response to increasing domesticity at home was the popularity of the private club, this story's protagonists often retreating into the familiarity of all-male spaces. Even during the crisis itself, attendance at these clubs appeared to continue unabated. For example, Grillion's was a popular haunt for many politicians, with known writer and socialite Edmund Gosse claiming that during the crisis itself he was dining at 'Grillion's two or three dinners out of four, and frequently in the company of ministers'.[176] Brooks's was also a popular haunt for many of London's highest echelons of society. Lord Riddell, a well-known figure in British politics at the time and close confident of Lloyd George, noted that the 'Other Club' met at Brooks's frequently, and even met just after the declaration of war.[177] It seems likely that these men would be drawn to these all-male spaces as they were familiar and congenial, a throwback to their schooling and university days where men spent time solely in the company of other men.[178] Perhaps, these clubs even represented a retreat into a safe space, where the familiarity of past behaviours offered a type of sanctuary. Some historians have argued that attendance at these clubs was due to a desire to either flee domesticity or to create their own form of domesticity in a masculine world.[179] Whatever the reason, it is clear that these clubs were a staple of everyday, upper-class male life.

The fact that these clubs were so popular illustrates that masculine spaces were important to these men as a form of comfort, a place where they understood how to behave and what was expected of them. They also show how masculinity shaped their existence, perhaps more so than any other cultural phenomenon, as these were the places these men chose to spend their free time in. Although queer history shows that normative masculinity does not just make distinctions between male and female, but also between men themselves, the majority of the men of this study seemed more than ready to seek a uniform existence.[180] Their experience of masculinity was remarkably similar, and would

175 Jeff Hearn, *Men in the Public Eye: The Construction and Deconstruction of Public Men and Public Patriarchies* [1992], 224.

176 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 3.

177 Ed. McEwen, *Riddell*, 88.

178 John Tosh, "New Men? The Bourgeois Cult of Home," *History Today*,46 (1996): 10.

179 John Tosh, "What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain", *History Workshop Journal* 38 (1994): 188–89. Amy Milne-Smith, "A Flight to Domesticity? Making a Home in the Gentlemen's Clubs of London, 1880–1914", *Journal of British Studies*, 45 (2006), 796–818. Amy Milne-Smith, "Club Talk: Gossip, Masculinity and Oral Communities in Late Nineteenth-Century London", *Gender & History*,, Vol.21(1) (April 2009), 86-106.

180 Amanda Vickery, "Golden age to separate spheres?: a review of the categories and chronology of English women's history", *Historical Journal*, vol. 36, no. 2 (1993), 383–414. See also, R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (2005).

thus shape their behaviours and perceptions more so than any other social norms. From their early years of exposure to Muscular Christianity and its continuation into their Oxbridge days, and then through their club lives, a little-changed ideal of masculinity lay behind every significant period of their existence. Additionally, their detachment from the (arguably) more feminine influences of open empathy throughout their adolescence and early adulthood, due to attending male-only boarding schools and then overwhelmingly male universities, reinforced behaviours that tended towards emotional repression towards other males. Perhaps, the topics of discussion were of topics unrelated to the home sphere, such as work, their careers, which also prevented emotions being shared. These two concurrent themes were present throughout the lives of the statesmen.

What is significant to take away from this examination of the masculine norms of the age, though, are ideas of character and a ‘stiff upper lip’. For most of these statesmen, a lifetime of exposure to a norm of emotional control, even repression, meant that emotional outbursts in the company of other men were likely something that would have been shunned. As will be shown later, Grey is frequently praised for his outward calm demeanour, whereas those who lose their cool are often derided by their peers during the crisis. However, the likes of Lloyd George and Asquith could express emotion in their interactions with others, conveyed through their words, tone, or mannerisms. This was, as will later be shown, a means of conveying the seriousness of a situation, for allowing the stiff upper lip to lapse could weaponize emotionalism to persuade and emotionally blackmail colleagues. For others, though, what the subsequent chapters will show is that the stiff upper lip, which had remained stable throughout most of their lives, would begin to wobble and quiver during the July Crisis. Nevertheless, the omnipresence and significance of the stiff upper lip is important, and certainly not something frivolous and irrelevant. It was a moral code with which they sought to govern their behaviours. As such, self-control and repression of ephemeral emotions can be considered a baseline (or a state of allostasis), because it meant that they were still in control of their stress enough to keep with social norms. Leaving allostasis, or losing control, meant abandoning the stiff upper lip.

Finally, it must also be noted that the reason masculinity was the main cultural norm shaper for these statesmen was partially because of the rise of secularism in Victorian Britain and the waning influence of Christianity. As we have seen, most of the statesmen of this study had grown up during a period where scepticism in Christianity had set in

amongst intellectuals.[181] This period was referred to, by Gladstone, as a 'strange epidemic'.[182] Atheism and agnosticism amongst intellectuals was on the rise, which led to a secularist movement in 1851.[183] Many schools sought to implement its more secular ideals, because they were more in sync with the movements of society as whole.[184] Some scholars have even gone as far as to say that in the middle and upper-class schools, English piety was no more than a superficial phenomenon.[185] Whether or not this was the case, it is clear that the charitable and pious Christian values of the past and the growing secular themes of Muscular Christianity were incompatible.

Despite Christianity being the main moral compass for many at the time, secularisation in Britain only increased during the Edwardian period.[186] Charles Masterman, later a member of the Liberal Cabinet during the July Crisis, remarked that the rising middle-class was 'losing its religion'.[187] Economic and academic progress were undermining religion, as was a rise in leisurely activities and hobbies. As such, morality and behavioural norms were no longer shaped as significantly by religion. However, some scholars have argued that broad and sweeping secularisation of British society *en masse* simply did not occur, and that although secularisation was prevalent in some sections of British society, it was by no means a norm for society as a whole.[188] In fact, attendances at Church of England Easter day services actually increased between 1901 and 1914.[189] This has led scholars to assert that religion, though its influence was waning in the early twentieth century, was still the main source of morality for much of British society.[190] Among the statesmen of this study, though, there were certainly signs of secularisation. Of course, there was also some religiosity present among the statesmen. Pease was a Quaker, a religion known for its pacific ideals, and was a well-known activist for various charities. Samuel was Jewish, and

181 For the origins, growth, influence, and significance of the movement, see Edward Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans: Popular Freethought in Britain, 1866–1915* (1980). Susan Budd, *Varieties of Unbelief: Atheists and Agnostics in English Society, 1850–1960* (1977). Warren S. Smith, *The London Heretics, 1870–1914* (1967).

182 David W. Bebbington, *The Mind of Gladstone: Religion, Homer, and Politics* (2004), 216.

183 For the growth of secularisation, see Patrick John Corbeil, "Grounding Non-Theological Morality: The Victorian Secularist Movement, Secular Ethics, and Human Progress", *Secularism and Nonreligion*, 8 (01 April 2019), Vol.8.

184 Helen Merrell Lynd, *England in the Eighteen Eighties* (1945), 340.

185 Elie Halevy, *Imperialism and the Rise of Labour (A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, V)* (1951), 168.

186 See Keith Robbins, "The Churches at the Cross-Roads", *History Today* 31, No. 11 (1981): 21– 25; Keith Robbins, History, *Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* (1993).

187 C. F. G. Masterman, *The Condition of England* (1909), 75.

188 See, Timothy Larsen, "The Bible and Belief in Victorian Britain", *Cahiers Victoriens & Edouardiens*, no. 76 (2012): 11. See also, Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, (2009), 163.

189 Kenneth Hyslon-Smith, *The Churches in England: volume 3* (1998) 144.

190 In particular, see Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850–1914* (1996). See also, Clive D. Field, "The Faith Society"? Quantifying Religious Belonging in Edwardian Britain, 1901-1914", *Journal Of Religious History*,37, no. 1 (2013): 39-63.

earlier in life had struggled to rectify his faith with the masculine ideals and lifestyles of late Victorian society. However, to contrast this, both Morley and Simon had fathers who were vicars, and yet both were known atheists. As such, the overwhelming majority of these men held secular ideals, and were certainly not as greatly influenced by religion as they were the masculine trends of their day. This can be seen during the July Crisis as, bar an attempt by Asquith to personally sway Pease towards remaining in Cabinet by referencing God, there is scant reference by the statesmen of either God or their faith in the available evidence. Nonetheless, it is hard to imagine that religions influence had totally waned by the early 1900's. Moreover, it would be difficult to argue that it was not a significant factor in the framing of the morals British society, at the time.

To summarise, this chapter has focused almost exclusively on masculinity to establish a baseline for behavioural norms amongst the statesmen. Whereas previous studies of the July Crisis have focused on the political backgrounds of the actors and protagonists, explaining their actions from a rational viewpoint, this study is more concerned with identifying behaviours which were out of the norm (to later identify instances of stress). This is not to say that the political backgrounds of the statesmen are unimportant. Far from it, and later chapters will present detailed descriptions of the contemporary political nuances, especially within the realm of foreign policy. However, it is necessary to provide the broader context within which these statesmen lived, placing them in their time and place in history. A broad, normative baseline of behaviours has now been established, and we can thus view the behaviours that do not fall within these parameters as being (potentially) caused by stress. With regards to this baseline of behaviour, there are three main points to consider. Firstly, that these were men who valued emotional reserve, which would have been instilled in them from a very young age. This meant that repressing outward signs of emotion was desirable so as to conform to the social and behavioural norms. As will be shown later, several of the statesmen were praised for keeping their calm in the face of the stress of crisis, whereas others were mocked for not being able to keep theirs. Secondly, the value placed on emotional reserve meant that outward displays of emotion were rare, hence any emotional outburst, especially in public settings and towards other men, is worthy of special consideration. The reason outbursts are so significant, is that, as the previous chapter demonstrated, stress can cause individuals to be unable to hide their own emotions. Furthermore, it may even cause them to seek emotional support from others, as a means of a coping mechanism for stress. What will be seen in subsequent chapters, is that many of the statesmen are unable to refrain from emotional outbursts, due to the stress of crisis. Moreover, some were so bewildered by events

around them that they sought out other men for their emotional support. As this chapter has shown, that was not a social norm of the time. Finally, these were men who sought and valued the company of other men, but reserved their inner feelings for letters written to female confidants. Thus, the written exchanges that many of the statesmen of this study engaged in are, arguably, extremely valuable pieces of evidence that allude to their emotional state.

Chapter 2- Identifying stress during the July Crisis.

The July Crisis was undoubtedly a stressful event for all involved. As this chapter will demonstrate, the statesmen were under a tremendous amount of stress, especially as the crisis itself escalated. A key facet in aiding in the identification of this stress, alongside the previously mentioned biomarkers, is the presence of outward signs of emotion. The statesmen displayed, as the following will show, some truly remarkable behaviour throughout. Tears, fists being hammered on tables and emotional outpourings to colleagues are just a few examples of the outward signs of emotion, which this study links directly to stress. The following will demonstrate that these were not isolated or unprovoked instances of emotion. Nor did they happen in a bubble. They were, each of them, as a result of the stress of the July Crisis. Until relatively recently, with an increased awareness as to the importance of mental health, society, often adopted a 'sink or swim' mentality towards how humans dealt with stressful circumstances or events. The world these statesmen inhabited was certainly not one where mental health was at the forefront of people's thoughts. As the previous chapter examined, the statesmen of this study inhabited a world where a stiff upper lip and restraint, in the face of stressful situations, were a qualities to be admired. Expressing emotion, whether physically or verbally, was not the norm for this group of men, and was indeed to be frowned upon. Outward displays of emotion represented a loss of control, which is the anthesis to a stiff upper lip. However, the following chapters will show that outward signs of emotion, which the stress of the July Crisis would dragged out of the statesmen, were often indications of just how strained the statesmen were. They represented a lack of control, which is a key part of how humans experience stress. This study draws a link between outward signs of emotion as an expression of a lack of control, due to it being so at odds with the statesmen's usual demeanour of emotional containment.

In essence, the statesmen's prized stiff upper lip first wobbled, and then shook uncontrollably, under the stress of the July Crisis. An inability to control one's own emotions, when stressed, is something most people have experienced during their lifetime. Though, we today live in a world where emotional expression is not as frowned upon as it was for the statesmen. Moreover, the world today has a greater knowledge of how a perceived lack of control is inexorably linked to stress. However, this study also breaks down and analyses not just the presence and impact of stress but also what *caused* this stress. As was shown in the introduction, stressors precede stress. However, they are numerous and can be highly individual. Therefore, this chapter is devoted to examining the

sources of stress the statesmen faced, both physical and psychological. That said, it will first open with an examination of the origins and history of the division within Cabinet over the conduct of British foreign policy. This provides context not only for this chapter but the following one too. Drawing heavily upon the historiography of Britain and the July Crisis, this chapter provides a clear and concise analysis of the two opposing group's positions with regards to Britain's foreign policy before the July Crisis, thus laying the groundwork for the following chapter's focus on the July Crisis itself. A full examination of the stressors of the July Crisis will be unpacked, ranging from the psychological to the physical.

The July Crisis for the British, as with the other European Powers, did not happen in a bubble. It was the culmination of many years, even decades, of evolving international tensions. Many causes of the July Crisis and the subsequent outbreak of the First World War are well known, including the splitting of Europe into alliance blocks, rising militarism, imperial competition, and domestic social tensions. There have even been those who have blamed the military rail timetables of the Great Powers, and how their inflexibility reduced freedom of action, for the outbreak of the war.[191] As the introduction to this thesis showed, most of these well-trodden paths have received ample attention from historians, both amateur and professional, since the war's outbreak. In Britain, however, there was another key factor that characterised the pre-war years, namely, a division in the Liberal Party over the aims of British foreign policy. Broadly speaking, the Liberals had been split over the conduct of Britain's foreign policy for some time. Historian Murial Chamberlain claims that the split had occurred during the Boer War, and never fully healed.[192] Several historians have published extensive works on the Liberal party's divisions over the conduct British foreign policy in the early twentieth century.[193] On the one side stood the Radicals, later to become the non-interventionists, and on the other the Liberal Imperialists, later to become the interventionists.

The split was based on the aims and ethics of Britain's foreign policy. The *Radicals,* hereafter referred to as the non-interventionists, had long feared continental entanglements, especially the Ententes with France and Russia, and opposed over-spending on the Royal Navy. They were also more pacifist in nature, preferring that Britain adopt a position of benevolent neutrality should a conflict arise. Amongst their number the

191 A.J.P. Taylor, *War by Timetable: How the First World War Began* (1969), 103-111. See also, D. Stevenson, 'War by timetable? The railway race before 1914', *Past and Present*, Issue 162 (Feb 1999), 163-194.

192 Muriel Evelyn Chamberlain, *"Pax Britannica"? : British Foreign Policy, 1789-1914* (2014), 204-205.

193 In particular, see Steiner and Neilson, *British Foreign Policy*. Wilson, *Policy of Entente*. A.J.P. Taylor, The Struggle for *Mastery in Europe 1848-1918* (1954).

most vociferous voices were Harcourt, Simon, Beauchamp, and Morley. Burns would be counted amongst their number during the July Crisis, but as he was more a Labour party man, he was not seen as a radical liberal. However, it is important to note that this group had been, in earlier crises, highly effective at mobilising itself and influencing the application of British foreign policy. For example, they even defeated the interventionist group by fifteen Cabinet member votes to five during the 1911 Agadir crisis, when an international crisis threatened to erupt over the effective blockade of the Moroccan port of Agadir by a German warship.[194] Moreover, this group was often buoyed by Radical backbenchers within the Liberal party, who had long been suspicious of Grey's foreign policy.[195] By the time of the July Crisis, the group had grown larger than just Morley, Beauchamp, Harcourt and Simon, the anti-interventionist section of Cabinet now consisting of, at a bare minimum, Harcourt, Beauchamp, Morley, Burns, Simon, Pease and Runciman.

The motivations for non-intervention were diametrically opposed to those of the interventionists. Historians tend to draw most attention to the non-interventionists' suspicion of Grey's foreign policy, especially with regards to ever-tightening Entente relations. Whereas the interventionists sought commitment to the balance of power paradigm, the non-interventionists are often shown as having a near-obsession with Britain maintaining a *free hand* in its foreign policy.[196] The free hand, to some historians, is often seen as the successor to its previous incarnation, *splendid isolation*.[197] For the non-interventionists, Britain should remain free of continental entanglements, as she had done for most of the previous century.[198] The consensus view amongst historians, is neatly summarised by Keith Wilson, who posits: 'the Asquith Cabinet contained a majority of ministers who were prepared to purchase peace through concessions to the power who they were encouraged to regard as the most likely disturber of it, Germany'. These were also men who were 'suspicious of the connection with France and detested that with Tsarist Russia', and who had did not want to 'see a British army employed on the continent of Europe.[199] In short, Russia and France were distrusted, and there was no cost too high in the pursuit of maintaining peace in Europe.

194 Wilson, *Policy of Entente*, 17-36 and 136. MacMillan, *The Road to 1914*, 439-465.
195 For detailed accounts, see Steiner and Neilson, 136-181. Wilson, *Policy of Entente*, 17-59.
196 Wilson, *Policy of Entente*, 135- 145.
197 For a detailed explanation of splendid isolation, see John Charmley, *Splendid isolation? Britain and the Balance of Power, 1874-1914* (1999).
198 Wilson, *The Policy of Entente*, 135-136. See also, Newton, *Darkest Days*, 32-35.
199 Wilson, *The Policy of Entente*, 135-136. See also, Newton, *Darkest Days*, 32-35.

As noted, in the years preceding the July Crisis, the non-interventionists were deeply mistrustful and critical of Grey's foreign policy, especially his dealings with France fearful lest the *Entente Cordiale* tie Britain to France in the event of a European war and thus remove Britain's freedom of action.[200] Furthermore, the non-interventionists were also concerned with the secretive nature of the military and naval talks between Britain and France, concerned that Grey was promising France more than was acceptable to Cabinet.[201] They were further alarmed by the contingency plans for sending military or naval assistance to France in the event of a Franco-German conflict, would inevitably drag Britain in.[202] Furthermore, as a consequence of these talks, the non-interventionists felt that the anti-German nature of the Entente might provoke a needless antagonism of Germany, a nation who many felt they had closer ties with historically.[203]

These fears over whether the Entente committed Britain to France and thus removed Britain's 'free hand' were intensified further by the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention in 1907 and the creation of the Triple Entente. Historians have identified several objections voiced by the non-interventionists to these closer ties with Russia. Firstly, it was argued that, rather than reducing tensions in Asia between the two powers, the Anglo-Russian Convention undermined British imperial security.[204] Second, and perhaps more significantly, there were moral and xenophobic issues at play, with some considering closer relations between a progressive and democratic Britain and an autocratic and repressive Russia unthinkable. Furthermore, Russophobia had been rife in Britain for decades,[205] as well as Russia having been the aggressor in imagined wars involving Britain due to its land-based empire clashing with Britain's sea based empire (before being succeeded by Germany as the main antagonist).[206] Clearly, seeking closer relations with Russia antagonised many in Britain, in all echelons of society.[207]

200 Ibid, chapter 5.
201 Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and the Origins*, 74-83. Wilson, *The Policy of Entente*, 85-86.
202 For Anglo-French military and naval discussions, see Keith M. Wilson, "To the western front: British war plans and the military entente with France before the First World War", *British Journal of International Studies*, vol. 3 (July 1977), 151-68.
203 See the seminal work by Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo German Antagonism 1860- 1914* (1987). However, see also Keith M. Wilson, "The question of anti-Germanism at the British Foreign Office before the First World War", *Canadian Journal of History*, Vol.18, No.1 (1983).
204 For a detailed assessment of Anglo-Russian tensions in Asia following the signing Anglo-Russian Convention, see Ira Klein, "The Anglo-Russian Convention and the Problem of Central Asia, 1907-1914", *Journal of British Studies,* vol. 11, no. 1 (1971), 126–147.
205 J.H Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain* (1950).
206 Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, 86.
207 See, Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Last Tsar. British Policy and Russia 1894-1914* (1995), and Zara Steiner and Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Origins*, chapter 4.

The numerically smaller group in Cabinet, The Liberal Imperialists (hereafter the interventionists), were almost diametrically opposed to their Cabinet counterparts. They viewed international treaties and agreements as sacrosanct and a means for maintaining peace throughout the world. This was especially the case as regards the ententes secured with France and Russia, which were seen as the cornerstone of both British imperial security and European peace. However, as concerned as they were with maintaining peace, the interventionists were not opposed to increasing defence spending (considered a useful deterrent), or even using force where necessary. Overtly, this group consisted of Grey, Haldane, Churchill, and Asquith, individuals who held some of the more senior Cabinet positions, especially vis-à-vis foreign policy. As such, they were often accused of obfuscating aspects of British foreign policy, especially how far-reaching the French and Russian ententes were. Indeed, they viewed closer ties with France and Russia as a realist approach to foreign policy, acknowledging that the British Empire had more pressure points with France and Russia than it did with Germany. Thus, by reaching agreements with France and Russia they could secure the far-flung frontiers of the Empire, albeit at the expense of potentially alienating Germany.

The interventionists supported entering the war because of the desire to maintain friendly relations with their imperial power allies, as well as maintaining the European balance of power. In short, it was held that maintaining a balance of power within Europe, with no one power or group gaining a significant advantage over the others, was the surest guarantee of peace on the continent which, in turn, allowed Britain to focus on its Empire. With Germany seen as the greatest threat to this power balance, Britain must uphold both the *Entente Cordiale* and the Anglo-Russian convention. To be sure, the primacy of the balance of power has long been recognised by historians. As Thomas Otte puts it, 'few concepts have preoccupied students of international affairs more, and fewer still present more problems to them, than the notion of the balance of power.'[208] A concise definition of the 'balance of power' is difficult, but a relatively lucid one was provided by the Foreign Office's Sir Eyre Crowe in his infamous memorandum of 1907;

> *The only check on the abuse of political predominance derived from such a position has always consisted in the opposition of an equally formidable rival, or of*

208 T.G. Otte, ""Almost a Law of Nature"? Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Office, and the Balance of Power in Europe, 1905-12", *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 14.2 (2003), 77. Also see Keith M. Wilson, 'British power in the European balance 1906-1914', in Ed. David Dilks, *Retreat from power: studies in Britain's foreign policy of the twentieth century, Vol.1: 1906-1939* (1981), 21-41. Conversely, for an international relations view on the balance of power and Anglo-German relations, see Paul A. Papayoanou, "Interdependence, Institutions, and the Balance of Power: Britain, Germany, and World War I", *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Spring, 1996), 42-76.

a combination of several countries forming leagues of defence. The equilibrium established by such a grouping of forces is technically known as the balance of power, and it has become almost an historical truism to identify England's secular policy with the maintenance of this balance by throwing her weight now in this scale and now in that, but ever on the side, opposed to the political dictatorship of the strongest single, State or group at a given time. [209]

For the interventionists, the omnipresent threat to the balance of power, particularly in the early twentieth century, was perceived to be from Germany and its allies. With the formation of Germany following its wars of unification, Benjamin Disraeli famously remarked to the House of Commons that 'the balance of power has been entirely destroyed, and the country which suffers most, and feels the effects of this great change most, is England.'[210]

However, in the years preceding the July Crisis it was not just Germany that represented a threat to the status quo. Crowe's memorandum continued;

So long as England remains faithful to the general principle of the preservation of the balance of power, her interests would not be served by Germany being reduced to the rank of a weak Power, as this might easily lead to a Franco-Russian predominance equally, if not more, formidable to the British Empire. [211]

Crowe was effectively warning that Britain's adherence to the balance of power was not without risks, but it was felt that Britain's power carried with it profound responsisiblities. For the interventionists, Britain was the arbiter of Europe. Ergo, the agreements with France and Russia, and their importance to maintaining the balance of power, were seen as fundamental.[212] In addition, the Entente with France conferred many other benefits that the interventionists placed great value on, not least in facilitating a reduction in naval expenditure, as Britain could now relocate the Mediterranean fleet to home waters following the 1912 naval agreement with France.[213] Furthermore, the signing of the

209 Ed. G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, British Documents on the Origins of the War, *1898–1914, Vol. III: The Testing of the Entente, 1904–6* (1928), 403.

210 Professor Patrick Salmon, "What's the context? Foundation of the German Empire, 18 January 1871", *FCDO Historians, Foreign affairs and diplomacy,* 20 January 2021, What's the context? Foundation of the German Empire, 18 January 1871 – History of government

211 Ed. G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, 403-404.

212 In particular, see Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (1998), 155.

213 Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and Origins*, 106-207. For the impact of naval planning, and the influence of the collapse of British trade in the event of entry into the war, or not, see N. Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution* (1999). For financial issues and their relation to the July Crisis, see Niall Ferguson, "Public finance and national security: the domestic origins of the First World War revisited", *Past and*

Entente effectively resolved colonial disputes between Britain and France that had raged for decades, almost prompting war during in the Fashoda Crisis of 1898.[214] And, of course, the Entente could potentially contain an increasingly hostile Germany.[215]

The interventionists also saw benefits from the Anglo-Russian convention, Grey considering it essential to the direction of British foreign policy. He had earmarked an understanding with Russia even before his time as Foreign Secretary, claiming that a 'bold and skilful Foreign Secretary might detach Russia from the number of our active enemies'.[216] This was because of the need to ensure that Russia, following its catastrophic performance during the Russo-Japanese war in 1905, was sufficiently strong to contain Germany's burgeoning power in Europe but not so as to challenge British interests in Asia.[217] As was rather poetically put by Sir Arthur Nicolson, Grey was constantly 'dancing on a tightrope' with regards to relations with Russia.[218] More specifically, those who advocated closer relations with Russia were keen to lessen, if not remove altogether, the Russian threat to British India.[219] This was mainly due to the manpower issues that prevented Britain from increasing troop numbers in India to meet a potential Russian threat; as Lord Morley stated '… That is our fundamental argument for the Convention, for we have not got the men to spare, and that's the plain truth of it'.[220] Furthermore, the new agreement resolved ongoing issues between Britain and Russia in Persia, alleviated tensions over the Dardanelles, and assuaged British concerns over Russia's growing naval strength.[221]

Present, Vol.142, No.1 (1994), 141-68. David Rowe, "The Tragedy of Liberalism; how globalisation caused the First World War", *Security Studies*, Vol.14, No.3 (2005), 407-47.

214 MacMillan, *The Road to 1914*, 142-171.

215 For British anti-German sentiment, see Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo German Antagonism 1860-1914* (1987). Keith M. Wilson "The question of anti-Germanism at the British Foreign Office before the First World War", *Canadian Journal of History*, Vol.18, No.1 (1983), 23-42.

216 H.C. Matthew, *The Liberal Imperialists* (1973), 204.

217 Zara Steiner and Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War* (2003, 2nd edition), 98-99. For the Russian challenge to British India, see Keith M. Wilson, "Grey and the Russian threat to India", *International History Review*, Vol.38, No.2 (2016), 275-84.

218 Nicholson to Buchanan, 21 April 1914, F.O. 800/373. For the influence of the Russo-Japanese war on the continental diplomatic situation, see also T.G. Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind: The Making of British Foreign Policy, 1865-1914* (2011), 240. T.G. Otte, ""The method in which we were schooled by experience": British Strategy and a Continental Commitment before 1914", in ed. Keith Neilson and Greg Kennedy, *The British Way in Warfare: Power and the International System, 1856-1956: Essays in the Honour of David French* (2010), 303. And, more specifically, ed. Rotem Kowner, *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War* (2007).

219 Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind: The Making of British Foreign Policy, 1865-1914*, 314.

220 Morley to Minto (private), 19 September 1907, Minto MSS, MS 12737.

221 "Memorandum respecting the Passage of Russian War Vessels through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus", Hardinge, 16 November, F.O. 800/92. For more on the specifics of Russia as a key determinant of British foreign policy, including Anglo-Russian naval considerations, from 1904-1914, see Wilson, *The Policy of Entente*, 85-99.

The preceding paragraphs have sought, albeit relatively briefly, to elucidate the complexities of British diplomatic strategies in the pre-war years, and to reveal longstanding splits in Cabinet over the fundamental aims of British foreign policy. This is necessary to contextualise the events of the July Crisis, as existing divisions would intensify as the crisis unfolded, causing a great deal of stress in the process. Indeed, the Cabinet split was the defining feature of the July Crisis from a British perspective, especially in its final days, as will be explored in subsequent sections. For now, it is important to attend to other factors that played their part in adding to the stress of crisis.

Stressors of the July Crisis

As shown, in order for the stress response to be activated, a stressor must be present, and this stressor could be physical or psychological, ubiquitous or idiosyncratic. It must, however, be categorised as a challenge or threat that exceeds one's capability to deal with it, thus leading to the engagement of the stress response system. The impact of the stressor is contingent upon how controllable an individual perceives it to be: the stressor's impact increases as perceived control diminishes. To be sure, it is not a stretch to claim that a diplomatic crisis is an extremely stressful event, which in turn would mean that several stressors are often present throughout crises. Recent studies have shown how Prime Minister Anthony Eden dealt with both the stress of crisis and his own private health issues during the Suez Crisis, for example.[222] Similarly, Tony Blair apparently leaned heavily on his faith to cope with the stress over the decision to take Britain into the Iraq war in 2003.[223]

Returning to the July Crisis, this section will identify and categorise the stressors that the statesmen faced. There were, of course, those which were more ubiquitous to all humans (such as workload, social pressure, the controllability of the stressor, or physical demands), as well as those which were more unique to the July Crisis itself (the so-called 'march of events'). Immediately prior to the July Crisis, the international tensions that had characterised relations between the Great Powers appeared to be dissipating. In May

222 For example, see Peter J. Kernahan, "An Iatrogenic Injury? Anthony Eden and the Suez Crisis of 1956", *The American surgeon*, 89.6 (2023): 3002–3006. Owen Owen, "The Effect of Prime Minister Anthony Eden's Illness on His Decision-Making During the Suez Crisis", *QJM: monthly journal of the Association of* Physicians,98.6 (2005): 387–402.

223 www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/5373525/Tony-Blair-believed-God-wanted-him-to-go-to-war-to-fight-evil-claims-his-mentor.html , www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/jun/06/tonyblair.religion .

1914, Arthur Nicholson even remarked that he had never seen such 'calm waters'. [224] Domestically, however, things were markedly less tranquil. 1914 began with intense debates over naval estimates, continued with the budget fiasco into June and July, whilst debates over Home Rule in Ireland also came to a head. Though these event would have been more stressful for some statesmen than others (Lloyd George and the budget fiasco, for example), in the months leading up to July 1914, Asquith claimed that 'Ireland and domestic matters consumed all of Cabinet's energies'.[225]

Historians too have illustrated the considerable impact of the domestic situation within Britain on the Asquith government of 1914.[226] However, despite Asquith acknowledging how energy-sapping the Home Rule issue was for Cabinet, the volume of diary entries and personal correspondence referring to this issue was far less substantial than that referring to the July Crisis, suggesting that the latter was perceived to be a far more significant stressor. This is not to say that Home Rule was *not* a stressor for the statesmen involved, and the increased workloads this issue caused for the likes of Asquith, Birrell, Lloyd George, and Churchill, would have a broader significance as the July Crisis unfolded. Put simply, the two crises overlapped and cannot be viewed in isolation. Nonetheless, immediately prior to the July Crisis, there is little evidence to suggest that there stress levels were causing undue alarm. Indeed, most of Cabinet would have been looking ahead to the end of the Parliamentary session in August, with a resumption not planned until December.[227] That said, an additional stressor that summer, one felt by all, was the unusually hot weather. In central London, it was said to be so hot that it was almost unbearable.[228] Although the weather was unlikely to have caused any of the statesmen to enter into allostatic load, it was nonetheless an additional daily stressor.

With regards to individual statesman in the period immediately preceding the July Crisis, the curious case of Charles Masterman stands out as the only notable case of an individual struggling with several stressors. Although little evidence exists of Masterman's actions and behaviour during the July Crisis, and accepting that he was not a major Cabinet player, one can infer a considerable amount about his allostatic state. By early-June, Masterman appeared troubled personally and professionally, displaying both bio and

224 Nicholson to Goschen (5 May 1914), F.O 800/374.
225 Otte, *Statesman of Europe*, 484.
226 In particular, see Jérôme Aan De Wiel, "1914: What Will the British Do? The Irish Home Rule Crisis in the July Crisis", *International History Review*, 37, no. 4 (2015): 657-81. Also, Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and the Origins*, 229.
227 Gilbert, *Churchill*, 263.
228 Ms. Milner Dep. 85, 1914 diary.

psychological markers of allostatic load.[229] Lloyd George noted in early 1914 that Masterman had been 'neglecting his work, drinking more than is good for him' and looked 'very unkempt and untidy'.[230] This was despite Masterman having spent the first months of 1914 recuperating on the continent after having lost re-election to his constituency following his appointment to a Cabinet post (seeking re-election in one's own constituency following a Cabinet appointment was normal procedure pre-1918, and victory in said re-elections were considered a formality).[231] Masterman began 1914 by losing two re-elections, a considerable personal blow.[232] In fact, he found himself without a parliamentary seat throughout 1914, but would continue to attend Cabinet meetings. His standing was exceptionally low amongst his colleagues in Cabinet, and his on-going battles with Lloyd George over the re-election debacles were unlikely to have eased his troubles.[233] Masterman's biographer notes the 'demons' in his personal life that were taking their toll by 1914, these 'demons' being Masterman's struggles with his sexuality (including an alleged attraction to schoolboys) which, in turn, led to bouts of nervous depression.[234] Whatever the cause of his depression (it might also have been inherited from his father),[235] Masterman was, by early 1914, beginning to unravel both physically and psychologically.

Despite the unique case of Masterman, there is no evidence to suggest that the remaining statesmen were being subjected to anything other than what could be considered daily or controllable stressors. Furthermore, personality clashes within the Cabinet itself were also nothing beyond the ordinary, unlikely to have caused an abnormal spike in stress. In fact, as a collective, the Cabinet itself had been noted as being relatively stable, and that good personal and professional relations were maintained.[236] This was all set to change, however, from the end of July onwards, as the July Crisis intensified. The statesmen, upon learning of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, on 24 July, were to have their collective focus shifted towards events transpiring in Europe. As Grey remarked, this was the 'most

229 Eric Hopkins, *Charles Masterman (1873-1927), Politician and Journalist; The Splendid Failure* (1999), 150.
230 John M. McEwan, *The Riddell Diaries 1908-1923* (1986), 83, 13th June 1914 entry.
231 Eric Hopkins, *Charles Masterman (1873-1927), Politician and Journalist; The Splendid Failure* (1999), 150.
232 Hopkins, *Masterman*, 138.
233 Hopkins, *Masterman*, 137-138, 142-145.
234 Ibid, 142. 18-19.
235 H. C. G Matthew, "Masterman, Charles Frederick Gurney (1873–1927)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004; online. See also, Julia Stapleton, "The New Liberal Vision Of C. F. G. Masterman: Religion, Politics And Literature In Eearly Twentieth-Century Britain" *Modern Intellectual History*, 17, no. 1 (2020): 89.
236 Cameron Hazlehurst, "Asquith as Prime Minister, 1908–1916", *The English historical review*, LXXXV.336 (1970): 507.

formidable document' addressed from one state to another.[237] In essence, in retaliation for the assassination of their Archduke, and with significant pressure from Berlin to deal decisively with the Serbs, the Austrians all but demanded Serbian sovereignty to be handed over. If they did not comply, war would be declared. This ultimatum was to prove the turning point in the July Crisis, where the rest of the British statesmen were to be engulfed, as Grey had already been for weeks, in a rapidly deteriorating European situation.

The July Crisis

During the July Crisis itself significant stressors were present. Firstly, the sheer number of Cabinet meetings that took place in such a short period of time would have been a source of stress. During the crisis, these meetings were daily, and sometimes twice daily.[238] In addition, John Young highlights the emotional nature of these meetings, and how draining they were for the participants.[239] They also led to extremely late nights for many of the Cabinet members; although working late was not abnormal, the number of meetings and the volume of information they had to digest was exceptional during the July Crisis, something that will be examined in more detail below. Even a cursory glance at the primary and secondary literature shows just how many meetings took place.[240] As Haldane put it, Cabinet appeared to be sitting in 'near permanence', and everyone was becoming jaded.[241]

In a similar vein, although statesmen were familiar with the responsibility of power, exercising this during a major international crisis would have been unusually stressful. This was amplified by the fact that those outside of Cabinet pressed them relentlessly for information on the crisis that was rapidly unfolding across Europe. Those pressuring them included backbench MP's, press barons, businessmen and bankers, as well as close friends and acquaintances. Such external pressure was part and parcel of being a cabinet minister, but the intensity and overt expressions of emotion during some of the exchanges added to the stress. For example, some bankers urged Lloyd George in late July to keep Britain out of the upcoming war: Lloyd George reported to Riddell how the Governor of the

237 Www.blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/formidable-document/
238 See Ed. David, *Hobhouse Diaries*, 179.
239 John W Young, "Emotions and the British Government's Decision for War in 1914", *Diplomacy and statecraft,* 29.4 (2018): 543–564.
240 For example, see Ed. David, *Hobhouse Diaries*, 179.
241 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 10.

Bank of England had begged him, with 'tears in his eyes', to keep Britain from being 'dragged in', for it would mean the country's financial ruin.[242] Meanwhile, Harcourt and Grey were frequently approached by backbenchers such as Percy Molteno, Arthur Ponsonby, and others, seeking updates on whether Britain would remaining aloof from a European conflict.[243] These exchanges often became heated, bordering on the physical.[244]

Some particularly extraordinary behaviour was exhibited by the Liberal grandee, Lord Bryce. Bryce, well-connected to the Cabinet as a former ambassador to Washington, did not handle the crisis well. According to Edmund Gosse, the well-known writer and personal friend of both Grey and Haldane, Asquith and Haldane were subjected to considerable pressure from Bryce on 31 July:

> *Last night, at Asquith's, there was a most unpleasant incident. Both Kitchener and Jellicoe were there, and Bryce, whom it would have been better not to have irritated, made a scene, raved about the necessity of peace at all costs… Asquith had to rise up from the table in order to make a division, and Bryce would not go into the drawing room, but went straight home.* [245]

This was not an isolated incident. Gosse also noted how, on 4 August in the Princes Chamber in Westminster, another 'extraordinary spectacle*'* unfolded, Bryce acting like 'an extremely angry chimpanzee', ranting and raving, informing everyone just how incensed he was by Britain's entry into the war.[246] Clearly, emotions were running high and were, at times, being expressed freely, undoubtedly a stressor to those on the receiving end of it. One individual on the receiving end of much emotion was Edward Grey, a man who would, as we will later see, bear the brunt of the crisis. However, before examining Grey's experience of stress during the July Crisis, two more key stressors need to be unpacked and examined: first, the so-called 'march of events'; second, how a perceived lack of control nourished a certain degree of fatalism on the part of the statesmen involved.

The march of events: a collective perception of helplessness?

242 Ed. McEwen, *Riddell Diaries*, 85.
243 See several of Harcourt's entries in his diary. Young, "Harcourt Diary", 437-450.
244 See Newton, *Darkest Days*, 283-297.
245 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 6.
246 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 25.

The march of events will be dominating. [247]

The 'march of events', a phrase originally coined by Churchill in a Cabinet note to Lloyd George, has been deployed extensively by those statesmen who were directly involved in the July Crisis. Even a cursory glance at the available archival evidence or secondary literature reveals the extent of the phrase's usage. However, despite the phrase's prevalence, historians tend to disagree as to its significance and utility. Wilson contends that it 'served as an excuse to put actions both taken and not taken in the best possible light,' whilst Hazelhurst sees a correlation between the march of events and 'drift towards intervention'. Steiner and Neilson, meanwhile, consider the march of events to be a reference to the Cabinet's 'unwillingness [to] face the ultimate question'.[248] The 'march of events' does, at first glance, evoke the rapidity of events as experienced by those directly involved. The first recorded instance of a Cabinet member speaking of the rapidity of events was Samuel's note to his wife that 'events are marching swiftly along the path that has been traced.'[249] That same day, Asquith wrote to Venetia Stanley that 'we had another turn of the Kaleidoscope to-day,' an analogy later employed by Crewe when noting how events were 'changing like a kaleidoscope… so amazingly rapid that we all feel as though we were living in a novel by Wells, and no real world.'[250] The shared reference to kaleidoscopes is very specific, suggesting that expressions of despair at the speed of events were articulated collectively.

A sense of events spiralling out of control was also being felt outside of Cabinet. The well-connected Gosse noted on 28 July how things were moving 'very rapidly'.[251] Similarly, in the Foreign Office, the speed of events was not lost on Nicholson. On 29 July he wrote to Goschen of the 'startling rapidity' of events, and how 'we are being overwhelmed with such a crowd of telegrams'.[252] It was not only the rapidity of events that prompted a feeling of hopelessness. As Nicholson alluded to, the sheer volume of constantly-evolving information was staggering. Asquith wrote again to Venetia Stanley on 1 August that 'the number of new questions that come forward every hour is inconceivable'.[253] Even relatively minor members of the Cabinet were experiencing information overload, Hobhouse stating on 3 August that the numbers of telegrams were 'in excess of any

247 Churchill to Lloyd George, Cabinet note, undated (August 1914), LG/ C/ 13B/ 10.
248 Wilson, *The Policy of Entente*, 146; Hazelhurst, *Politicians at War*, 77; Steiner and Neilson, Britain and the Origins, 250.
249 HS to BS, 30 July 1914, Samuel MSS, A/157/ 692, ff. 34-35.
250 Ed. Brocks, *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, 30 July 1914, 135; Pope-Hennessy, Lord Crewe, 144.
251 Gosse Diary, 5.
252 Nicholson to Goschen, 29 July 1914, FO800/375, Miscellaneous correspondence, volume 4, 1914.
253 Ed. Brocks, *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, 1 August 1914, 140.

previous record, and some of the staff [were] working for 36 hours continuously'.[254] The volume of telegrams meant that information became out-of-date very quickly, amplifying the impression of events moving too rapidly which, in turn, increased the sense that the controllability of events was being lost. The events of the July Crisis seemingly took on a life force of their own, and the statesmen seemed powerless to stop it.

Certainly, by the time the decision for war had been taken, a conviction had taken hold that, as Hobhouse wrote to C.P. Scott on 4 August, 'events (had) moved too fast for us'. Margot Asquith's diary entry that day noted similarly how it had 'all happened in such a short time. On the 30th July everyone was talking of Ireland'.[255] At the same time, the speed of events and information overload were not the only things that affected statesmen during the July Crisis. There are also the frequent expressions of fatalism present throughout. As the crisis intensified, allusions to fatalism increased. Of course, given that the protagonists were (as noted previously) not prone to sharing their innermost feelings, instead privileging the maintenance of a 'stiff upper lip,' this fatalism was mostly shared with their female confidants. For example, Churchill famously wrote to his wife on the 28 July;

> *Everything tends towards catastrophe and collapse. I am interested, geared up and happy. Is it not horrible to be built like that? The preparations have a hideous fasciation for me. I pray to God to forgive me for such fearful bouts of levity. Yet I wd do my best for peace, and nothing would me wrongfully to strike the blow… I wondered whether those stupid Kings or Emperors cd not assemble together and revivify kingship by saving the nations from hell but we all drift on in a kind of dull cataleptic trance.* [256]

Samuel echoed Churchill's sentiments, but used historical reference to illustrate the severity of the situation. On the 30 July, he wrote to his sister that the outbreak of war 'will be the most horrible catastrophe since the abominations of the Napoleonic time, and in many respects worse even than they'.[257] Such thoughts had not dissipated a few days later, Samuel writing to his sister that the world teetered on 'the verge of a great catastrophe', and that 'the bitter experience of these days may bring a greater hatred of

254 Ed. David, *Hobhouse*, 180.
255 Ed. Wilson, *C.P. Scott Diary*, 99; Ed. Brocks, *Margot Asquith Diary*, 4 August 1914, 13.
256 Www.winstonchurchill.org/the-life-of-churchill/rising-politician/1910-1919/summer-1914-age-39/
257 HS TO BS, 30 July 1914, HLRO HS A/157/692.

the use of force in the next generation'.[258] Samuel, as will later be examined, was one of the more level-headed members of Cabinet, with no recorded instances of him losing his cool in any of the primary evidence. However, these letters to his sister, a close female confidant, betrayed a privately-expressed fatalism due to the lack of controllability of events. Similarly, Haldane wrote to his own sister in alarmist terms, prophesying an 'old, peaceful, beautiful world' being replaced by 'one of horrors'. Interestingly, he would go on to note that 'we have done all in our power. But war is now on Europe.'[259] This was on the 2 August, with still two more stressful days to go until Britain was to enter the war. Finally, Lloyd George wrote of 'moving through a nightmare world these days', in language very similar to that of Haldane, seemingly powerless to alter the 'destined course of events'.[260] There is evidence of very similar language being used outside of Cabinet. Horace Rumbold, Goschen's deputy in Berlin, wrote to his wife that 'the whole thing is, to me, a gigantic nightmare', and that he kept on 'wondering whether I am in a sane world'.[261] Interestingly, such comments use very similar language to describe the feeling of helplessness, reflecting, perhaps, their shared social and educational backgrounds. But the similarities in language also allows us to speculate that the statesmen were using the same rhetorical devices when discussing the crisis amongst themselves, at least occasionally and privately. The 'march of events' was inducing an air of resignation. Samuel uses the future modal 'will', casting war as an inevitability. Churchill speaks of a 'dull, cataleptic trance,' similarly acknowledging the uncontrollability of events. Deployment of fatalistic language indicates how individuals felt powerless to control the situation. Words like 'nightmare,' or evoking how events were 'destined' tie in with Crewe's 'no real world', or Haldane's 'world of horrors'. The language used speaks of events having rapidly assumed an uncontrollable life force of their own, leaving Europe on the brink of catastrophe.

A significant number of the Cabinet verbalised these fears as to the uncontrollability of events. For some, such overt expressions of fear were uncharacteristic. Samuel and Crewe, for example, were not known for their expressive use of language or their volatile temperament, instead having a reputation for being rather cold and calculated individuals. In fact, both have been praised for providing mediating voices that helped the Cabinet come together later in the crisis. Yet, they too spoke of the 'march of events'. By contrast,

258 HS TO BS, 3 August 1914, HLRO HS A/157/698.
259 Haldane to Elizabeth Haldane, 2 August 1914, Haldane MSS 6012.
260 Ed. K. O. Morgan, *Lloyd George Family Letters 1885-1936* (1973), 167. Ed. Wilson, *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott*, 98.
261 Horace Rumbold to Louisa Rumbold, 2 August 1914, in M. Gilbert, *Sir Horace Rumbold: Portrait of a Diplomat, 1869-1941* (1973), 118-119.

although Churchill is often seen as a character prone to hyperbole and exaggeration, one can read into his words a sense of resignation. However, it is also important who the remarks were addressed to, as most cases of fatalism were addressed to female correspondents. As Hazelhurst has noted, Ministers displayed 'extraordinary freedom' when communicating with friends and family regarding confidential government information.[262] They seemed more comfortable confiding their innermost thoughts and feelings with female confidents, almost certainly a learned behaviour from childhood.

The sheer rapidity of events, combined with information overload and a general understanding of what modern war entailed, combined to generate a collective feeling of helplessness. Essentially, crisis amounted to one enormous, uncontrollable stressor. A consideration of how humans react to uncontrollable stressors enhances our understanding the impact of the 'march of events' during the July Crisis. As shown, humans are most likely to verbalise their discomfort when events are perceived to be spiralling out of control. The effort of verbalising helplessness is a means of reasserting control, through shared helplessness. However, the form these verbalisations take are as important as the fact that they occur. Simply put, the more uncontrollable a stressor is perceived to be, the more an individual resorts to emotive language. Statesmen are no different to ordinary people insofar as they will use emotive at times of crisis. In *Leaders Under Stress*, the authors showed how the language of former U.S. Presidents changed, becoming more or less emotive, as stress levels fluctuated.[263]
interestingly, conspiracy theories tend to work in a similar fashion. Research shows that conspiracy theories circulate more freely, and are used more freely, when;

> *…they promise to satisfy important social psychological motives that can be characterized as epistemic (e.g., the desire for understanding, accuracy, and subjective certainty), existential (e.g., the desire for control and security), and social (e.g., the desire to maintain a positive image of the self or group).* [264]

There is some degree of overlap between the allusions to the 'march of events' and these three listed criteria for the dissemination of conspiracy theories. A key prerequisite for more free-flowing conspiracy theories is the presence of a stressor that is deemed highly uncontrollable or unpredictable. The Covid pandemic, for example, saw several conspiracy

262 Hazelhurst, *Politicians at War*, 78.
263 Wiegele, Hilton, Oots and Kisiel, *Leaders Under Stress* (1985).
264 Douglas, Karen M, Robbie M Sutton and Aleksandra Cichocka, "The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories", *Current directions in psychological science : a journal of the American Psychological Society*, 26.6 (2017): 538542.

theories arise that became far more widespread than previously thought possible. An unprecedented and terrifying pandemic provided the uncontrollable 'stressor' that allowed this to happen. To be sure, the 'march of events' and the bouts of fatalism induced cannot be seen as a conspiracy theory, but the efforts on the part of statesmen to assert control over a stressor by accepting their own helplessness bears some striking similarities. Their response to the 'march of events' was a collective expression of helplessness prompted by the existence of a sudden and severe stressor. None of this is to say that the actors can be absolved of any responsibility for their actions. In fact, by buying into the almost conspiracy theory-like idea of the 'march of events', it is arguable that the statesmen may have reduced, albeit inadvertently, their ability to act or adapt to events.

This was not helped by Grey's policy throughout the July Crisis, as well as Britain's own ability to influence events. Whilst not a marginal actor, Britain was unable to exert as much influence over Austria-Hungary and Serbia as Germany or Russia. Grey recognised this and formulated his strategy accordingly, focusing his efforts on Berlin and Paris (through their ambassadors in London). The policy Grey pursued throughout the crisis was one of ambiguity, keeping both his allies and adversaries guessing over Britain's role in any potential conflict. The goal was not to embolden the French (and, subsequently, the Russians) with direct promises of intervention, nor to antagonise the Germans via a threat of intervention. On the 27 July, following a Cabinet meeting, Hobhouse summarised Grey's policy as it was perceived by Cabinet;

> *If she (Britain) kept aloof from France and Russia we should forfeit naturally their confidence forever, and Germany would almost certainly attack France while Russia was mobilising. If on the other hand we said we were prepared to throw our lot in with the Entente, Russia would at once attack Austria. Consequently our influence for peace depended on our apparent indecision.* [265]

On the 29 July, Harcourt offered a similar summation of Grey's policy, noting that the Foreign Secretary had told the German Abassador that 'you must not assume that we shall not join France,' whilst simultaneously telling the French Ambassadors 'you must not assume that we shall join you'. Should Britain commit to a position, concluded Harcourt, their ability to mediate would be 'hopelessly weakened'.[266]

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265 Ed. David, *Hobhouse*, 27 July 1914, 177.

266 Harcourt Diary, 29 July 1914, Young, John W., "Lewis Harcourt's Journal of the 1914 War Crisis", *International history review*, 40.2 (2018): 440.

By adopting this ambiguous position, Grey was, as Steiner and Neilson put it, 'both the beneficiary and the prisoner of his own system'. It enabled him to limit the number of voices from within Britain, as well as to prevent escalation on the continent.[267] Otte also notes Britain's inability to influence the other powers of the July Crisis, stating that 'the problem was that Paris and St Petersburg were not to be swayed and that Berlin did not listen to its own ambassador'.[268] As a result, Grey's strategy was certainly more passive than active. It also prevented the Cabinet being more proactive, Grey's ministerial colleagues having little choice but to adopt a 'wait and see' attitude to unfolding events. This sense of an inability to act was further drummed home by Grey to Cabinet on the 29 July, when he stated that he did not 'believe that our (Britain) action wd. be a real deciding element in the outbreak (or not) of war'.[269] Furthermore, this policy also concentrated any action that could be taken firmly within the hands of Grey himself. This meant that events, such as the Austro-Hungarian declaration of war on Serbia, on the 29 July, would have been viewed with a sense of powerlessness by the remainder of Cabinet. They were being informed of events after they had transpired, denied the opportunity to influence them. This amplified the prevailing sense of helplessness. As Pease remarked, Britain 'could do nothing right' in the eyes of the rest of Europe, but would still be 'liable for anything that happened'.[270] Spender, who spent a good deal of time with Cabinet ministers throughout the crisis, also noted on 29 July that the power to act was 'slipping out to the hands of the minsters & diplomatists into those of the General staffs'.[271] Samuel perhaps summarised the situation most eloquently that same day. 'We nineteen men round the table at Downing St. may soon have to face the most momentous problem which men can face,' he noted: 'Meantime our action is held in suspense, for if both sides do not know what we shall do, both will be the less willing to run risks.[272]

Sir Edward Grey's experience of stress

Of all the British statesmen, Sir Edward Grey, was naturally the most involved in the July Crisis. Where other statesmen were drawn into the crisis from 24 July, following the

267 Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and the Origins*, 242.

268 T.G. Otte, "'Postponing the Evil Day': Sir Edward Grey and British Foreign Policy", *International history review*, 38.2 (2016): 259.

269 Harcourt Diary, 29 July 1914, Young, "Lewis Harcourt's Journal of the 1914 War Crisis.", 440.

270 Pease Diary, 29 August 1914, Wilson, "The Cabinet Diary of J.A. Pease, 24 July- 5 August 1914", *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society. Literary and Historical* Section, XIX, 3 (1983), 43-45.

271 Memo by Spender, August 1914, Spender MSS, BL, Add. MSS 46932, fos. 172-173.

272 HS to BS, 29 July 1914, Samuel MSS, A/157/691, ff. 29-31.

Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, Grey had already been working almost non-stop since the assassination of the Archduke on the 28 June. As such, Grey was much more exposed (and for a much longer period) to the stress of crisis than any of his Cabinet colleagues. Assessing Grey's mental state during the crisis is no easy task, especially as Grey's personal papers were destroyed by a fire at his Fallodon residence in 1917. As such, no known personal accounts exist that would shed light on his innermost thoughts. Although his autobiography recounts the crisis in some detail, details of his personal feelings at the time are scarce.[273] Furthermore, eyewitness accounts, from those around him at the time, only begin to appear in the second phase of the July Crisis, from the 24 July onwards. However, thanks to the large amount of official Foreign Office documents, as well as some accounts from his colleagues at the time, it is possible to piece together enough evidence to assess Grey's experience of stress during the opening phases of the July Crisis.

Grey's overall conduct during the July Crisis has divided opinion amongst historians; he certainly remains a polarising figure not just for his time as Foreign Secretary, but also on account of his character and personality.[274] The intention here is not to be drawn into the debate over Grey's conduct, nor to present a detailed biographical account of his background and life.[275] Instead, it seeks to present and assess just how much stress he was under during the opening phase of the crisis, from the assassination in Sarejevo until the Austrian ultimatum. Grey was first officially informed of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand on the 28 June, shortly after it transpired.[276] Grey, often much maligned for his oscillation and hesitation during the July Crisis, was actually one of the first European statesmen to accurately surmise the significance of the assassination and its wider ramifications for the Great Powers.[277] As Otte notes, Grey understood that the assassination was more than an isolated incident in the Balkans, and that the peace of Europe now hinged on the response of the ageing Austrian Emperor.[278] Despite Grey's apprehensions, the overall mood in London was far more sanguine. Edmund Gosse, a famed writer and poet who was much involved in the inner circles of Westminster, noted that barely anyone considered a European war likely in the month following the

273 Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of First World War*, 244.
274 For a summary of the criticisms of Grey's performance during the July Crisis, see Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus* (2002), 191-200.
275 A thoroughly detailed biography already exists, from which this chapter will extensively borrow from. See, T. G. Otte, *Statesmen of Europe: A Life of Sir Edward Grey* (2020).
276 De Bunsen to Grey, 29 June 1914, BD xi, no. 10.
277 Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, 234. Michael G. Ekstein, "Some Notes on Sir Edward Grey's Policy in July 1914", *The Historical Journal* 15, no. 2 (June 1972), 321-324. Thomas Otte, ""Postponing the Evil Day": Sir Edward Grey and British Foreign Policy", *The International History Review*, 38,no. 2 (2016): 258–60. Otte, *July Crisis*, 141-142.
278 Otte, *Statesman of Europe*, 495-496

assassination.[279] Gosse was a close friend of both Grey and Haldane, yet neither appeared to refer to the unfolding crisis, suggesting, perhaps, that they still considered the crisis to be controllable.

Grey might also have been trying to shield his colleagues from the stressor of the Balkans Crisis, but this came at a price. It meant that he was exposed to the stressors of the crisis much earlier than his Cabinet colleagues and even others in the Foreign Office. On 6 July, he was 'disturbed' by a report from Lichnowsky on events in Vienna since the assassination.[280] This dovetailed with information he had received of a talk the previous day between the British ambassador to Vienna and his Russian counterpart, where the latter asserted that a 'Servian war meant a general European war.'[281] Sir Edward Goschen, the British ambassador to Germany who was currently on leave in London, noted on the 11 July that Grey was 'nervous' as regards the unfolding tensions between Austria and Serbia.[282] Clearly, whilst most of the Cabinet were only aroused to the dangers of a major European war from 24 July, Grey had been becoming increasingly uneasy for several weeks. As shown earlier, the longer the duration of the stressor the more impact it is likely to have. Furthermore, the longer its duration, the more difficult it becomes for the individual to remain in allostasis.

Grey was certainly alert to the danger that Austro-Hungary would be forced into action. His nervousness stemmed not only from a desire to prevent war between Serbia and Austro-Hungary, but also to prevent any conflict dragging in the Great Powers through alliance bloc commitments. This was something Grey realised was possible far earlier than his Cabinet colleagues, remarking on 20 July how he 'hated the idea of a war between any of the Great Powers' and found it 'detestable' that they should be 'dragged into war' by Serbia.[283] Grey's desire to avoid a general European war also reflected his fears concerning the potential collapse of the European status quo and the economic disaster that a general war would entail. His memoir posited this anxiety as the first of the four considerations (or 'heads') that readers must consider when seeking to understand his actions during the July Crisis. A general European war, he insisted, would have been a 'catastrophe for which previous wars afforded no precedent', and that the 'financial strain

279 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 2-3.
280 See Grey to Rumbold (no. 214), 6 July 1914, Foreign Office. BD, xi, no. 32.
281 De Bunsen to Grey, 5 July 1914, BD xi, no. 41.
282 Goschen to Rumbold, 11 July 1914. MSS Rumbold.
283 Grey to Rumbold (no. 235), 20 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 68.

and expenditure of wealth' would have been 'incredible'.[284] Grey even states that all 'four heads' worked together as one, meaning that 'war must, if possible, be prevented'.[285]

Although Grey's memoir must be treated with caution, his ex-post-facto explanation of events does not differ greatly from the contemporary evidence of his own words and actions. Even prior to 1914, Grey had expressed fears regarding the consequences of a general European war. One of his first allusions to the consequences of a conflagration came in 1912, when he remarked to Lichnowsky;

> *If a European war were to arise through Austria's attacking Serbia, and Russia, compelled by public opinion, were to march into Galicia rather than again put up with the humiliation like that of 1909, thus forcing Germany to come to the aid of Austria, France would inevitably be drawn in and no-one could foretell what further developments might follow.* [286]

During the July Crisis Grey gave several, far more specific warnings about the ramifications of a general European war. To be sure, these could have been exaggerated, strategic ploys to preserve peace in Europe by making war seem too great a risk, but the consistency and frequency of these warnings is striking. Grey warned Mensdorff on the 23 July, just before the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, that a wider European war would result in the 'collapse of European credit and industry'. Moreover, he also warned Mensdorff that such a war would result in the 'state of things being worse than that of 1848', and that 'many things might be completely swept away'.[287] Grey similarly evoked the 'attendant catastrophes' of a general European war to the Russian ambassador, Count Beckendorff, in early July, Grey telling him that the thought of a European war 'made his hair stand on end'.[288]

To the German ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, Grey warned that a general European war would result in 'total exhaustion and impoverishment', and that 'industry and trade would be ruined and capital destroyed', resulting in 'revolutionary movements such as those of the year 1848'.[289] Though Grey could, at times, be accused of being evasive or

284 Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, 313.
285 Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, 313.
286 Prince Lichnowsky and Sefton Delmer, *Heading for the Abyss: Reminisces* (1928), 167-168.
287 Grey to de Bunsen (no. 121), 23 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 86.
288 Otte, *July Crisis*, 146. See also, Grey to Buchanan (no. 264), 8 July 1914, BD xi, no. 39.
289 Lichnowsky to the Auswartigesamt, 24 July 1914. Contained within, Prince Lichnowsky and Sefton Delmer, *Heading for the Abyss*, 389-390.

ambiguous with his wording, he was extraordinarily clear in his warnings here. He vocalised, time and again, his fears of the collapse of the established order. Grey's famous remark from 4 August - 'The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime' - can also be interpreted as further evidence of his fears regarding the collapse of the European order. These fears might also be seen as representative of Grey's more general distaste for war and killing, a moral scriuple that would have added to the severity of the stressor. It is well-known, for example, that Grey had read Norman Angell's anti-war *The Great Illusion* in 1910, which his biographer Otte argues left a lasting impression on him.[290] Furthermore, Grey was very much a Victorian liberal, infused with a distaste for war that had been evident in his disapproval of British actions in the 1899-1902 South African War.[291] Grey was not, however, a pacifist or an idealist; on the contrary, he was a realist, his longevity as foreign secretary owing much to his cross-party appeal in Britain, which in turn stemmed from his insistence that foreign affairs were no place for party controversy.[292] Nevertheless, although a sense of duty often overrode his moral concerns during the July Crisis, this did not mean that the later were without effect.[293] Indeed, it is hard to imagine that an individual who was so enamoured with the natural world and the tranquillity of nature would be unaffected by the prospect of a modern, mechanised war and all the death and destruction that it would wreak.[294]

Indeed, Grey's actions and words immediately after Britain's entry into the war betray his inner feelings. There are many recorded instances of Grey expressing his aversion to the war.[295] An oft-quoted instance was on the 4 August, when the Foreign Secretary banged his fists on the table, shouting 'I hate war, I hate war'.[296] Haldane also noted that Grey was holding up rather badly following the outbreak of war, stating that 'he takes it all so terribly to heart'.[297] Clearly, not only did Grey experience the duration of his stressor longer than any of his Cabinet colleagues, but he was no less disturbed by the prospect of war than some of the more well-known pacifists and non-interventionists in Cabinet. Comparing Grey to two of the more infamous non-interventionists, Harcourt and Beauchamp, is instructive. Whilst Grey was seemingly emotionally disturbed by the slide into war,

290 Otte, *Statesman of Europe*, 379 and 587. See also, Nicholas A. Lambert, *Planning Armageddon: British Economic Warfare and the First World War* (2012), 192-193.
291 Otte, *Statesman of Europe*, 544, 154.
292 *The Times*, 1 June 1905. Originally in Keith M. Wilson, *The Policy of Entente: Essays on the Determinants of British Foreign Policy 1904-1914* (1985), 17; Wilson, *The Policy of Entente*, 17-20.
293 For Grey's sense of duty, see, T.G Otte "Postponing the Evil Day': Sir Edward Grey and British Foreign Policy," *International History Review*, 38.2 (2016): 251-252
294 Clark, Christopher. "Sir Edward Grey and the July Crisis." *International History Review* 38.2 (2016): 326-327.
295 For the days and months immediately after the wars outbreak, see Otte, Grey, 537-541.
296 Otte, Grey, 534.
297 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 36-37.

Harcourt had become ‘an enthusiastic supporter’ of the policy of intervention by early August 1914.[298] Similarly, Beauchamp received congratulatory handshakes from Unionist Peers following the declaration of war on Germany. As Gosse recalled about that day, ‘Lord Beauchamp said to me, with a discreet smile, “How charming this is! People who have cut me for months are as kind as they can be. It is the beginning of the millennium”.’[299]

This distinction can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that Grey had experiencing the stressor of crisis longer and more intensely than Harcourt and Beauchamp. Moreover, the length and perceived severity of the crisis was exacerbated by a growing sense of losing control over events, making the stressor more intense and inducing more emotive responses from those affected. In Grey’s case, there is clear evidence of a growing sense of control being lost as the crisis developed. Although initially alarmed by events, Grey considered the crisis controllable, based on experiences of earlier Balkan crises being resolved peacefully. Thereafter, a growing sense of helplessness and lack of control sets in through July, amplifying the intensity of the stressor. Grey’s early strategy for the crisis - using the alliance blocs to mediate the crisis – nourished a belief that the stressor was relatively controllable. Following his meeting with Lichnowsky on 6 July, Grey appears to have put emphasis on bringing the ‘two alliance blocs closer together’ in order to ‘prevent European complications’.[300] He repeated such sentiments to each of the Great Power ambassadors in London in the days that followed.[301] In essence, Grey’s hope was that Britain and Germany could use their respective influence to mediate, just as they had done in previous Balkan crises.[302] This strategy was confirmed on 9 July, when Grey remarked to Lichnowsky that, should the crisis escalate, ‘I would continue the same policy I had pursued through the Balkan crisis… The greater the risk of war the more closely I would adhere to this policy.’[303]

Grey’s critics have often noted that his performance in the early days of the crisis was hesitant, nonchalant, and even negligent.[304] In short, Grey’s previous experience of

298 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 38.
299 Ibid, 29.
300 Lichnowsky to Bethmann-Hollweg, 6 July 1914. Lichnowsky and Delmer, 372.
301 BD, xi, Grey to Bertie, no. 38. Grey to Buchanan, no. 39.
302 See Jared Morgan McKinney, “Nothing Fails like Success: The London Ambassadors' Conference and the Coming of the First World War”, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 41.7 (2018): 947-1000. Otte, *July Crisis*, 147. Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, 235. Michael G. Ekstein, “Sir Edward Grey and Imperial Germany in 1914”, *Journal of Contemporary History* 6, no. 3 (1971): 121–31. Grey, *Twenty-Five Years vol I*, 292-296.
303 Grey to Rumbold (no. 223), 9 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 41.
304 Most famously see, D. Lloyd George, *War Memoirs* (1938), vol. I, 56-60. Other critics include, F.R Bridge, “Sir Edward Grey and Austria-Hungary”, *International History Review*, 38.2 (2016): 270. Keith M. Wilson, “Britain” in, *Decisions for War*, 1914, 175-208.

success during the Balkan crises in 1912-1913 meant that he remained relatively calm and in control during the early days of the crisis, perhaps even slightly complacent.[305] One scholar has even stated that Grey's 'intuitive analogical reasoning' or, more simply, his inability to discern the July Crisis from the Balkan crisis, was the reason for his 'over-confidence' and disinterest in even notifying the rest of Cabinet as to the dangers of the current crisis.[306] Whatever the reasoning, there is certainly evidence to support claims that Grey failed to recognise that the crisis of 1914 was of a different magnitude to those that had come before. Reports of diplomatic meetings and encounters certainly indicate that Grey was relatively calm, outwardly at least. Lichnowsky reported that the tone of their 6 July meeting was as 'pleasant and friendly', as usual, whilst their encounter three days later saw Grey 'laughingly' refer back to the First Moroccan Crisis, seeing 'no reason for taking a gloomy view' of the present situation.[307] Grey might, however, have been trying to calm the 'anxious' Lichnowsky, who Grey reported as being concerned by the 'pessimistic' mood he had recently seen in Berlin.[308] Indeed, Lichnowsky was said to have been susceptible to 'bouts of the blackest despair' and of a 'nervous disposition'.[309] Whatever the reasons for Grey's jovial demeanour in early July, such joviality disappeared as he began to perceive the crisis as less controllable.

A steady stream of information would change Grey's demeanour, reports from British embassies across Europe painting an increasingly disturbing picture. On 9 July, Grey received a report from De Bunsen that the mood amongst his fellow Great Power ambassadors in Vienna was bleak as with regards to the current situation.[310] This was followed by further pessimistic reports from Vienna, and to a lesser extent Belgrade, from 13-21 July.[311] During this time, Grey could do little to directly address the situation in Vienna or Belgrade, undermining his whole strategy of using German and British influence to enable a conference resolution.[312] Grey's inability to direct affairs, and his growing

305 For Grey's experience of the Balkan crisis of 1912-13, see, Andrew Thomas Park, "International Commissions, the Birth of Albania, and Sir Edward Grey's Preventive Diplomacy during the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913." *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 31.1 (2020): 22-43.

306 Jared Morgan McKinney, "Nothing Fails like Success: The London Ambassadors' Conference and the Coming of the First World War." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 41.7 (2018): 972-1000.

307 Lichnowsky to Bethmann-Hollweg, 6 July 1914. Lichnowsky and Delmer, *Heading for the Abyss*, 372.

308 Grey to Rumbold, 6 July 1914, BD xi, no. 32.

309 See Otte, *July Crisis*, 166, footnote 212.

310 De Bunsen to Grey (no. 13) received 9 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 40.

311 Crackanthorpe to Grey (no. 126), 13 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 45. De Bunsen to Grey (no. 140), received 15 July, BD, xi, no. 46. De Bunsen to Grey (no. 85.), 16 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 50. See also the minute added by Crowe at the end of the report. Crackanthrope to Grey (no. 44), 17 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 53. De Bunsen to Grey (no. 143, 91, and 92), 18 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 55, 58, and 59 respectively. Crackanthorpe to Grey (no. 46), 19 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 61. De Bunsen to Grey (no.145, 148), 20 July 1914, BD, xi, no 64 and 65 respectively. De Bunsen to Grey (no. 93), 21 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 71. Also see the minutes added by Crowe and Nicholson.

312 Lichnowsky to Auswartiges Amt (no. 143), 20 July 1914.

recognition of this powerlessness, intensified his stress response. By 20 July, rumours started circulating about an impending Austrian ultimatum to Serbia. Grey had been forewarned of the ultimatum on the 16 July, with most other European capitals also learning of it ahead of it actually being delivered.[313] At first, Grey remained hopeful that his strategy would still be effective, telling Lichnowsky on 20 July that all depended on the tone of the Austrian ultimatum and Berlin's capacity to restrain her ally. According to Lichnowsky, Grey still regarded the situation 'optimistically'. [314] However, telegrams from Moscow and Berlin on 22 July indicated that neither Sazonov nor Jagow were willing to fully cooperate in mediating the Austro-Serbian crisis.[315]

These fast-moving developments rattled Grey. On 22 July, Cambon noted that Grey, following a meeting with Lichnowsky, was left with an 'impression of anxiety which he did not conceal from me'.[316] Grey had hitherto outwardly, at least, maintained control of his demeanour. It was only now that he began to display somewhat uncharacteristic behaviours, indicating that his sense of control was slipping. For the first time in the crisis he began to put pressure directly on Moscow. Hitherto, although Grey had always warned of the deleterious consequences of a European war, his interactions with Beckendorff tended to be diplomatic, suggestive, and cautious. However, by 22 July, Grey's language was much more direct, indicating a new sense of urgency. He was adamant with Beckendorff that 'the Russian Government should communicate directly with the Austrian Government', and that keeping 'each other at arm's length' only worsened 'a difficult situation'.[317] Grey's frustration was palpable, even pondering 'what might be done if I were in M. Sazonof's place'.[318] Though this could easily be seen as part of Grey's role as Foreign Secretary, it can also be seen as evidence that Grey was contemplating the crisis from different angles in an increasingly desperate attempt to make sense of it and thus control it.

Another interesting incident took place on the evening of 21 July. At the Buckingham Palace conference over Home Rule, Grey and Churchill found time to discuss the current issues in Europe. Churchill wrote to Grey the following day;

313 De Bunsen to Grey, (no.85), 16 July 1914, BD, xi, no.50; Otte, *July Crisis*, 194.
314 Lichnowsky to Auswartiges Amt, (no.143), 20 July 1914. Lichnowsky and Delmer, *Heading for the Abyss*, 383.
315 See Buchanan to Grey, (no. 336 and no.299), 20 July 1914, BD, xi, no.67. Rumbold to Grey, (no. 88), 22 July, BD, xi, no.77 and 158, respectively.
316 Cambon to Bienvenu-Martin, 22 of July 1914, French Yellow Book, no.19.
317 Grey to Buchanan (no. 289), 22 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 79.
318 Grey to Buchanan (no. 289), 22 July 1914BD, xi, no. 79.

In Foreign Affairs you will proceed by two stages: First you will labour to stop Austria & Russia going to war: Second if that failed you will try to prevent England, France, Germany & Italy being dragged in… the second step will only hope to limit & localise the conflict: whereas at home the [aim is to] will prevent the local conflict… [319]

It seems that Grey had been very candid about the crisis with Churchill, somewhat curiously given that Churchill was not known for his ability to offer considered advice. The timing is illuminating. Whilst Grey had discussed the crisis often with Haldane throughout July, this would be explained by the fact that Grey was staying with Haldane whilst his house was being refurbished.[320] It is striking that Grey took the unusual step of confiding in Churchill on the evening of 21 July, once he knew that a strong Austrian ultimatum to Serbia was forthcoming. Sensing that his control over events was slipping, Grey perhaps forgot himself in conversation with Churchill as he sought to verbalise his stressor as a means of coping with it. Just a few days prior to this, on 16 July, Grey had been more sanguine and calm in a conversation with Bertie, even avoiding direct discussion of the European situation and speaking instead of 'cricket, football and fishing'.[321]

Grey's growing sense of losing control was palpable by 23 July. The two meetings with Mensdorff on 23 and 24 July, discussing the Austrian démarche to Serbia by Austria, must be seen as a breaking-point, Mensdorff telling Grey that there would be a time-limited ultimatum.[322] Grey spent a good portion of the meeting, after having illustrated the problems that a timed-ultimatum brought for attempted mediation, highlighting how severe the consequences of a war would be for the Great Powers. As he had done earlier in the crisis, Grey predicted the 'complete collapse of European credit and industry' and that 'many things might be completely swept away'.[323] Though Mensdorff found Grey to be 'cool and objective' as well as 'friendly', Grey's emotive appeals reflected a sense of helplessness.[324] It was to no avail, as Grey received from Mensdorff, on 24 July, the text of the official ultimatum. It was, remarked Grey, 'the most formidable document I had ever seen addressed from one State to another'. Grey also made a point of noting to De Bunsen, in a dispatch that was shared with all major British embassies in Europe, that he

319 Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: a life* (2000), 263.
320 Richard Burton Haldane, *Before the War* (1920), 58.
321 FO 800/ 161.
322 Grey to De Bunsen, (no. 121) 23 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 86.
323 Grey to De Bunsen, same document.
324 Mensdorff to Berchtold, (no. 107) 23 July 1914. OUA viii, no. 10537.

'felt great apprehension' about the current situation.[325] Evidently, Grey was increasingly realising that his control over events was slipping. As if to compound matters, Grey most likely saw a letter from Count Hoyos, a high-ranking aide to the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Berchtold, which was addressed to Haldane. Haldane noted that the letter was 'very serious', proof of German support for Austrian hostility which meant that Austria was 'ready to plunge Europe into war to settle the Serbian question'.[326]

Grey could no longer downplay the severity of the situation, or fail to recognise his diminishing lack of control. His efforts to exert pressure and encourage mediation had failed. This would have been a blow for anyone, let alone someone who feared the outbreak of a European war and its attendant consequences as much as Grey did. Obvious cracks in Grey's hitherto calm demeanour were becoming more obvious. Lichnowsky saw Grey on 24 July, and reported that the British Foreign Secretary had been 'deeply affected by the Austrian note'. Grey warned Lichnowsky, once again, of the consequences of a general European war. Grey., remarked the German Ambassador, 'could not conceal his lively regret at the provocative tone of the Austrian note and the brief time limit'.[327] According to Cambon, the ultimatum had prompted Grey to abandon his plans for mediation between Russia and Austria.[328] These first hints of a change in Grey's strategy can be interpreted as an attempt to regain control of the situation.

Grey's stress would have been amplified by the need, on 24 July, to inform Cabinet of the escalating crisis. As Masterman and Churchill state, Grey waited until the end of the meeting, just as everyone was leaving following lengthy discussions on Ireland, to halt everyone in their tracks.[329] Whether Grey chose this moment for dramatic effect or because he had simply been reluctant to speak, we shall never truly know. Whatever the reason, conveying the gravity of the situation to a seemingly oblivious Cabinet would not have been a comfortable task. Furthermore, it has already been shown how, by this stage, Grey had been shaken by a loss of control, something that was compounded further that evening. A telegram from Buchanan in Moscow informed Grey of Russian and French resolve; as Eyre Crowe minuted, Moscow and Paris 'are decided to accept the challenge thrown out to them'.[330] This telegram was followed by meetings with Cambon and

325 Grey to De Bunsen, (no.148), 24 July 1914, BD, xi, no. 91.
326 Frederick Maurice Haldane, *Haldane 1856-1915* (1937), 349-352.
327 Lichnowsky to the Auswartiges Amt, 24 July 1914. Lichnowsky, Heading for the Abyss, 387-390.
328 Cambon to Bienvenu-Martin, 24 July 1914. Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Diplomatic and Military documents* (2013), 328-329.
329 Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis* (1938), vol. 1, 154-155. Hobhouse, *Inside Asquith's Cabinet*, 176-177.
330 Buchanan to Grey, 24 July 1914, (no. 166), BD, xi, no. 101.

Lichnowsky that simply confirmed the futility of British mediation.[331] As to if to add yet further strain, Grey spent the remainder of the evening at Haldane's house at a dinner with, Morley, Churchill, and, most significantly, the German industrialist Albert Ballin.[332] Ballin, who was often used by the German government an unofficial intermediary, was well-known amongst the London elite. That night, however, Ballin was reportedly more flustered than usual, reluctant to discuss topics other than the diplomatic situation in Europe.[333]

Finally, Grey also had to contend with stressors of a more personal or daily nature. Ordinarily these could have been more manageable, but in combination with the events of the July Crisis they would have assumed greater significance. Three such stressors merit consideration here. First, Grey had, just prior to the July Crisis, given up smoking, a source of stress in and of itself, but also denying Grey what might previously have been a stress-relieving mechanism. Second, and perhaps more seriously, Grey was having issues with his eyesight, and was even planning to visit a famous German opthamologist in the summer, a trip that had to be cancelled due to the European crisis.[334] Undoubtedly, the fear of losing one's eyesight would be acutely stressful for anyone, let alone someone with Grey's responsibilities. In addition, the constant late nights demanded of Grey, spent reading and digesting significant numbers of dispatches and telegrams, would have done little to help his deteriorating eyesight. Indeed, immediately following the crisis, Grey's eyesight was considered so bad that he needed a period of total rest and recuperation, and was only allowed to read for a maximum of two hours per day.[335]

Third, Grey had to navigate personal relationships with a diverse array of colleagues and foreign diplomats, including some rather difficult characters. Steiner and Neilson claim that Grey had little support from the Foreign Office throughout the crisis, and that Foreign Office staff such as Crowe and Nicolson felt sidelined by Grey's apparent determination to resolve the crisis on his own.[336] Both Crowe -Grey's talented yet volatile Assistant Under Secretary and Nicholson – the Permanent Under Secretary – were advocates of upholding the ententes with France and Russia, and became increasingly outspoken in advancing this position as the crisis unfolded.[337] Another source of stress for Grey emanated from the

331 Otte, *July Crisis*, 256-258.
332 Richard Haldane, *An Autobiography* (1929), 288-289.
333 Otte, *Grey*, 505.
334 Otte, *Grey*, 489-491.
335 Otte, Grey, 540-541.
336 Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and the Origins of the First World War*, 242-244.
337 Ibid, 243.

actions of Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador to London. Where Grey's dealings with Lichnowsky, Beckendorff and Mensdorff showed occasional signs of tension, they were never anything short of professional. However, with regards to Cambon, the same cannot be said. Cambon's behaviour, at times, lurched towards the theatrical; Douglas Newton and Keith Wilson both highlight the interview that took place on 1 August as an example of such theatrics.[338]

To summarise the preceding, An international crisis is always going to be a stressful event, posing unique challenges to those involved. This chapter has attempted to foreground those stressors present, whether peculiar to the July Crisis or those of a more everyday nature. The British statesmen involved in the July Crisis had to navigate an increased workload, longer working hours, information overload, the experience of losing control over events and subsequent feelings of helplessness, and the social stress of liaising with others both inside and outside of Government. As this chapter has shown, several Cabinet members frequently alluded to these stressors, both openly and privately. In addition, whilst some use talk of a 'march of events' to explain decisions taken or not taken, it is actually more revealing to see it as an expression of exasperation at the uncontrollability of a stressor. Although other stressors were present, allusions and references to both the march of events *and* fatalistic expressions about the inevitability of war were far more frequent than references to other social or physical stressors. For the statesmen involved, especially Grey, the most significant stressor appears to be a diminishing sense of control.
This chapter began with an examination of the prelude to the July Crisis, namely the division within the Cabinet as to the aims and execution of Britain's foreign policy. It is now necessary to circle back to this division, as it became the defining factor of the British experience of the July Crisis, the decision of whether or not to intervene threatening to divide the Cabinet irreparably.[339] But the Cabinet did not collapse, and despite many threats of resignation (which would have meant the dissolution of the Asquith Government), only two members did so. The Asquith Government entered the First World War mostly intact. A politicians' instinct for self-preservation may have been a factor, as might one's patriotic duty, but a significant factor in the survival of the Cabinet was stress, as the following chapter demonstrate.

338 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 142-144. Ed. Wilson, Decisions For War, 194-196.
339 In particular, see Douglas Newton, *Darkest Days*. Keith M. Wilson, *The Policy of Entente*. Ed. Keith M. Wilson, *Decisions for War*. Donald Lammers, "Arno Mayer and the British Decision for War: 1914", *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (May 1973), 151-162. Cameron Hazelhurst, *Politicians at War.* Zara Steiner and Keith Neilson, *Britain and the Origins*.

Even works that provide a narrative of the July Crisis from a transnational perspective, tend to focus on the so-called Cabinet split.[340] The following chapter will be no different. However, it will also be concerned with establishing why the anti-interventionist section of Cabinet failed to mobilise itself, as opposed to the interventionist section, given its relative success in the years prior to the July Crisis. Furthermore, it will also offer an explanation as to why only two members of Cabinet resigned, despite so many threatening resignation over the course of the crisis. Whereas some historians have taken a realist approach to explaining the lack of resignations, some have mentioned the threat of coalition government, and others have written of German bellicosity in Belgium as the main factor that swayed the anti-interventionists towards intervention, the following chapter will focus on stress as a key factor.[341]

340 In particular, see Luigi Albertini, *Le origini della guerra del 1914* (1942-43). Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (2013). Thomas Otte, *July Crisis*. Margaret MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace*.

341 Wilson, *Policy of Entente*, 135-147. Otte, *July Crisis*, 499. Newton, *Darkest Days*, 257-260. Steiner and Neilson, *Britain and the Origins*, 251-252. Hazelhurst, *Politicians at War*, 66-76. MacMillan, *The War That Ended Peace*, 621.

Chapter 3- The impact of stress during the July Crisis.

As the previous chapter established, significant stressors were present for the statesmen. Ranging from the work-related to the more significant feeling of the uncontrollable nature of the crisis, stressors were practically omnipresent throughout. However, the main concern of this thesis is what impact stress had upon the statesmen. Accordingly, the final chapter of this thesis will be devoted to the impact stress had upon the statesmen. It will subsequently be divided into three sections. The first will assess just how stressed the statesmen were. In order to do so, the allostatic model, that was earlier presented during the introduction of this thesis, will be used. To briefly summarise, the allostatic model is used to characterise how stressed an individual is. It can also help us to spot the telltale signs of stress, through the use of bio or behavioural markers. How stressed an individual is, under the allostatic model, can be catagorised in three distinct stages. Allostasis, is where an individual can cope and adapt to external challenges or stressors. Allostatic load is where an individual can no longer adapt to external difficulties or stressors, and as such their behaviour and physiology begins to change. Allostatic overload is when an individual has remained in allostatic load for such a sustained period of time that they begin to take on long-term damage to their both their physical and mental health. In essence, the available primary and secondary evidence will be examined through the prism of the allostatic model, in order to locate bio or behavioural markers of stress that will enable an assessment as to whether they were able to remain in allostasis, or not.

The second section of this chapter will examine how Grey, who suffered the effects of stress the longest, coped with the stress of crisis. In turn, it will also identify behaviours that were later criticised by both his Cabinet colleagues and historians that are possibly misunderstood. Once again, the goal here is not to admonish Grey of blame for his role in the crisis, nor to glorify his contribution. This section of the chapter is more interested with reevaluating certain idiosyncrasies or quirks that could be reevaluated with an understanding of how individuals cope with stress. The final section of this chapter will then examine how Asquith and Lloyd George managed the stress of crisis better than those around them, allowing them to perform roles that greatly influenced their more distressed colleagues. Once again, by better understanding the relationship between stress and behaviour, a reevaluation of the roles played by Asquith and Lloyd George becomes possible.

Succumbing to stress and its impact on the non-interventionists

As is almost to be expected by anyone who has worked within a team environment during a time of stress, some people are able to handle what is thrown their way more easily than others. With regards to the July Crisis, several of the Cabinet seemed to be greatly impacted by the stress of crisis. Some even seemed unable to control themselves, producing remarkable displays of behaviour within a professional environment. This section is primarily concerned with four members of Cabinet who displayed the most visible signs of strain. These were Burns, Simon, Morley and Churchill. To be sure, it is also important to note, before delving into impact stress had upon the statesmen of this study, that sufficient evidence does not exist for all members of Cabinet. In the cases of some, such as McKinnon-Wood, Birrell, Runciman, Beauchamp, McKenna and Crewe, there is little available evidence, outside of the official documents, to make claims as to their allostatic state. Take the case of Herbert Samuel, for example. Samuel did exhibit some curious behaviour during the crisis. As his biographer states, Samuel wrote to his mother and sister with 'unusual frankness', regarding the events of the crisis and the feeling in Cabinet.[342] What is curious about this statement, is that by June 1914, Samuel is noted as experiencing a time of relative prosperity. There is no evidence to suggest that he was suffering from stress in either his personal or professional life. On the contrary, Samuel was prospering. The Marconi affair, which Samuel was involved in, had subsided by 1914 and Samuel was prospering both in terms of finances and in terms of his relative rise in Cabinet.[343] Yes, there was a change of Cabinet roles, from Postmaster-General to the Local Government Board, which would have brought change. However, this was a change that Samuel himself very much wanted, and one which was seemingly motivating him.[344] Pre-July Crisis, Samuel appears to be showing no evidence of significant stress in either his physical or mental health. Therefore, Samuel's usually detailed correspondence, during the crisis, with his mother and sister could be seen as the deployment of a coping mechanism for stress. As we will see with Sir Edward Grey, later, confiding in those closest to us helps lessen the blow of stress. However, despite this, there is not sufficient evidence to make a clear judgement as to Samuel's allostatic state. He was evidently feeling the strain of crisis, but whether it was enough to knock him from allostasis, it is unclear. Even amongst his Cabinet colleagues who kept diaries at the time of the July Crisis, such as Pease, Harcourt and Hobhouse, there is often little reference to their own feelings, spare the occasional remark or comment, that would allow an informed

342 Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel: A Political Life (1992)*, 160.
343 Bernard Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 147-149.
344 Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 153-157.

judgement as to their allostatic state to be made. Therefore, the focus of this section will be the members of Cabinet that there is, firstly, sufficient available evidence, and, secondly, evidence that suggests that they left allostasis.

To begin with, John Burns seems like the most appropriate place to start, given his behaviour throughout the latter stages of the crisis. Perhaps his most famous moment of came late on in the crisis, when during a Cabinet meeting his Cabinet colleague Hobhouse noted in his diary that;

> *Burns on Sunday morning was saying that this meant either unconditional neutrality or (leaning over the table shaking his clenched fists) war with both hands, naval and military. He was interrupted by McK and Ll. G saying 'But which is your policy?' He hesitated, they repeated the challenge, and with a gulp said 'Neutrality, under circumstances', and turned very white.* [345]

This was not the only recorded instance of Burns showing signs of stress. Samuel recalled Burn's attempted resignation from Cabinet, where he would also display the signs of stress. On 2 August, Burns, who was attempting to resign from Cabinet over Britain potentially entering the war, spoke with 'deep feeling' and was noted as being 'moved to tears'.[346] Burns, unable to maintain his composure, was clearly displaying the outwardly visible signs of stress. Not only this, but his increasing involvement in Cabinet discussions was becoming more apparent. Morley claims that Burns 'took the lead to good purpose', over the issue of Germany attacking French ports on the English Channel.[347] Morley also praised Burns for having spoken 'with remarkable energy, force and grasp'.[348] Indeed, Burns appears to be far more present during Cabinet debates during the July Crisis than he was for the years previous.[349] As Haldane put it, with regards to Burn's lack of presence in Cabinet meetings, 'one often falls into the habit of forgetting he exists!'[350] This makes his outbursts and continued involvement in Cabinet discussions seem very much out of character. Burns appeared to be struggling to maintain control of a situation that was rapidly getting away from him, as his outward shows of emotion and increasing engagement in debates seem to indicate.

345 Ed. Davids, *Hobhouse*, 179.
346 Ed. David, Hobhouse Diary, 180.
347 Kent, *Burns*, 237.
348 John Viscount Morley, *Memorandum on Resignation* (1928), 12.
349 See Otte, *July Crisis*, 493.
350 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 18.

Of course, the argument could be made that it was, perhaps, issues in his personal life that were affecting him during the July Crisis. However, there is little evidence to suggest that Burns was under pressure in other areas of his life, both during the July Crisis and in the months leading up to the summer of 1914, meaning that these visible signs of stress were surely caused by the crisis itself. Leading up to the July Crisis, Burns appears to have been little involved in Home Rule debates. Moreover, nor does he appear to have been overworked during the early months of 1914. His diary suggests that he had thought of leaving politics.[351] However, he changed Cabinet roles from President of the Local Government Board to President of the Board of Trade, and is said to have welcomed the move, as it came with more prestige.[352] Furthermore, many of his activities appear quite mundane throughout this period. He appears to have given countless speeches up until the beginning of the July Crisis, but this was not unusual for him.[353] There is also no primary or secondary evidence of his personal life being a source of stress for him in 1914.

Finally, Burns could not be prevailed upon to remain in Cabinet by his Cabinet colleagues. Whereas 'the power of Asquith and Grey' was too much for others to resist, Morley stated, Burns was immune to their attempts to persuade him to remain.[354] Moreover, it was not just Asquith and Grey who prevailed on Burns to remain in Cabinet. Pease is also noted as prevailing upon Burns to remain.[355] And, yet, Burns followed through with his resignation nonetheless. Burns resigned on the 2 August, despite meetings with Asquith that were aimed at persuading him to withdraw his resignation. However, Burns was noted as being 'immoveable' and 'obdurate', despite these meetings.[356] Seemingly, Burns was no longer able to adapt to a changing situation. He obstinately maintained a diametrically opposed view of the situation. For Burns, it appears to have been a choice between war or peace. There was no middle ground. Even Morley, who was the only other Cabinet minister to resign, was unable to shake Burns from his line of thinking. Morley prevailed upon Burns to be more flexible with regards to proposals from the interventionists. But, stated afterwards that 'I made just as much impression on John Burns as I expected- that is not the slightest'.[357] All this suggests that Burns had entered allostatic load by the end of the July Crisis. The available evidence shows that he was incapable of adapting to his stressors, and that his outbursts and closed-minded thinking were indications of him

351 See Otte, *July Crisis*, 493.
352 Kenneth D. Brown, "Burns, John Elliott (1858–1943)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).
353 William Kent, *John Burns: Labour's Lost Leader* (1950), 233-236.
354 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 259.
355 Kent, *Burns*, 237.
356 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 190-195.
357 Kent, *Burns*, 237.

having left allostasis. Whether or not he entered into allostatic load, however, is not clear. This is because no evidence of Burn's mental or physical health exist following his resignation. He kept no diary nor correspondence that might shed light on just how affected he was by the stress of crisis.

Whilst Burns was evidently struggling with the stress of crisis, Sir John Simon also showed significant and clearly visible signs of stress during the latter stages of the crisis. Simon appears to have reached his breaking point around 3 August. The comments of those around him, regarding his appearance, are quite revealing. However, unlike Burns, even before the July Crisis Simon was beginning to show signs of being overworked. A letter from a friend, in March 1914, mentions that Simon was 'putting excessive strain on even your own powers of endurance', with regards to his workload.[358] During the crisis itself, though, the most notable remarks about Simon's outwardly appearance come from C.P. Scott and Viscount Morley. Scott, in his diary entry for the 4 August, noted that Simon 'was looking terribly worn and tired', and that 'morally and physically he was like a man half-dead'.[359] Clearly, Simon was unable to conceal his inner turmoil to those around him. As Harcourt noted Simon saying that 'if country at war it was the duty of men like himself and the peace party to support the Govt,' and that he then 'broke down'.[360]

Churchill also seemed to exhibit signs of stress. What is most curious about Churchill's behaviour is the contradictory nature between his words and actions. On the one hand, Churchill expressed his desire and longing for peace, as was the modus operandi of the Liberal Party as a whole. On the other hand, as historian John Young has shown, he frequently carries out tasks that seem to be geared towards war, having had an infatuation with war his whole life.[361] This seemed to create some sort of turmoil, that he himself alluded to in a now famous letter to his wife;

> *Everything tends towards catastrophe & collapse. I am interested, geared up & happy. Is it not horrible to be built like that? The preparations have a hideous fascination for me. I pray to God to forgive me for such fearful moods of levity. Yet I would do my best for peace, & nothing would induce me wrongfully to strike the blow.* [362]

358 MS Simon 50 no.52, J.W. Hurst to Simon, 24 March 1914.
359 Ed. Wilson, *C.P. Scott Diary*, 96-97.
360 Young, Harcourt Diary, 448.
361 In particular, see J. W. Young, "By God, I Will Make Them Fight!" Winston Churchill and Britain's Decision for War in 1914", *Taylor & Francis Taylor & Francis (Routledge)*, 2019.
362 Gilbert, *Churchill*, 268.

There are yet further examples available of his inner turmoil and the contradictory nature of his words and actions. At his meeting with ship magnet Albert Ballin, Churchill was noted as having 'tears in his eyes', as he beseeched Ballin not to let Germany go to war with France.[363] And, yet, immediately following this meeting, Churchill preoccupied himself with readying the British fleet and ensuring that Britain was not wholly unprepared in the event of a European war.[364] He expressed his frustration at the monarchs of Europe not being able to assemble together and guarantee peace,[365] and yet during several Cabinets he is noted as being 'very violent', 'bellicose', 'all for war' and 'very angry – overwrought & excitable'.[366] Towards the conclusion of the crisis, Asquith noted that Churchill, like others, was 'much overstrained'.[367] Yet, immediately following the declaration of war, Conservative MP Leo Amery noted a curious incident on the 3 August. He noted that Churchill was overheard loudly exclaiming 'it is war and I made it', before 'suddenly becoming alarmed at the thought that he had been overheard'.[368] This somewhat manic and contradictory behaviour did not go unnoticed by his Cabinet colleagues. Most notably, Harcourt appeared to be most alarmed and startled by Churchill during the July Crisis. So much so, he would make a most remarkable appeal to Asquith;

> *I warned him that he ought to order Churchill to move no ship anywhere without instructions from the Cabinet. I have a profound distrust of Winston's judgement & loyalty & I believe that if the German fleet moved out into the Channel (agst. France – not us) he would be capable of launching our fleet at them without reference to the Cabinet.* [369]

This view of Churchill's disloyalty was shared by Simon, who seemed to imply that it was Churchill who drove forward the talks of coalition government in early August 1914.[370] Perhaps, like many politicians, Churchill felt that he was held accountable by public opinion. In essence, perhaps he was keeping his options open, waiting to see whether war or peace would prevail. Harcourt and Hobhouse, certainly believed that Churchill wast heavily reliant on public opinion and lacked true Liberal beliefs. In turn, they saw him as a

363 Gilbert, *Churchill*, 265.
364 Ibid, 266-269. See, also, Young, "By God, I Will Make Them Fight!" Winston Churchill and Britain's Decision for War in 1914", *Taylor & Francis (Routledge)*, 2019, 1.
365 Gilbert, *Churchill*, 268.
366 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 137.
367 Jenkins, *Asquith*, 330.
368 AMEL 7/12 Jan 1913-Nov 1914, Diary 3 August 1914.
369 Young, Harcourt Diary, 26 July, 438.
370 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 161.

political opportunist, more concerned with survival and promotion.[371] However, Churchill's scribbled Cabinet notes to Lloyd George, slid across the table during Cabinet meetings, show signs of, again, more manic and less controlled behaviour. He almost begs and beseeches Lloyd George to lend his aid to swaying the Cabinet towards British intervention in a European war. By contrast, Lloyd George, who was much more in control of his emotions during the July Crisis, seeks to calm and coerce Churchill towards a more conciliatory tone so as to prevent the break-up of Cabinet.[372] These two sides of Churchill during the July Crisis, the manic and considered, do not seem to add up. Perhaps, his political instinct for survival was strong enough to prevent his descent into allostatic load from the stress of crisis, thus explaining his contradictory behaviour. Frustratingly, in Churchill's case, the available evidence isn't strong enough to be able to determine whether this was the case.

Finally, Morley's experience of the stress of crisis shared many similarities with that of Burns. Harcourt noted that Morley, was 'very angry' at Churchill during the Cabinet meeting on the 2 August.[373] He was also as unwilling to shift his opinion that Britain should remain totally neutral in an upcoming European war, despite the pleas of his Cabinet colleagues. No less than the Prime Minister himself attempted to persuade him to remain in Cabinet. In an astonishing emotional barrage upon Morley, Asquith wrote;

> *To lose you in the stress of a great crisis is a calamity which I shudder to contemplate… I therefore beg you, with all my heart, to think twice and thrice, and as many times more as arithmetic can number, before you take a step which impoverishes the Government and leaves me stranded and almost alone.* [374]

And, yet, Morley, like Burns, would not budge. He remained obstinate and unwilling to compromise on his views. An argument could be made that his age was a contributing factor to this obtuseness. By the time the July Crisis began, Morley was in his mid-seventies. Many of his Cabinet colleagues commented, both immediately before and during the crisis itself, that Morley was displaying the signs of old age. Morley is described, by those around him, as being infirm, increasingly deaf, and showing signs of old age. For example, during the crisis, Haldane noted that Morley had 'become so fidgety, so pernickety, so incapable of rapid action, that in times of crisis like this his presence at the

371 Young, "Harcourt Diary", 29 July, 440. Ed. Davids, *Hobhouse*, 179.
372 See, Toye, *Lloyd George and Churchill*, 125.
373 Young, Harcourt Diary, 2 August, 446.
374 See Hazelhurst, *Politicians At War*, 112.

council table is a weakness'.[375] Furthermore, Hobhouse wrote of Morley's near constant threats of resignation over the past 3 years leading into the July Crisis.[376] This surely would have been an irritant for his colleagues at worst, and at best seen as stubbornness in his old age. Nonetheless, modern research has shown that an individual's ability to withstand stress, or stay within allostasis, diminishes with age.[377] This appears to be the case with Morley, who was significantly older than his other Cabinet colleagues, and who arguably struggled more with the stress of crisis than those around him due to his old age. However, as was previously stated, he and Burns, despite being a great many years apart in age, shared their obstinate views over Britain remaining neutral in a European war, their outward expressions of frustration and anger, and the fact that both actually followed through with their resignations.

Any British entry into a European war would be, to many of the non-interventionists, a hammer blow to their beliefs. The thought of the outbreak of a general war would have been abhorrent to many among them. Augustine Birrell perhaps put it best, by stating that nothing 'can ever be so disheartening … to a Liberal Government … as the outbreak of an European war'.[378] To others, it was a matter, as Morley put of, of 'a man's principle and creed'.[379] Haldane noted that Simon was having great difficulty with the morality of the decision, stating that 'he had all his life been a pronounced peace man, and that he could not possibly stay in a Cabinet which declared war'.[380] Even Samuel, though not strictly a non-interventionist, spoke of the 'abominations' of previous wars, and how the decision over whether to intervene was 'the most momentus problem which men can face'.[381] Moreover, there was Pease, a well-known Quaker, who would have likely been horrified at the prospect of a European war. However, burns perhaps but it best in his resignation letter, stating on the 2 August that the 'decision of the Cabinet to intervene in a European war is an act with which I profoundly disagree'.[382]

375 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 18.
376 Ed. David, *Hobhouse*, 179-180.
377 Aging and its effect on the stress response has seen much research over the years. For example, see, D.J. Dues, E.K. Andrews, C.E. Schaar, A.L. Bergsma, M.M. Senchuk, J.M. Van Raamsdonk. "Aging causes decreased resistance to multiple stresses and a failure to activate specific stress response pathways", *Aging (Albany NY),* Apr;8(4) (2016), 777-95. Ashley Novais, Susana Monteiro, Susana Roque, Margarida Correia-Neves, Nuno Sousa, *How age, sex and genotype shape the stress response, Neurobiology of Stress, Volume 6* (2017), 44-56.
378 See J.W. Young, Emotions and the British Government's Decision for War, 547-548. Originally found in Augustine Birrell, *Things Past Redress* (1937), 224
379 Morley, *Memorandum*, 15–17, 29–31.
380 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 28.
381 Wasserstein, *Samuel*, 160.
382 Kent, *Burns*, 237-238.

In the end, despite the moral dilemma, most in Cabinet 'remained strong' with the exception of Burns and Morley, who, according to Samuel suffered a 'failure of courage'.[383] Despite Samuel's harsh words, Burns and Morley were the only two non-interventionists who actually resigned in protest over Britain's policy of intervention, and thus stuck to their principles. As was examined in the previous chapter, the non-interventionist section of Cabinet, which was much larger than just Burns and Morley, were staunchly opposed to British intervention in any European conflict. During the crisis itself, they also seemed unwilling to even entertain the prospect of using the threat of Britain's entry into the war as a deterrent to other Great Powers who were thinking of entering the war. Nor do they seem willing to entertain the prospect of a limited war. Burns, Morley, Harcout and Simon all displayed an unwillingness to compromise over non-intervention. Gosse quoted Harcourt saying that European war was nothing to do with Britain, and that Britain should remain 'benevolently neutral'.[384] Early in the crisis, for example, Harcourt seemed unaware as to how the crisis could escalate, nor how complicated it could become. His only concern was keeping Britain out of any conflict. Harcourt, even when learning of the growing tensions between Austro-Hungary and Serbia, and how that could escalate into a general, European conflicted, stated that 'under no circs. could I be a party to our participation in a European War'.[385] As the de facto leader of the non-interventionists, his views are quite possibly reflective of his fellow non-interventionists as a whole, with him stating that it 'was inconceivable that we should take part in a European War on a Servian issue'.[386]

In order to prevent Britain's entry into a European war, the non-interventionist group repeatedly threatened resignation from Cabinet, as a means of preventing a policy of intervention being carried out. Time and again, they would threaten to bring down the Government over intervention. This strategy, which had been successful in previous diplomatic crisis where a European war threatened to break out, began on the 27 July. Harcourt noted that he had discussed with 'several colleagues' following the Cabinet meeting that day, 'in order to form a Peace Party which if necessary shall break up the Cabinet in the interest of our abstention'.[387] Harcourt was very explicit in his views, vowing that their resignations would see the Government 'destroyed' in order to 'prevent war', so that 'no other cd make it'.[388] Despite a swift acceleration of events throughout Europe in the coming days, Harcourts main concern still appears to be whether he 'could smash our

383 Wasserstein, *Samuel*, 163-164.

384 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 6.

385 Harcourt Diary, 26 July 1914. Young, "Harcourt Diary", 438.

386 Young, "Harcourt Diary", 27 July 1914, 438.

387 Young, "Harcourt Diary", 27 July 1914, 438.

388 Ibid, 439.

Cabinet before they can commit the crime'.[389] Even following a Cabinet meeting on 2 August, which was dubbed a 'shallow affair' many among the non-interventionists agreed that 'Burns was right' to have resigned, and that they all should follow him.[390] The view that Burns was right to resign is expressed just one day before Grey made his famous speech to the House of Commons on the 3 August, which, for all intents and purposes, solidified Britain's entry into the First World War. However, for the non-interventionists parallels could have been drawn with previous crises, where breaking up the government as a means for securing peace was the modus operandi of this group (and, was a successful strategy). However, by the 2 August it would have been evident that their attempts to break up Cabinet were unsuccessful.

What characterises the non-interventionist groups experience of the July Crisis was their inability adapt their strategy to prevent Britain's entry into the war. Time and again, they tried the same method of threatening resignation, despite it having little to no influence on events. To be sure, with regards to a failure to adapt their strategy on the part of the non-interventionists, an argument can be made as to the limited options available to them. They certainly lacked the positions within Cabinet that would have allowed them to remain abreast of information. Douglas Newton certainly makes the case that they were often deprived of up-to-date information by Grey and Asquith.[391] In fact, one of Newton's main arguments is that Grey and Asquith deliberately held back information from the remainder of Cabinet, so as to manipulate Britain's entry into the conflict.[392] Beauchamp, for example, complained of feeling 'jockeyed' over information regarding the German high seas fleet.[393] Consequently, it is fair to say that they did often find themselves on the back foot in Cabinet debates. However, when they did receive new information that indicated that crisis was fast changing, they still believed, some until the end, that resignation, or the threat of, was the best means for preventing British entry into the war. Their inability to adapt, and thus ineffectiveness, has meant that it is difficult to find scholars who appear willing to defend their efforts at preventing Britain's entry into the war.[394]

The July Crisis was different to the other diplomatic crises that had occurred in the years prior, in that war was already breaking out over the continent by early August 1914.

389 Ibid, 442.
390 Young, "Harcourt Diary", 2 August 1914, 446.
391 See Newton, *Darkest Days*, 176-193.
392 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 200, 281-297.
393 Young, "Harcourt Diary", 2 August 1914, 446.
394 Only Newton seems to think that the non-interventionists offered credible alternatives to intervention. Newton, *Darkest Days*, 300.

Moreover, the rapidity of events, which many of the statesmen themselves alluded to, increased the need for adaptive thinking. Add in the prospect of a coalition government to take Britain into the war was highly possible, and thus flanking the anti-interventionists threats of resignation, meant that events were thoroughly different to the previous year's international crises. Yet, still, the non-interventionists seemed incapable of adapting their strategy to the changing circumstances. Even though their strategy was failing, they seemed unable to adapt. They continued to play the man and not the ball. Some scholars have noted that this was a phenomenon of a lack of adaption towards the crisis that characterised the decision-making circles of the Great Powers during the July Crisis.[395] Christopher Clark's *Sleepwalker* hypothesis of events, as as examined in the introduction, posits that the leadership circles sleepwalked into the war, unable to adapt. However, the term itself is, perhaps, slightly disingenuous. As has been previously shown, the decision-makers during the July Crisis were under a tremendous amount of stress, from several different sources. The argument could be made for the presence of stress being responsible for stress resulting in decisions being made based on heuristics and bias, rather than rational and adaptive thinking, on the part of the non-interventionists. In essence, due to the intense stress of crisis clouding their judgement, the non-interventionist section of Cabinet was treating the July Crisis as one of the previous years crises, when it reality it was very, very different. They were playing the man, not the ball.

The introduction to this thesis highlighted the work of Daniel Kahnemann, who's research into the field of decision making has shown us that there are two systems of decision-making. It is worth reiterating the key facets of Kahnemann's research, briefly. To summasrise, system one is fast but flawed.[396] It relies on bias and mental shortcuts being taken. On the other hand, system two is slow, but is rational and requires deliberation.[397] When individuals are placed under stress, they display a tendency to rely system one.[398] This is mainly due to the increase in activity in the amygdala and the subsequent decrease in activity in the pre-frontal cortex.[399] In essence, using system one is easier. However, an individual may then engage in the process of post-decision justification, rather than

395 See Lebow, *Between War and Peace*. 101-146.

396 Daniel Kahnemann, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, (2012).

397 See also, J.S. Evans, "Dual-processing accounts of reasoning, judgment, and social cognition", *Annu. Rev. Psychol.,* 59:(2008) 255–278. T. Gilovich, D. Griffin, D. Kahneman, *Heuristics and Biases: The Psychology of Intuitive Judgment* (2002). J.S.B. Evans, K.E.Stanovich, "Dual-process theories of higher cognition advancing the debate", *Perspect. Psychol. Sci.*, 8 (3):(2013) 223–241.

398 R. Yu, Stress potentiates decision biases: A stress induced deliberation-to-intuition (SIDI) model. *Neurobiol Stress.*, 3:(2016)83–95. Published 2016 Feb 12.

399 Dibyadeep Datta and Amy F. T. Arnsten, "Loss of Prefrontal Cortical Higher Cognition with Uncontrollable Stress: Molecular Mechanisms, Changes with Age, and Relevance to Treatment", *Brain Sciences* 9, no. 5 (2019): 113.

deliberation over the decision itself. A failure to adapt to the realities of the situation may take place, which results in further mistakes being made. This failure to adapt, when under stress, is also known as *cognitive closure*.[400] Cognitive closure, as a result of stress, is when an individual, or group, is unable to process new information that contradicts to a long-held belief. Cognitive closure, in some ways, is an early precursor to Kahneman's system one decision-making system. Some scholars have already used cognitive closure to explain the inability of decision-making circles in Berlin and Moscow to change course during the July Crisis.[401] It appears to be equally as applicable to the non-interventionist section of the British Cabinet, as it does to the decision-makers in Berlin and Moscow, due to the levels of stress present likely being similar.

Nonetheless, to briefly return to the morality of the decision, there is the interesting case of how individuals under stress make decisions of a moral nature. Of course, it must be mentioned that morality is culturally defined. The work of Ute Frevert, in particular, has shown that morality is intrinsically linked to culture.[402] Nonetheless, within the field of cognitive neuroscience, some general patterns of human behaviour may be observed when an individual's morality is brought into question. Firstly, modern research shows that deontological thinking, as opposed to making a utilitarian decision, is particularly prevalent among people who are under stress.[403] Researchers have speculated that this may be due to the presence of evolutionary structures that bias humans towards 'gut feelings' on moral issues, especially when under stress (which inhibits reasoning).[404] Therefore, as the statesmen were already under the stress of crisis itself, they were more likely to be thinking deontologically, rather than being able to process their options and adapt to the

400 In particular, see Ap Dijksterhuis, Ad van Knippenberg, Arie W. Kruglanski, Carel Schaper, "Motivated Social Cognition: Need for Closure Effects on Memory and Judgment", *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Volume 32, Issue 3 (1996), 254-270. D. M. Webster and A. W. Kruglanski, "Individual Differences in Need for Cognitive Closure", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(6), (1994). 1049-1062. D. M. Webster, L. Richter, A. W. Kruglanski, "On leaping to conclusions when feeling tired: Mental fatigue effects on impressional primacy. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology", 32(2), (1996) 181-195.

401 See Lebow, *Between War and Peace*, 101-147.

402 U. Frevert, *Honour and humiliation: Emotional economies of war and defeat. Nations and Nationalism* (2025). U.Frevert, *Emotions in History – Lost and Found* (2011). U. Frevert, "Rev. of Shame: A Brief History", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 49(2), (2018) 316–318. U. Frevert, "Rev. of Honor, Politics, and the Law in Imperial Germany, 1871–1914", *The Journal of Modern History*, 84(2), (2012) 515–517.

403 K. Starcke, C. Polzer, O.T. Wolf, M. Brand, "Does stress alter everyday moral decision-making?", *Psychoneuroendocrinology,* 36(2), (2011 Feb) 210-9. K. Starcke, A.-C. Ludwig., M. Brand, "Anticipatory stress interferes with utilitarian moral judgment", *Judgment Decision Making*, 7 (2012) 61–69. B. Gawronski, J. Armstrong, P. Conway, R. Friesdorf, M. J. Hütter, "Consequences, norms, and generalized inaction in moral dilemmas: The CNI model of moral decision-making", *Pers Soc Psychol*, 113(3), (2017 Sep) 343-376. F. Youssef, K. Dookeeram, V. Basdeo, E. Francis, M. Doman, D. Mamed, et al, "Stress alters personal moral decision making", *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 37, (2012) 491–498. Renata Suter and Ralph Hertwig. "Time and Moral Judgment", *Cognition*, 119.3 (2011): 454–458.

404 Lucius Caviola and Nadira Faulmüller, "How stress influences our morality", *In-Mind Magazine*, 23 (2014).

changing situation. Secondly, there is evidence to suggest that individuals that have acute stress induced, also show a tendency towards inaction in moral decision-making situations.[405] Furthermore, acute stress may also impair cognition, as per the systems one and two previously examined, and consequently the individual fears making the wrong decision, which can lead to inaction. Therefore, inaction is considered preferable to incorrect action by the individual.[406] With regards to the non-interventionist statesmen, acute, or short term, stress was almost certainly present, as this and the previous chapter demonstrated. Therefore, their inability to adapt or act could actually be linked to the morality of the decision itself in conjunction with the stress that was present throughout the crisis. In essence, they struggled to cope with the stress of crisis.

In summary, the ineffectual strategy pursued by the non-interventionist section of Cabinet can be better understood when adding the impact stress has upon individual's and groups tasked with making decisions. The inability of the non-interventionists was, to a certain extent, as a result of the stressful nature of the July Crisis. Their inability to adapt or, in some cases, act on new information, was severely hindered by the fact that many among them were struggling with the stress of crisis. The impact stress had upon these men has not been hitherto seriously considered by historians as a factor in their inability to act or adapt. However, as this preceding has hopefully shown, not only were several of the statesmen outside the boundaries of allostasis, they were seriously impacted by stress itself. On the other hand, as the coming sections will show, this was not the case with the interventionist section. Asquith, Grey and Haldane, for the most part, were able to manage the stress of crisis far better than their Cabinet colleagues, and were thus able to adapt and act. The focus will now shift towards how they managed the stress of crisis, as well as how they were able to influence events as a result of their remaining within allostasis.

Eccentricities or coping mechanisms? How Sir Edward Grey coped with the stress of crisis.

Society is often prone to labelling coping mechanisms for stress as *eccentricities*, *quirks*, or *idiosyncrasies*. Coping with, or managing, stress is all about the perception of control. The less an individual perceives themself to be in control of a stressor, the more they will

405 B. Gawronski, P. Conway, J. Armstrong, M. Hütter, 'Effects of incidental emotions on moral dilemma judgments: an analysis using the CNI model', *Emotion* (2018) doi: 10.1037.

406 E.J. Hermans, M.J.A.G Henckens, M. Joëls, G. Fernández, "Time-dependent shifts in neural systems supporting decision-making under stress", in *Decision Neuroscience*, eds J. Dreher and L. Tremblay (2017) 371–385. F. Cushman, L. Young, M. Hauser, "The role of conscious reasoning and intuition in moral judgment: testing three principles of harm", *Psychol. Sci.*, 17,(2006) 1082–1089.

seek comfort in behaviours that are, in the best case, adaptive. In the worst case, uncontrollable stressors are met with maladaptive behaviour that can be damaging to the individual in both the long and short term. The statesmen of the July Crisis were no different in their deployment of coping mechanisms, both adaptive and maladaptive. What is significant about these coping mechanisms, though, is not just their presence. It is the impact they would have on the events of the crisis. To be sure, some of the statesmen appear to have deployed their own coping mechanisms to deal with the stress of crisis. Examples of these include, as we will later see, Asquith writing incessantly to Venetia Stanley, or seeming to be very insistent on consuming alcohol and playing cards. We have also already seen how Samuel, someone who displayed little outward emotion during the crisis, also wrote often and uncharacteristically to his sister and mother. However, it is Sir Edward Grey, though, who is, arguably, most famous for his idiosyncrasies or quirks. These idiosyncrasies are better referred to as coping mechanisms, though, as this section will examine how Grey deployed coping mechanisms as a means of managing the stress of crisis.

Grey received many plaudits, at the time, for his calm and controlled manner. For example, cabinet colleague Lord Crewe wrote that 'Grey (he wrote to the Viceroy) has been the tower of strength and patience'.[407] Herbert Samuel described him, following a meeting on 30 July, as 'serene, and indeed cheerful'.[408] Margot Asquith described Grey, on 31 July, as 'very grave and silent, but in quite good form', and that 'in crises, he seems to get right away from himself'.[409] As late as 2 August, Gosse describes Grey as looking as if 'all his feathers were sharpened; he looked tired, but his strong eyes were bright and calm'.[410] Even up until the morning of the 3 August, Grey still resisted the stress of crisis, as he even found time to crucially sway Sir John Simon away from resigning, with Simon praising Grey's 'firmness of judgment'.[411] What is crucial to note here, is that Grey was able to maintain an element of outward calm which would have been undoubtedly useful in persuading his Cabinet colleagues as to the surety of his plan of action. Furthermore, it appears that he was thinking clearly, and was yet to have left allostasis, even as all around him was descending into chaos. By 3 August, much or Europe was already mobilising for war, or had even begun to move troops to the front. Yet, several eye witness accounts of Grey appear to confirm that he was calm and considered, still.

407 Pope-Hennessy, *Lord Crewe*, 145.
408 HS TO BS, 30 July 1914, HLRO HS A/157/692.
409 Friday 31 July 1914, *Margot Asquith Diary*, Ed. Brocks, 7.
410 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 2 August 1914, 12.
411 Viscount Simon, *Memoirs*, 95

Grey was by the time he had to give his famous speech to the House of Commons on the afternoon of 3 August, beginning to reach his limit. He was, from this point onward, unable to maintain an outward appearance of calm. This is evidenced by two observations. The first, by Charles Masterman, who claims that during one of the later Cabinet meetings, Grey 'had burst into tears', something Masterman considered 'an extraordinary and moving thing in a man so reserved'.[412] This account appears to be confirmed by Pease, who noted that at the Cabinet on 3 August, Grey 'broke down' in front of Cabinet.[413] These are extraordinary images, as Grey was just a day prior considered to be in good form. The second instance of Grey arguably losing his cool, and entering into allostatic load, comes from two observers of Grey's speech on the 3 August. With regards to Grey's speech, Gosse, an observer in the gallery at the House of Commons noted that:

> *Nothing of interest happened, until Sir Edward Grey rose, when the buzzing of voices abruptly ceased, and there was a dead silence. He was evidently under the influence of extreme emotion, which showed itself in the hardening of the lines of his face, and in a sort of abruptness, not exactly jerkiness, in his movements.* [414]

Gosse, having a somewhat close relationship with Grey, would have been well-placed to notice such changes in Grey's appearance. Moreover, as frequent references to his diary within this thesis have shown, he spent a great deal of time around Grey during the July Crisis, and was thus able to observe the changes in his appearance over time. Grey's speech on 3 August really seemed to be when he truly broke under the stress of crisis. Interestingly, Gosse's account is supported by an account of Grey's Cabinet colleague, Charles Hobhouse. Having met Grey immediately after said speech, Hobhouse recollected that Grey spoke with great emotion about his speech:

> *He told one or two of his friends afterward that the sight of the double row of chairs up the floor of the House recalled to him the Home Rule Bill of '86. He to have said perhaps of '92, for I saw them similarly in that latter year. The recollection brought back the fact while he stood in Mr G's place, hardly another person was now present who had been there. His friends, leaders, wife, most of his private life had disappeared and he was so overcome with emotion that if he had been called on once could not have spoken.* [415]

412 Ed. Wilson, *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott*, 99. 4 August 1914.
413 Pease Diary, 3 August 1914, Ed. Wilson, "Cabinet Diary", 48.
414 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 3 August 1914, 18-19.
415 Ed. David, *Hobhouse*, 3 August 1914, 180.

Such outward expressions of emotion were uncharacteristic for Grey, as Masterman correctly claimed. Moreover, as was also the case for several of his Cabinet colleagues, an inability to contain outward expressions of emotion or to maintain self-control was the first visible sign of stress. Research has shown that this has long been noted as a very visible consequence of an individual entering into allostatic load.[416] It is impressive, nonetheless, that Grey had made it to 3 August, and the afternoon of 3 August at that, before showing outward signs of breaking down. Grey is credited with almost having single-handedly facilitated Britain's united entry into the war.[417] Had he entered into allostatic overload sooner, Britain's entry into the conflict would surely not have been as united and relatively harmonious as it was. However, just how Grey was able to maintain his outward and inward sense of control for so long is the critical issue that this section is primarily concerned with.

Throughout the crisis, Grey was able to deploy two personal coping mechanisms to combat the stress of crisis. By doing so, he was able to stave off his decent into allostatic load until the final moments of the crisis. These coping mechanisms, however, were varied. They were both adaptive and maladaptive. Maladaptive coping mechanisms, as the name suggests, though good for dealing with his stress, are not good for an individual's overall health. Grey's use of the maladaptive was to restart smoking. The link between smoking and management of stress, as a maladaptive coping mechanism, requires little explanation to most.Grey stated that he had quit smoking in the months immediately prior to the July Crisis, as his fears over his health grew.[418] Yet, by the end of the July Crisis, Grey appears to be smoking again, as Asquith claims that on 4 August, Grey sat smoking cigarettes with himself and Crewe.[419] It would difficult to believe that this was Grey's first cigarettes of the July Crisis, given the stress he was under. On the other hand, Grey was able to employ more adaptive coping mechanisms to greater effect. Gosse noted that, Grey, following a particularly streneous period of several Cabinet meetings a day was in need of something to take his mind off of things. On 2 August,

416 See Brian M. Galla, and Jeffrey J. Wood, "Trait Self-Control Predicts Adolescents' Exposure and Reactivity to Daily Stressful Event,"" *Journal of* personality, 83.1 (2015): 69–83. Silvia U Maier, Aidan B Makwana and Todd A Hare, "Acute Stress Impairs Self-Control in Goal-Directed Choice by Altering Multiple Functional Connections Within the Brain's Decision Circuits", *Neuron (Cambridge, Mass.)* 87.3 (2015): 621–631.

417 See Annika Mombauer, "Sir Edward Grey, Germany, and the Outbreak of the First World War: A Re-Evaluation", *International history review*, 38.2 (2016): 319. Wilson, *The Policy of Entente*, 145-146.

418 MSS Creighton, MS. Eng. lett. e. 73/2. Grey to Leighton, 8 February 1914.

419 Jenkins, *Asquith*, 330-331.

Gosse noted down Grey expressing an almost direct link between his hobbies, in this case ornithology, and how he dealt with stress;

> *He said "I have been at Cabinet meetings all night and all day, and then in another Cabinet at 6, but I must just shake hands with you. What do you think I am going to do? I have a clear hour, and I am going up to the zoo, to spend it there among the birds, so goodbye."* [420]

Grey was well-known to be an ornithologist, even going on to write books on the subject in his later years.[421] This was often viewed as one of his eccentricities by those that knew him. Whereas he was surrounded by those who sought the excitement of London's political scene, Grey was most at home in the countryside. It is, then, no coincidence that at the high point of the July Crisis from a British perspective, 2 of August, Grey chose to use the one hour he had available to him to do something that brought him comfort. It had long been known that Grey coped with the pressure of his work as Foreign Secretary by taking breaks away in the countryside.[422] In fact, such behaviour is not actually overly unique, nor could it be seen as Grey not realising the severity of the crisis. Research into how individuals cope with stress show that the use of what is known as *passive coping mechanisms*, or rather spending an hour watching the birds, as a means of controlling stressors that cannot physically be dealt with.[423] Clearly, as with most diplomatic crises, there were moments of waiting involved where one could not be active in their coping. As Margot Asquith stated, when referring to the July Crisis, that 'waiting hour to hour waiting for telegrams, late at night; standing stunned and unable to read or write', left all around them feeling the 'strain'.[424] By spending a fraction of his time bird watching, or by having the occasional cigarette, Grey was able to stave off the effects of stress just a little while longer. However, this was not his only means of coping with the stress of crisis.

Grey was able to call upon his close friend and Cabinet colleague, Viscount Haldane. Enter, then, one of the most understated, or underappreciated, statesmen of the July Crisis, Richard Haldane. Their close proximity, both physically and emotionally was to be a key factor in Grey maintaining his calm during the July Crisis. The reason their physical

420 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 2 August 1914, 11.
421 See, Richard Smith, "Sir Edward Grey: The Private Life of a Foreign Secretary", *International history review* 38.2 (2016): 342. Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *The Charm of Birds* (1927).
422 Richard Smith, "Sir Edward Grey: The Private Life of a Foreign Secretary", *International history review* 38.2 (2016): 346-347.
423 See, Ed. R. Dantzer, *Behavior: Overview, in the Handbook of Stress*, 59.
424 Ed. Brocks, *Margot Asquith Diary*, 5.

proximity was so close, was because Haldane and Grey shared a living space from 27 July due to Grey's house in London being renovated.[425] Consequently, Grey and Haldane spent a significant period of time together, especially late into the evenings. This is confirmed by Haldane's sister, who also sheds some light on the burden they both shared, despite Haldane having his own concerns about his work outside of Cabinet;

> *Sir E. (dward) G (rey) was staying with R. (ichard, i.e. Haldane) from the 27th (of July) and he and R. passed through a time of mental strain amounting to torture. Both strained for peace To R. it was a personal of the greatest magnitude to come to war with a power like Germany. He was engaged on a very arduous case (Olympic vs Hawke) and terribly overwrought with this and the Cabinet on his mind.* [426]

What she then goes on to say is even more illuminating:

> *Sir E. Grey looks older. He and R. came through a terrible time, but he spoke most gratefully of having been with R. all the time and of the help it had been. He is wonderful. Both had suffered from indigestion, whether owing to Mrs. Prunier's rich cooking or their anxiety, I know not. They could not sleep and the weight of responsibility weighed them down. To R. the war is a really personal sorrow.* [427]

Evidently, both Haldane and Grey suffered from indigestion, which is a relatively well-known symptom of stress.[428] As is insomnia.[429] Of course, we are unable to fully know just what was said between Grey and Haldane, privately, during the July Crisis. However, the evidence suggests that Grey and Haldane shared their burden, as Haldane's sister recorded, and that it was most likely to have been through conversation. A talking cure, as it were. This appears to be confirmed by Haldane, who wrote to his sister;

> *We discuss every new phase constantly & I think I am of help to him in putting various points of view & clearing his mind…* [430]

425 MS Haldane, 5919, 27 July 1914, Haldane to his mother.
426 Campbell, *Haldane*, 183.
427 Campbell, *Haldane*, 184.
428 L. Chang, "The role of stress on physiologic responses and clinical symptoms in irritable bowel syndrome", Gastroenterology; 140(3) (2011):761-765.
429 For a review of studies on allostatic load and insomnia, see, X. Chen, S. Redline, A.E. Shields, D.R. Williams, M.A.Williams, "Associations of allostatic load with sleep apnea, insomnia, short sleep duration, and other sleep disturbances: findings from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2005 to 2008", *Ann Epidemiol*, 24 (8) (2014): 612-619.
430 MS Haldane, 6012, letter to his sister, 2 August 1914.

Aside from talking things through together, alone in the evenings as they were, it also seems that Haldane was with Grey when every major decision was taken outside of Cabinet. He was clearly more than just a talking cure for Grey, despite how important that role was. He appeared to be doing his best to support Grey through every stage of the crisis, attempting to be present at every major juncture. He was often accompanied by Asquith, the third member of their so called *Regulas Compact* group.[431] The group that was named after Grey's fishing lodge, where the three of them had met a decade before, to oust Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman from the Liberal Party.[432] Once again, this group would circle the wagons around each other, with Asquith recalling spending the evening of 28 July with Grey and Haldane 'talking over the situation, and trying to discover bridges and outlets'.[433] He was also present on 2 August, having spent the night with Grey, and actually having to make the decision to wake him as news came in. As Haldane wrote to his mother;

> *Last night was trying. We were awakened at 3.30 & I took them up to EG. He & I in close consultation & I am thankful to be here. There will be a Cabinet at 11 – the first of several momentous Cabinets – at 10.30 he and I go to see Asquith. Things look black – but it is possible, though not probable that the struggle may be short…* [434]

Gosse confirms that Haldane was present for the final decision for war, on the night of 2 August;

> *That night, war was decided upon, after dinner at Downing Street, by Asquith, Grey, Haldane and Crewe.* [435]

The toll of being Grey's crutch, appeared considerable, according to those who saw Haldane's physical appearance during the crisis. According to Gosse, who appears to have seen Haldane as regularly as he did Grey during the July Crisis, the stress of crisis was beginning to show by 2 August. Haldane displayed visible biomarkers of stress, such

431 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 145-146.
432 Malcolm Pearce and Geoffrey Stewart, *British Political History, 1867-1990: Democracy and Decline* (1992), 195.
433 Ed. Brocks, *Letters to Venetia Stanley*, 132. 29 July 1914.
434 MS Haldane, 5992, 1 August 1914, 1 letter to his mother.
435 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 2 August 1914, 19.

as sleep deprivation, substance overuse, and physical fatigue.[436] On 2 of August, Gosse was 'alarmed' by Haldane's appearance, remarking that 'he (Haldane) looked old and white, and he was walking about heavily and trembling'. Haldane then told Gosse that his appearance was merely the result of physical fatigue, as 'he had practically not slept for 48 hours'. However, this is belied by Gosse's subsequent observation that 'Haldane then settled on a settee, smoking one big cigar after another'.[437] Much like Grey, Haldane sought the calming effect of tobacco smoking as a passive coping mechanism. Furthermore, just a day later, Haldane appears to have looked even worse, when Gosse noted that, after Grey's speech to the House, Haldane 'looked fearfully tired, and almost dazed with exhaustion'.[438] It is, therefore, clear that Haldane paid a heavy physical price in his role as social support for Grey.

Evidently, Grey seems to have used Haldane, whether consciously or unconsciously, as someone whom he could receive social support from as the crisis unfolded. Social support can be defined as relationships between two or more people that can alleviate the impact of stressors or blunt the stress response.[439] It can be crucial for many people as a means for blunting the impact of stressors.[440] Not only this, but social support may improve an individual's ability to maintain self-control over both over behaviour and decision-making.[441] Arguably, the fact that Grey had Haldane with whom he could share the burden of the July Crisis with, meant that he was able to withstand the impact of stress longer. It is doubtful whether anyone else in Cabinet, even Asquith due to his role as Prime Minister, would have been able to provide Grey with the support he needed. Furthermore, Haldane was someone who was renowned for being a deep thinker. He had studied philosophy at Gottingen and Edinburgh and was considered a gifted lawyer.[442] Rather than the hyperbole of a Churchill or a Lloyd George, the tendency to view foreign policy through the prism of the entente of Crowe or Nicholson, or the ideology-based perception of the crisis

436 For biomarkers of stress, see B. S. McEwen, "Biomarkers for assessing population and individual health and disease related to stress and adaptation" (2015), *Metabolism* 64, S2–S10.

437 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 11-12, 2 August 1914.

438 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 13, 3 August 1914.

439 See, J. E. Pearson, "The definition and measurement of social support", *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 64(6),(1986) 390–395. Similarly, see James S. House, *Work Stress and Social Support* (1981).

440 See, Neal Krause, "Social Support, Stress, and Well-Being Among Older Adults", *Journal of Gerontology*, Volume 41, Issue 4 (July 1986),512–519. F. Ozbay, D.C. Johnson, E. Dimoulas, C.A. Morgan, D. Charney, S. Southwick, "Social support and resilience to stress: from neurobiology to clinical practice", *Psychiatry* (Edgmont), 4(5)(2007), 35-40.

441 Jared B. Torre and Matthew D. Lieberman, "Putting Feelings Into Words: Affect Labelling as Implicit Emotion Regulation", *Emotion Review*, 10.2 (2018): 116–124.

442 Ed. Brack, *Dictionary of Liberal Biography* (1998), 157. Andrew Vincent, "German Philosophy and British Public Policy: Richard Burdon Haldane in Theory and Practice", *Journal of the history of ideas*, 68.1 (2007): 157–179.

of a Morley or Simon, Haldane probably offered a calm, rational ear for Grey. Furthermore, Haldane was not as ignorant to foreign affairs or military planning, nor Germany more generally, as a good many of his colleagues in Cabinet. This was due to the time he spent in Germany over the years, as well as his mission to Germany in 1912.[443]

It must also be noted that Haldane was able to perform this role because of his already close relationship with Grey. It was not just about the closeness in terms of physical proximity. As have shown, the quality of social support doesn't just depend on how often an individual is present for another.[444] Though this certainly played a part, seeing that Haldane was readily available to Grey throughout the crisis, at seemingly any hour of the day. The more present or accessible an individual perceives social to be, the more likely a stressor is to have less impact.[445] More important, is the wording of the support and communication skills of the person who seeks to alleviate the concerns of the other.[446] However, there appears to be a fine line between saying the right and wrong things to someone under stress. Accordingly, if the social support offered is too verbally supportive, without allowing the individual under stress the opportunity verbalise their concerns, the social support actually can actually increase the impact of stress.[447] It appears that the most effective technique for alleviating stress through social support appears to be when an individual under stress can verbalise their perception of their stressor, whilst the other individual seeks to help them to better understand their stressor.[448] This technique results in the individual under stress perceiving that their sense of control over their stressor has increased, and thus blunts its impact.[449] Their friendship, though remarked to be 'odd' by some, appeared to be sincere and reciprocal.[450] It was a long-standing friendship, that was remarkably open. Haldane was the only male friend he could talk to about the death of his wife, Dorothy, as well as someone who Grey spent a great deal of time with, despite his need for solitude.[451] There was clearly a closeness between them. Studies within

443 Hazelhurst, *Politicians at War*, 72. For Haldane's account of his mission to Germany, see Haldane. "GERMANY AND GREAT BRITAIN IN 1912." *Current history & forum 8.2* (1918): 166-169.
444 N. Bolger, A.Zuckerman, R. C. Kessler, "Invisible support and adjustment to stress", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79 (2000), 953–961.
445 See, S. Cobb, 'Social support as a moderator of life stress', *Psychosom* (1976), Med. 38, 300–314. C. Kirschbaum, T. Klauer, S. H. Filipp, D. H. Hellhammer, "Sexspecific effects of social support on cortisol and subjective responses to acute psychological stress", *Psychosom. Med*. 57, (1995) 23–31.
446 Tian, Xi, Denise Haunani Solomon, and Kellie St Cyr Brisini. "How the Comforting Process Fails: Psychological Reactance to Support Messages", *Journal of communication* 70.1 (2020): 13–24.
447 E. E. Crockett and L. A.Neff, "When receiving help hurts: Gender differences in diurnal cortisol responses to spousal support", *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4, (2012) 190–197
448 Tian Xi, Denise Haunani Solomon, and Kellie St Cyr Brisini, "How the Comforting Process Fails: Psychological Reactance to Support Messages", 27.
449 Ibid, 26.
450 Otte, *Statesman of Europe*, 49.
451 Otte, *Statesman of Europe*, 48-51, 248-250, 370.

neuroscience on the impact of oxytocin, the neuropeptide, or hormone, that acts as a relaxant and that is released when interacting with others, have shown that there is a correlation between the amount of oxytocin released and how close the individuals are. Succinctly, the closer you feel towards the person you are interacting with the more oxytocin released, and consequently the more relaxed you feel.[452] Especially during stressful situations, where oxytocin has been shown to suppress the impact of stressors and the stress response.[453] As if to summarise this perfectly, when Gosse attempted to get Haldane to rest, due to his fatigued appearance, Haldane refused, 'saying that to talk was the only rest possible'.[454] In some ways, Gosse also provided the social support to Haldane, that he was providing to Grey.

Despite Haldane being more well-informed than his fellow Cabinet colleagues, due to his daily conversations and closeness with Grey, what is most curious is that Haldane is not noted as contributing widely within the Cabinet discussions from 27 July onward. There is little evidence of him being involved at all during the debates, with Lloyd George even going so far as to claim that Haldane was 'almost its most silent member'.[455] Simon was less flattering in his assessment, calling Haldane 'that old windbag', and claiming that he 'counted for nothing', during the debates in Cabinet from 27 July onwards.[456] This, perhaps, has led to his role during the crisis as being largely overlooked. Whereas Samuel and Crewe have garnered praise as being an 'intermediary body' who prevented the split of Cabinet, and Asquith for preventing the resignations of more of his Cabinet, Haldane has received little to no attention for the role he played.[457] Perhaps, it is because just how important social support is as a coping mechanism for stress is not properly appreciated by those outside of the discipline of psychology. Perhaps, those who are frequently praised within society are those who are people of overt action, not those who offer moral or emotional support. Whatever the reason, Haldane played an extremely important role during the July Crisis. He was almost solely responsible for Grey not entering into allostatic overload, and thus ensured that Grey was able to play his crucial part in ensuring that Britain entered the war united.

452 See, A. C. Kelly, D. C. Zuroff, M. J. Leybman and P.Gilbert, "Social safeness, received social support and maladjustment: testing a tripartite model of affect regulation", *Cognit. Ther. Res*., 36 (2012), 815–826.

453 M. Heinrichs, T. Baumgartner, C. Kirschbaum and U.Ehlert, "Social support and oxytocin interact to suppress cortisol and subjective responses to psychosocial stress", *Biol. Psychiatry*, 54 (2003), 1389–1398.

454 Gosse to Earl Spencer, 3 August 1914 within Evan Charteris, The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse (1931), 366-68.

455 David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs, Volume 1* (1933), 603.

456 Ed. Wilson, *The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott*, 103. 3-4 September 1914.

457 Wilson, *The Policy of Entente*, 138-140. Newton, *Darkest Days*, 206-212.

Asquith the puppet master and Lloyd George the opportunist.

Whereas Grey has garnered the most attention of the British statesmen from historians of the July Crisis, probably due to the fact that he was Foreign Secretary during a diplomatic crisis, the roles of Asquith and Lloyd George have received significantly less attention. This, despite that by 1914 both men were the two most powerful members of Cabinet. To be sure, the likes of Churchill and Grey also wielded power and influence, but it was Asquith as Prime Minister and Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer that held the two most prominent positions within Cabinet. Yet, despite their prominent positions, neither Asquith nor Lloyd George have received much in the way of criticism or praise for their actions during the July Crisis. Their actions are somewhat glossed over by historians. However, this section will examine in detail the critical roles they both played during the July Crisis. Its main focus will be upon how by remaining calm they were able to dictate events, whether directly or indirectly, to achieve their own aims.

In the months and weeks prior to the July Crisis, the Prime Minister, H. H. Asquith has been noted to have been under considerable professional pressure. This is, of course, understandable, as being Prime Minister means a lot of personal responsibility. However, his contemporaries noted that he seemed to be coping with it well enough.[458] Reflecting on Asquith's time as Prime Minister, as a whole, Herbert Samuel notes it as being a time of 'domestic controversies of exceptional bitterness and international dangers of unprecedented gravity'.[459] This was not hyperbole. By 1914 Asquith had been Prime Minister for 6 years, a time which had seen both social and international pressures come to the fore, as well as overcoming several domestic and foreign crises.[460] From the suffragette movement to increases in diplomatic tension within Europe between the two power blocs, and by 1914 with the peaking of the Home Rule crisis. However, in 1914 specifically, Jenkins summarises his position best, by stating that;

> *He (Asquith) had become the "natural" head of the Government, with his own well-established routine of authority, and it required an effort of imagination on the part*

458 Jenkins, *Asquith*, 315.
459 Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs* (1945), 87. See also, George Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England 1910-1914* (2017), 334.
460 Cameron Hazlehurst, "Asquith as Prime Minister, 1908-1916." The English Historical Review 85, no. 336 (1970): 530-531.

of his colleagues, his opponents, the electorate, and even himself, to visualise anyone else in his place. [461]

Further issues that faced Asquith as Prime Minister included the disagreement in Cabinet over naval estimates, which was then subsumed by the issues over Home Rule, which itself was then subsumed by the July Crisis. The Home Rule and July Crises overlapped for many in Cabinet, but more so for Asquith. This is because the Home Rule Crisis had troubled Asquith for some time, leading into July 1914, and showed no signs of abating by late July.[462] Asquith himself thought of the crisis as an 'impasse' that he could not overcome, and that he had 'rarely felt more hopeless'.[463] Interestingly, Asquith, so often praised for his reserve and calm, displayed uncharacteristic anger during the Home Rule Crisis, reacting with 'surprising violence' towards a fellow MP's suggestions to delay the Amending Bill. Asquith described this proposal as 'idiotic', and that the proposal would seem as though the government were 'drifting on'.[464] What is most curious about this outburst, is that this outburst against 'drifting on' goes against Asquith's tendency to allow things to delayed, if the matter were complicated.[465] This is, arguably, evidence that Asquith was stressed over Ireland, as things were evidently dragging on to long even for him. Nonetheless, these outbursts appear isolated. There appears to be no evidence to suggest that Asquith, even with the strains of the Home Rule crisis, left allostasis. There is no evidence of stress-related illnesses (such as a colds), or an inability to control his outward emotions (unlike others around him), for example.

What is clear, though, is that up until late-July, Asquith was mainly preoccupied with Ireland and not with events unfolding in Europe.[466] During the early to mid-stages of the July Crisis, there appears to be little to no mention of the European situation in any of his letters to Venetia Stanley (with whom Asquith spoke most candidly and openly) until 24 July.[467] Until then, much of his correspondence refers to Ireland, and doesn't contain any of the urgency or nervousness of letters post-24 July. From this point onward, Asquith, albeit relatively slowly, started to show more of a preoccupation with the rapidly unfolding crisis in Europe. Though, on 26 July, and possibly earlier,[468] it must be said, that he is

461 Jenkins, *Asquith*, 332. See also, Hazlehurst, *Asquith*, 502.
462 In particular, see Jérôme Aan De Wiel "1914: What Will the British Do? The Irish Home Rule Crisis in the July Crisis", *International History Review*, 37, no. 4 (2015): 657-81.
463 Jenkins, *Asquith*, 321.
464 Jenkins, *Asquith*, 322.
465 See Cameron Hazlehurst, "Asquith as Prime Minister, 1908–1916", *The English historical review*, LXXXV. 336 (1970): 508.
466 Hazelhurst, *Asquith*, 527.
467 Ed. Brocks, *Letters*, 92.
468 See Ed. Brocks, *Letters*, 126, footnote 5.

known to have remarked about how the unfolding crisis in Europe would 'have the incidentally good effect of throwing into the background the lurid pictures of "civil war" in Ulster'.[469] It isn't until the 28 July, when Asquith talked with Grey and Haldane until 1am, that the situation in Europe becomes the main political focus of his correspondence to Stanley, with his letter on 29 July focusing on the European situation.[470] As if to confirm this, Margot Asquith's diary entry for 29 July states that he was 'grave' and that when speaking to her of the 'precautionary telegram' (to alert all every office in the Empire) for war readiness;

> *For once he stood still, and didn't walk up and down the room (He never sits down when he is talking of important things.)* [471]

Evidently, the talk with Grey and Haldane on the evening of 28 July changes Asquith's perception of the crisis. He became more aware of the potential impending dangers, and this was evident in his letters. He even explicitly wrote of the 'anxious and worrying' days he had had, on 1 August.[472] Though, in the very same letter, Asquith writes that he 'didn't sleep badly', which in essence sums up his allostatic state quite well (insomnia being closely linked with stress).[473] Though, Gosse claims that 'for once in his life, Asquith spent a night of insomnia', around 2 August.[474] To be sure, Asquith evidently viewed the crisis as very stressful (the 'most critical of crises', he wrote), and yet there is no real evidence of him leaving allostasis and entering into allostatic load.[475] Asquith's personal life, in early 1914, was comfortable. He had no financial concerns, something that had been a concern in his earlier years, and his family life could be considered stable enough.[476] Though, there were two interesting facets of his personal life that are worth mentioning. Firstly, by 1914, Asquith had earned the moniker 'Squiffy', due to his fondness for wine. The reason for this nickname was used in reference to the amount of alcohol he is known to have consumed, particularly at social events such as dinners, but also during working evenings.[477] Some have even claimed that Asquith was an alcoholic, and that it was a hidden secret amongst

469 Ibid, 126.
470 Ibid, 132.
471 Ed. Brocks, *Margot Diary*, 5-6.
472 Ed. Brocks, *Letters*, 112.
473 For example, see Steven J. Linton, "Does Work Stress Predict Insomnia? A Prospective Study", *British journal of health psychology*, 9.2 (2004): 127–136. Johanna Garefelt, et al, "Reciprocal Relations Between Work Stress and Insomnia Symptoms: A Prospective Study", *Journal of sleep research*, 29.2 (2020): e12949–n/a.
474 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 17.
475 Ed. Brocks, *Letters*, 147.
476 Jenkins, *Asquith*, 26-37,
477 www.politico.eu/article/the-art-of-british-political-drinking-westminster/

his peers.[478] He is also said to have been warned about his consumption levels, by Haldane, and that he became dependent on alcohol to deal with the stress a life in politics.[479]

Asquith attended a great many dinners and events and was said to have often been disappointed when they ended early, or when his co-dinners had little interest in playing bridge following dinner (thereby extending the evening).[480] For Asquith, evening gatherings and drinking appear to go hand in hand, and probably provided relief from the pressures of office.[481] In other words, a maladaptive coping mechanism for stress. However, during the July Crisis, there are no specific references to Asquith being visibly intoxicated. Previously, there appears to have been several references to Asquith being visibly drunk during professional and private engagements.[482] Interestingly, there are several reports of Asquith looking very worse for wear by 1916. He is noted to have been visibly shaking during Cabinet meetings, and seriously struggling with his alcohol addiction.[483] Years of using alcohol as a maladaptive coping mechanism had caught up with him. This is in stark contrast to reports of his demeanour and physical state during the July Crisis, where there is no evidence of any such reports of his physical or mental state. This lends weight to any claim that Asquith had not entered allostatic load during the July Crisis.

Though, it must be said, that his usual method of attending or hosting dinners as a coping mechanism for the stress of office evidently did not always offer the detachment from the crisis he would have, arguably, needed. Interestingly, Gosse offers an account of an altercation that took place at a dinner Asquith hosted, during the July Crisis, where Asquith had to separate Lord Bryce, who was 'raved about the necessity of peace at all costs', from Admiral Jellicoe and Lord Kitchener.[484] Furthermore, even during the early days of the crisis, the furore over Home Rule meant that dinner parties of London had become a partisan affair, with social circles becoming increasingly split down political party lines. One such example was the ball thrown by Lord Curzon, in May 1914, in which due to the King and Queen being in attendance meant that 'no political significance could be attached' to it. However, neither the PM nor his wife were invited to attend, as would usually have been

478 For a comprehensive account of Asquith's drinking habits, see Marvin Rintala, "Taking the Pledge: H. H. Asquith and Drink", *Biography (Honolulu)*, 16.2 (1993): 110.
479 Ibid, 110-112.
480 Ibid, 113.
481 Jenkins, *Asquith*, 328. See also, Richard Toye, "H. H. Asquith: Last of the Romans. By V. Markham Lester. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019. Pp. Xii." *The Journal of modern history*, 93.2 (2021): 457-458.
482 Marvin Rintala, "Taking the Pledge: H. H. Asquith and Drink", *Biography (Honolulu)* 16.2 (1993): 110-116.
483 Ibid, 115-116.
484 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 6.

customary.[485] Relations with rival Conservative MP's had become strained over Ireland.[486] Evidently, dinner parties were not always the safe haven Asquith would have liked them to be, but such incidents appear to be isolated.

When taking all this into consideration, it would be fair to say that immediately pre-July Crisis, as well as during, Asquith remained in allostasis. This, despite the daily, work-related stressors that were present in his role as Prime minister. There appear to be no signs of any bio or psychological markers. What is interesting, is Asquith's deployment of coping mechanisms or behaviours. His socialising and consumption of alcohol seemed to be a functioning method of coping, even during the crisis. It must also be noted that Asquith was also one of the statesmen who used the company of females as a coping tool for the stressors that were present in professional life. One need only to look at the content of his letters to Venetia Stanley, which will feature prominently throughout this chapter, as well as the sheer volume of letters (despite all his other duties and obligations as PM) to see that he used her confidence as a coping tool for his daily stressors. Arguably, both of his coping mechanisms were, in large part, responsible for him being able to remain within allostasis, despite his near-constant exposure to stressors in his professional life. However, it is important to note that there were accounts that Asquith was openly emotional throughout the crisis itself. However, these were, as later chapters will show, more performative in nature and, thus, less sincere. This will be elaborated upon later.

Lloyd George's experience of the July Crisis appears to show someone who was similarly unperturbed by events going on around him. This, despite the fact that in the months leading up to the crisis, Lloyd George was experiencing some difficulties in his professional life. Though his personal life remained stable, by his own standards, he was suffering some serious political setbacks.[487] Political setbacks would have been a significant pressure to Lloyd George, because, as Hazelhurst puts it, 'he enjoyed power too much, and relied on his ministerial salary even more, to contemplate seriously a return to the back benches'.[488] 1914 itself, though had started badly for Lloyd George, and was to get worse. Early in January 1914, he caused a great deal of anger with regards to comments made about Britain's relationship with Germany, which were not cleared with Sir Edward Grey first. Grey was said to have been 'incensed' with him, with Lloyd George then

485 Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, 362.
486 Hazelhurst, *Asquith*, 528.
487 Hazelhurst, *Politicians At War*, 107.
488 See, Cameron Hazlehurst, "Asquith as Prime Minister, 1908–1916", *The English historical review*, LXXXV.336 (1970): 502–531. See also, Hazelhurst, *Politicians At War*, 103.

being forced to make excuses for his comments.[489] This, seemingly, added to troubles he was already experiencing with regards to issues over his budget. By late January, he is noted as looking 'very tired' and 'slack'.[490] Furthermore, his budget tribulations over the budget continued to come under attack from all sides. The attacks ranged from inside Cabinet, as well as from outside.[491] His statement regarding the Chancellor's Budget, in May 1914, was generally considered a 'complete disaster'.[492] Even as late as 12 July, Lord Riddell, a close colleague of Lloyd George, noted that Lloyd George's standing in the party was 'low', and that the budget had been a 'fiasco'.[493] Though, it is also worth adding, that Lloyd George was seemingly capable of dealing with crisis, possessing the resolve to be able to bounce back from crises, according to Riddell, due to his 'wonderful nervous system'.[494]

Lloyd George's powers of recupperation from crises seem to have been in full effect during the July Crisis, as accounts of Lloyd George's physical and mental well being appear to show that he was not suffering, at least openly, as much as his Cabinet colleagues. There appears to be no evidence of consistent bio or psychological markers of stress. On the contrary, he appeared to remain, outwardly at least, in control of his actions and decision making throughout the crisis. Riddell noted that, having met Lloyd George on 2 August, that he 'had been at work for eighteen hours, but he seemed wonderfully fresh'.[495] What is interesting about this statement is that Lord Riddell often remarked, in his diary, about the appearance and well being of Lloyd George (as they would frequently meet). However, throughout the dates of the July Crisis this is the only reference Riddell makes about Lloyd George's appearance, despite them meeting almost daily throughout the crisis. Riddell's interpretation also ties together with other accounts of Lloyd George during the crisis, most notably by Asquith. Asquith noted the calm Lloyd George displayed, as he described Lloyd George as 'statesmanlike', and in favour of keeping the position 'open' during Cabinet debates.[496] Clearly, whilst others around him were showing signs of stress, Lloyd George was able to, at least in public, maintain an outward sign of calm. This would have been very difficult to do, had he entered into allostatic load, as his Cabinet colleagues proved. This seems remarkable, considering the heightened states of emotion of those around him

489 Ed.Wilson, *Diaries of C.P Scott*, 74, 17 January 1914. Roy Hattersley, *The Great Outsider: David Lloyd George* (2010), 348.
490 Wilson, *Diaries of C.P Scott*, 77-78, entries for 22 and 25 January.
491 Hattersley, *The Great Outsider*, 349-350.
492 Ibid, 350.
493 Ed. McEwen, *Riddell*, 84.
494 Ed. McEwen, *Riddell*, 84.
495 McEwen, *Riddell*, 87.
496 Ed. Brocks, *Letters*, 140.

by 2 August. Moreover, Lloyd George faced considerable pressures from those around him in his professional and personal circles to keep Britain out of any war that could take place. Liberal newspaper editor C.P. Scott was said to have been one of those pressures, as were the bankers in London (though, both, it must be said, sought to keep Britain out of the war for very different reasons).[497] Unaffected by those around him, and in the face major diplomatic crisis, Lloyd George was not one of those who entered into allostatic load. This can also be evidenced in his reading of public opinion throughout the crisis. Similar to the sitauation with Churchill, where he was maligned for being a popularity seeker, McKenna and Harcourt noted that Lloyd George had his 'ear to ground' and found that public opinion was 'strong against war', and 'wants to be with it'.[498] Later assessments of Lloyd George during the crisis, by his private secretary, and lover, Frances Stephenson, as well as by Cabinet colleague Hobhouse, also claim that Lloyd George was in touch with by public opinion.[499] Remaining open to new information, or swings in public opinion, would only have been possible if an individual were to remain within allostasis. As was examined in the case of Burns and Morley earlier, a key psychological marker of stress is cognitive closure. As Asquith stated, Lloyd George was more statesmanlike, than stressed.

Lloyd George, the absentee leader of the non-interventionists.

A consequence of both men remaining within allostasis is how they were then, subsequently, able to manipulate and influence those around them within Cabinet. Cynically speaking, both Asquith and Lloyd George exploited the stress of crisis for their own personal aims. For Lloyd George, his was that of self-preservation. Historian Thomas Otte has presented Lloyd George's role in the July Crisis as characteristic of his career in general, opportunistic.[500] However, the reason he was able to remain self-serving and opportunistic was that Lloyd George was one of the members of Cabinet who was best able to handle the stress of crisis. Whereas those around him were losing their heads, struggling to adapt to changing circumstances, Lloyd George remained somewhat aloof, and calm. Therefore, he was able to play a more calculating game, and not succumb to his system one for decision-making. As such, he was able to keep his finger on the pulse of public opinion and was able to change his position readily as and when it was necessary. It is possible to go yet further, and label him as duplicitous, playing both sides of Cabinet

497 Hattersley, *Lloyd George*, 354. Hazelhurst, *Politicians At War*, 108-109.
498 Young, Harcourt Diary, 29 July 1914, 440.
499 See Frances Lloyd George, *The Years That Are Passed* (1967), 73.
500 Otte, *July Crisis*, 499.

whilst adapting to the rapidly changing reality of the crisis. The fact that he is counted among both opposing groups, as part of their number, is indicative of how Lloyd George kept his cards close to his chest throughout the crisis.[501] Both sides, at one time or another, appeared to be convinced of his support. In fact, Lloyd George did not openly and definitively declare his position until the very end of the crisis, when he declared that the invasion of Belgium by Germany made all the difference in the world to him.[502] He was also able to cajole the resigning members into remaining on 3 August, with a personal appeal during a Cabinet meeting. This, at the height of the flurry of resignations.[503] This was crucial in minimising the number of resignations, as well as ensuring that Cabinet unity was maintained.

However, it was absence as a leader for the non-interventionists that was to have the greatest impact on events. Historians tend to agree that there was no charismatic for the anti-interventionist camp to rally around during the July Crisis.[504] When comparing the coping mechanisms and support networks of the two groups, it also becomes apparent that the interventionist group were far more well-equipped to deal with the stress of crisis than the non-interventionists. Whereas Grey and Haldane relied on each other to help deal with the stress of crisis and had their long-term friendship of Asquith to call upon, the non-interventionists appear to be far less unified despite their supposed common cause. Morley summarised it best, by stating that there was 'no standard-bearer' for them rally around.[505] There was nobody to rally the group, despite the countless meetings that took place both inside and outside the Cabinet room. In previous crises, the mantle of leader of the opposition to Grey's foreign policy, within Cabinet, had been taken up by Lord Loreburn. Following his retirement from politics in 1912, he handed the baton to Harcourt.[506] However, he appears to have been little more than a mouthpiece for the non-interventionists, speaking for them at meetings with Asquith.[507] There is little evidence of him being especially active during Cabinet discussions, and he was certainly not more animated and impassioned than Burns or Morley. Harcourt would show that during the crisis, he was ill-equipped for such a burden. He was to spend much of the crisis fretting over Churchill's actions, especially early on, and leaving little time for him to confront Grey, Haldane or Asquith.

501 For example, see Harcourt's Diary entries for 27 and 29 July. Young, Harcourt Diary, 438 and 440 respectively.
502 Ed. McEwen, *Riddell*, 3 August 1914, 88.
503 Ed. Brocks, *Letters*, 148. 3 August 1914.
504 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 259.
505 Ibid, 259 for Morley quote.
506 Wilson, *Policy of Entente*, 136
507 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 255.

Because of Harcourt's failure to cope with the leadership role that was bestowed upon him, it was to be Morley and Burns who were the most vociferous in support of non-intervention during Cabinet meetings. However, these two were also incapable of rallying significant support around them, due to their perceived low-standing in Cabinet. Morley, as was previously stated, was viewed as somewhat of a relic of the past, too old to be taken seriously. Haldane was particularly scathing, noting that Morley's 'ideas, his knowledge, are forty years old'.[508] As for Burns, he has been described as a 'product of an electoral bargain with the Labour Party', hardly a flattering description.[509] Post-resignation, Haldane summarised the mood over loss of Morley and Burns, best. Despite the flattery of Asquith and others to get them to remain, Haldane is quoted as saying;

> *His (Morley) absence will really be no loss to us, but a relief. He has become so fidgety, so pernickety, so incapable of rapid action, that in times of crisis like this his presence at the council table is a weakness.' I said 'And John Burns?' Haldane answered 'Oh I suppose so! Dear John Burns, one gets into the habit of forgetting he exists!* [510]

On paper Lloyd George was the most suitable candidate to lead the anti-war faction in Cabinet. This is despite him not being ever fully trusted by some on the anti-interventionist side. Although he had made his name with his anti-war speeches during the Boer War, he was not considered sincere enough in his anti-war sentiment to take on the unofficial role of leader of the non-interventionists. Harcourt perceived Lloyd George be a 'popularity hunter', and thus 'not to be trusted' to lead the anti-interventionists.[511] However, he was actively courted by both groups. Whether it was Churchill's frantic exchanges with him by written note in Cabinet meetings, or long sit-downs with McKenna, both sides recognised the necessity for having Lloyd George onside. His skills and energy as a speaker were legendary. However, Lloyd George was able to remain aloof of both groups, despite being present at several meetings on either side of the debate.[512] Essentially, Lloyd George held the balance of power in Cabinet. He was only able to do so, by remaining calm and calculating, as well as aloof, which he did so by coping better with the stress of crisis than most of his colleagues. The dilemma he faced was that were he to lend his support to one side or the other, especially earlier in the crisis, it would have meant the dissolution of

508 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 4.
509 Wilson, *Policy of Entente*, 136.
510 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 18.
511 Young, Harcourt Diary, 29 July, 440.
512 See Toye, *Lloyd George and Churchill*, 125. Young, Harcourt Diary, 29 July 1914, 440.

Cabinet. Had he stepped up and led the non-interventionist cause, this surely would have emboldened the non-interventionists, and would have resulted in a surge of resignations from Cabinet ministers who would have felt that they were able to galvanise wider support with the name value of Lloyd George openly on their side. Such a decision would have resulted in the dissolution of Government. Conversely, had he thrown in his lot with the interventionists too early, he would have risked emboldening and accelerating their actions towards intervention, and thus causing the resignations on the non-interventionist side to occur earlier. This would have either brought down the Government, or increased the risk of a coalition Government taking its place. Neither would have been a positive for Lloyd George, in July-August 1914.

Of course, we can never truly know whether Lloyd George was aware of, or even contemplated these points, and there is no archival evidence to suggest that he did. Morley, when reflecting on his own resignation, later noted that Lloyd George's motivations during the crisis were a 'riddle'.[513] However, we do know that Lloyd George did not lend his full support to either side of the debate until the very end of the crisis. The archival evidence shows this. Furthermore, we know that Lloyd George was considered both by his colleagues and historians to be a thoroughly calculating individual, who had a gift for picking a winning side, and was more than aware of his own standing and importance. We also know that individuals who are under stress, especially for a sustained period of time, are often unable to think rationally or critically; Lloyd George, however, displayed no discernible signs of stress during the July Crisis. When combining these three points, it seems plausible to claim that Lloyd George was aware that he held the balance of power in Cabinet, and that by waiting and picking his moment to declare himself he was able to ensure that Cabinet did not dissolve.

Interestingly, and in relation to the balance of power in Cabinet, the so-called 'intermediary body', which consisted of Samuel, McKenna, and Crewe, were also examples of those who handled the stress of crisis better than their counterparts, and were thus able to recognise the need for their roles as intermediaries between the two warring factions within Cabinet. Wilson posits that Samuel played an underappreciated role during the July Crisis, as he was the one to offer the intermediatory position to allow Cabinet to come together.[514] Though Samuel did exhibit some curious behaviour during the crisis, there is no evidence to suggest that he entered into allostatic load. As his biographer states,

513 Morley, *Memorandum on Resignation*, 20.
514 Wilson, *Policy of Entente*, 138.

Samuel wrote to his mother and sister with ‘unusual frankness’, regarding the events of the crisis and the feeling in Cabinet.[515] What is curious about this statement, is that by June 1914, Samuel is noted as experiencing a time of relative prosperity. There is no evidence to suggest that he was suffering from stress in either his personal or professional life. On the contrary, Samuel was prospering. The Marconi affair, which Samuel was involved in, had subsided by 1914 and Samuel was prospering both in terms of finances and in terms of his relative rise in Cabinet.[516] Yes, there was a change of Cabinet roles, from Postmaster-General to the Local Government Board, which would have brought change. However, this was a change that Samuel himself very much wanted, and one which was seemingly motivating him.[517] Pre-July Crisis, Samuel appears to be showing no signs of significant stress in either his physical or mental health. Therefore, Samuel’s usually detailed correspondence, during the crisis, with his mother and sister could be seen as the deployment of a coping mechanism for stress. Meaning, that though Samuel would have felt the stress of crisis, he was managing his stress through his correspondence, and thus remaining within allostasis.

Samuel kept his head and offered mediation between the two groups, as opposed to the obstinate and static behaviour of the non-interventionists. The same, to some degree, can be said of McKenna. Although he does not appear to have contributed a vast amount to Cabinet debates during the July Crisis, he does seem to offer alternatives to full-scale intervention. Harcourt notes that McKenna offered a solution of bottling up the German merchant ships, at the end of July, so as to put pressure on the, supposedly, overstrained German railways (dealing with troop transportations).[518] Masterman, at the time, recalled McKenna wanting to ‘fight for time’, rather than break up the Cabinet with resignations.[519] McKenna, like Samuel, was looking to either limit or reduce the scale of the war, or prevent the breakup of Cabinet through resignations. There is no evidence available to show that they were openly succumbing to the stress of crisis, and their actions seem to confirm their maintenance of control. Crucially, this is another example of how stress, or rather how stress is handled, was a factor behind the Cabinet remaining in place at the end of the July Crisis.

As the title to this section suggests, Lloyd George was not the only member of Cabinet seeking to control events. It must be said that no member of Cabinet did more to prevent

515 Wasserstein, *Samuel*, 160.
516 Bernard Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel: A Political Life* (1992), 147-149.
517 Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 153-157.
518 Harcourt Diary, 29 July 1914. Young, 439.
519 Wilson, *Policy of Entente*, 139.

its dissolution, other than Grey, than Asquith. If Grey is credited with bringing a united Britain into the war, then Asquith should be credited with bringing a united Cabinet into the conflict. For example, Wilson states that Asquith used 'blackmail and bribery' to cajole the Cabinet towards his favoured decision of intervention.[520] Similarly, Newton posits that Asquith's 'seductive power' and 'personal appeals' were significant in reducing the number of resignations.[521] Historians, generally, tend to agree on this point.[522] However, the fact remains that only two Cabinet members resigned in protest over Britain entering the war. Asquith was extremely successful at preventing the dissolution of his Government, and he did so by, whether consciously or unconsciously, utilising three key strengths. Firstly, he appeared outwardly calm, which would have comforted his colleagues. Secondly, he offered control, in the form of justification for entry into the conflict, to his colleagues. Control, research shows, is a key factor in alleviating stress.[523] Additionally, an individual may, as with any adaptive coping mechanism, become dependent on the source of stress control. In practice, his colleagues appeared to become dependent upon him, and were thus more pliable to his will. Finally, he was also able to raise an individual's self-esteem through flattery or emotional appeals, which is another method for lowering stress.[524] Modern research shows that as an individual's perceived control of a stressor increases, so their levels of stress decrease.[525] Perceived control, particularly over psychological stressors, is, of course, very subjective.[526] What works for one person, may not be as effective for another. What Asquith did, was to offer a way out of the crisis. He did this by successfully offering several, often individualised, solutions to the crisis. As we have seen previously, as perceived control increases the power of a stressor decreases. However, it is also important to note that an individual can become dependent upon something, or someone, who alleviates stress. This perceived control can be either adaptive or maladaptive, but what is crucial is that an individual becomes dependent on this control to alleviate the impact of stress.

520 Wilson, *Policy of Entente*, 145.
521 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 253 and 259.
522 See also, David Silbey, T*he British Working Class and Enthusiasm for War* (2005), 18.
523 J.P. Bhanji, E.S. Kim, M.R. Delgado, "Perceived control alters the effect of acute stress on persistence", *Journal of Experimental Psychology Gen.*, 145(3) (2016 Mar):356-365. Bruce E. Compas, Gerard A. Banez, Vanessa Malcarne, and Nancy Worsham, "Perceived Control and Coping with Stress: A Developmental Perspective", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (1991), 23-34. Kathleen Dracup et al, "Perceived Control Reduces Emotional Stress in Patients with Heart Failure", *The Journal of heart and lung transplantation*, 22.1 (2003): 90–93.
524 Bruce S. McEwen, Jason D. Gray, Carla Nasca, "Recognizing resilience: Learning from the effects of stress on the brain", *Neurobiology of Stress*, Volume 1 (January 2015), 1-11.
525 L.P. Wadsworth and S.A. Hayes-Skelton, "Exploring Perceived Control, a Low-Control Task, and a Brief Acceptance Intervention in a Low and High Transdiagnostic Anxiety Sample." Neurology, psychiatry, and brain research 35 (2020): 1–9.
526 In particular, see the work of David H. Barlow, *Anxiety and Its Disorders : the Nature and Treatment of Anxiety and Panic*. 2nd ed. (2002).

First and foremost, it is important to note that although there were instances where Asquith admitted to feeling the stress of crisis, and was occasionally openly emotional, he was able to project an outwardly appearance of calm towards those he interacted with.[527] However, Asquith was only able to be so adaptive in his approach because of his ability to remain calm during the crisis, and free of the impact of stress. Historians have noted that Asquith remained calm throughout the crisis, and that his natural character was not 'sulky'.[528] They have also noted his lack of tolerance towards resignation threats, as well as a natural ability to reconcile his colleagues with each other.[529] Modern research also states that the higher up in a hierarchy one is, the less impacted by stress they tend to be.[530] By 1914, Asquith really was at the top of the totem pole, the peak of his powers. Whatever the reason, his controlled demeanour also appears to have calmed and impressed those around him. This is what would allow him to offer control to colleagues and a way out of the stress of crisis, by his visually appearance of calm dovetailing with his choice of words. Furthermore, this outwardly appearance of calm also added weight to his occasional bouts of, some have claimed, choreographed emotion and statements that had such an impact on his Cabinet colleagues. As Hobhouse wrote in his diary, on 3 August, Asquith's eyes were 'filled with tears' during the Cabinet meeting, in response to the resignations he faced.[531]

Asquith also showed remarkable adaptability and flexibility in the wording of his pleas to his colleagues. Yet, each time he made them, what he offered to them was either control over their stressor, or it was flattery as a means of boosting self-esteem and thus lowering their stress response. Of these attempts at winning over his colleagues, let us examine some of the individual cases, first, before moving on to the more collective approaches Asquith made. Firstly, take Pease, for example. Asquith, as has been extensively quoted by historians since, famously remarked to Pease, following an evening game of bridge on 3 August, that 'god works in a mysterious way his wonders to perform'.[532] Moreover, Pease was partaking in this game of bridge to 'stay the strain'.[533] Pease was clearly indicating that he was under stress, which meant that he was to be far more amenable to Asquith's

527 See previous chapter.
528 In particular, see, John W Young, "Emotions and the British Government's Decision for War in 1914", *Diplomacy and statecraft*, 29.4 (2018): 549. Jenkins, *Asquith*, 333
529 Cameron Hazlehurst, "Asquith as Prime Minister, 1908-1916", *The English Historical Review*, 85, no. 336 (1970): 505-507.
530 G.D. Sherman, J.J. Lee, A.J. Cuddy, J. Renshon, C. Oveis, J.J. Gross, J.S.Lerner, "Leadership is associated with lower levels of stress", *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.*, Oct 30; 109(44) (2012):17903-7.
531 Ed. Davids, *Hobhouse*, 180.
532 Pease Diary, 3 August 1914, in Wilson, "Diary of Pease", (48), 10-49, 11.
533 See Newton, *Darkest Days*, 251

manipulations than previously. Despite this appearing to be a quite transparent attempt at wooing Pease, a well-known Quaker, it appeared to be remarkably effective. Furthermore, there is no record of Asquith having made any other mention of 'God' during the July Crisis. This was an individualised approach to Pease, and a shrewd one at that. Asquith was, in essence, offering Pease a way out of making a choice of his own free will, by making the question one of faith. Interestingly, Pease would later reference how important his faith was in his decision, when writing to Trevelyan. On 5 August, he wrote that being a Quaker, he 'had more peace blood' in his veins 'than any man in the House', and that he wished that Trevelyan had waited until he 'knew all the facts', before leaving his colleagues.[534]

Asquith was very successful with the wooing of Simon. As was previously touched upon, Simon showed significant and visible signs of stress during the crisis, especially in its latter stages. Simon appears to have reached his breaking point around 3 August. The comments of those around him are quite candid, in this regard. However, even before the July Crisis, Simon was beginning to show signs of being overworked. A letter from a friend, in March 1914, mentions that Simon was 'putting excessive strain on even your own powers of endurance', with regards to his workload.[535] During the crisis itself, though, the most notable remarks about Simon's outwardly appearance come from C.P. Scott and Viscount Morley. Scott, in his diary entry for 4 August, noted that Simon 'was looking terribly worn and tired', and that 'morally and physically he was like a man half-dead'.[536] Morley also remarked that Simon was 'labouring under great emotion', during Cabinet meetings, and that there 'were tears in his eyes'.[537] Clearly, Simon was unable to conceal his inner turmoil to those around him, as others, such as Lloyd George, were able to do;

> *Simon sd. "if country at war it was the duty of men like himself and the peace party to support the Govt.": he broke down.*[538]

With regards to Simon, Asquith worded his approach differently, yet still offered control. Asquith chose to focus on loose appeals loyalty and duty, as opposed to faith, as a means of offering control and removing choice. This was despite that fact that Simon was the son of a Reverend,[539] and someone who, due to his religious upbringing, took his own faith

534 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 258.
535 MS Simon 50, no. 52, J.W. Hurst to Simon, 24 March 1914.
536 Ed. Wilson, *C.P. Scott Diary*, 96-97.
537 Ramsay MacDonald papers 30/69/1753/1, diary, 6 October 1914.
538 Young, "Harcourt Diary", 448.
539 Roberts, *Simon*, 12.

similarly seriously to Pease.[540] Moreover, Simon's critics even noted that he was someone who had 'a special and personal abhorrence to killing'.[541] Haldane claimed that Simon, during a Cabinet meeting, claimed that 'he had all his life been a pronounced peace man' and that he 'could not possibly stay in a Cabinet which declared war'.[542] And, yet, Asquith did not play on Simon's pacificism or faith to win him over, astutely realising that it would have been likely unsuccessful, but rather on his loyalty and duty. Loyalty, to Asquith personally, as Haldane summarises;

> *Simon has been Asquith's pet young statesmen, and he used every argument to bring him round. He did at last, very unwillingly consent, but said that he must not be looked to for aid in any propaganda in favour of enlistment.*[543]

Others have also remarked on Simon's personal loyalty to Asquith and how Asquith exploited it in persuading Simon to remain in Cabinet. Newton correctly highlights that, in his letter to Simon on the 3 August, Asquith made no mention of Belgium to Simon. Instead, Asquith, chose to focus on loyalty and duty, as well as offering to 'fully safeguard' Simon, should he remain in Cabinet. Moreover, Asquith finished the letter by mentioning Simon's 'invaluable service to the Government' and 'loyal and devoted attachment' to himself (Asquith).[544]

Asquith likely knew that it would also be unsuccessful to focus upon either faith or the legalities of the Belgium treaty with Simon, and thus chose to focus on more personal factors such as loyalty and duty. These were concepts which Asquith alluded to both openly and in private meetings with Cabinet colleagues. Though, could we perceive 'duty' and 'loyalty' as something more than what they appear to be on the surface? Duty and loyalty are mentioned by several other members of Cabinet as their reason for not resigning over intervention in the war. However, there is no evidence of Asquith specifically publicly, or during private meetings, guilting Cabinet members with these specific words. Yes, there are allusions both, especially in the case of Simon, or to Cabinet as a whole. For example, during a Cabinet meeting, Pease noted that Asquith was 'anxious' to avoid coalition government, so as to keep the party together.[545] Such appeals would have been common, no doubt. Though, there appear to be no direct references to either loyalty or duty. Though, it must be said, that some historians have speculated over what was said by

540 Roberts, *Simon*, 14, 311.
541 Ed. David, *Hobhouse*, 180.
542 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 28.
543 Ibid, 28.
544 See Newton, *Darkest Days*, 251-252. MS Simon 2, Asquith to Simon, 4 August 1914, Diary no. 5.
545 MSS Gainford Pease to wife, 3 August 1914, box 521.

Asquith at private meetings.[546] What we are sure of, though, is that Asquith undoubtedly used flattery, both emotional and literal, to win over his colleagues. Though, it was to be the open emotionalism that was most effective in winning over his colleagues. This was because it was not something he was known for doing, hence the special weight it would have carried at the time. The best-known instance of which, came during the Cabinet meeting in early August;

> *The P.M., whose eyes filled with tears, said … they were men for whom he had regard and friendship; the party was still hesitating; the country was in danger and unity of counsel was essential*. [547]

As well as another incident that Harcourt and Pease recorded;

> *[T]hat is 4 said the P.M. out of our number… God knows I should like to be relieved of all this, then he alluded to personal attachment & his indebtedness to Morley and broke down…*[548]

Lloyd George, reflecting on the July Crisis, on the 3-4 September, remarked;

> *Asquith's latent emotionalism had burst out in the same direction. He had never seen him so moved and he had never made such effective speeches.*[549]

Following these open appeals, during Cabinet meetings, the flow in resignations seemed to slow. Simon and Beauchamp both withdrew their resignations over the following days, and Cabinet unity was maintained. However, the reason that these particular appeals are so significant, is that emotional flattery and hierarchical stability are both present. Asquith, whether knowingly or instinctively, openly showed emotion. Something he was not known for doing. This had the potential to be perceived as a sign of great trust and would have also shown those around him that he valued them highly enough to openly trust them with his emotions. Something, which in 1914, was not openly accepted in such a society. In essence, he was showing them that they were worthy of seeing him at his most vulnerable, and that he respected them deeply. Therefore, this raised the self-esteem of those around him, at a time of great stress. It was this raising of their self-esteem, by

546 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 252.
547 Peter Raina, *The Seventh Earl Beauchamp: A Victim of His Times* (2016), 310; Ed. David, *Hobhouse*, 180.
548 See Young, "Emotions", 555 footnote 75.
549 Ed. Wilson, *C.P. Scott Diaries*, 104. 3-4 September 1914.

raising them within a hierarchical structure to the perceived position of his equal, that lowered their stress response. As was previously stated, research shows that higher self-esteem results in lowering the impact of perceived stressors, as well as higher hierarchical positions resulting in dimmed stress responses. Asquith was, therefore, acting as a coping mechanism for those around him. Essentially, he was able to mold the views of those around him more easily, because of their dependence on him. As a result, we start to hear members of Cabinet speak more frequently of personal loyalty to Asquith. For example, in Beauchamp's case, he felt;

> *…a real anxiety to cooperate as long as possible with colleagues & a chief for whom I have a great admiration & respect*.[550]

Burns certainly seemed to feel that Asquith was manipulating Beauchamp, stating that he felt that Beauchamp was coaxed into staying, against his better judgement, by Asquith.[551] Whereas Beauchamp would write to Morley, as a justification for his remaining in Cabinet, of his 'great allegiance' to Asquith.[552] Runciman spoke of how after 'ten days of anxiety and torturing thought, that he Pease, Lloyd George, and Harcourt were persuaded to remain by the call of 'our duty'.[553] To Simon, one of the more ardent non-interventionists, Haldane notes that Asquith employed a great deal of personal flattery and emotional blackmail;

> *Asquith made a very strong appeal to him not to leave his colleagues at such a moment of such tremendous crisis, and presented to him what injury he would do to the nation at large by abandoning them when they it was most needed that should present an unbroken front to the enemy. Simon has been Asquith's pet young statesmen, and he used every argument to bring him round. He did at last, very unwillingly consent, but said that he must not be looked to for aid in any propaganda in favour of enlistment*.[554]

Runciman claimed that several wavering members of Cabinet were convinced that 'our duty—and each man alone can decide for himself—is to remain where we are, and with our full strength devote ourselves to the terrible work'[555] Haldane noted, during the crisis,

550 Raina, *Beauchamp*, diary, 5 August 1915, 310–11.
551 Young, "Emotions", 554.
552 Ibid, 554.
553 WR 135, Runciman to Trevelyan, 4 August 1914.
554 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 28.
555 WR 135, Runciman to Trevelyan, 4 August 1914.

that ‘among the lesser Ministers, the loyalty to Asquith was strongly marked’.[556] It seems likely that Asquith would have been aware of this, and used it to his advantage, as per the more senior members of Cabinet. Why was this strategy so successful, though? This was mainly because Asquith exploited a great many of his over-strained Cabinet colleagues. For many within the Cabinet, the issue had shifted from one of intervention versus non-intervention to one of loyalty versus disloyalty, because their dependency on Asquith, for alleviating the stress of crisis, meant that their focus shifted from dealing with a crisis to dealing with stress. In essence, ‘loyalty’ and ‘duty’ could be perceived as ersatz language for ‘dependence’; dependence on Asquith. They could not bring themselves to be separated from that, or rather him, which alleviated their stress; Asquith himself. Therefore, Asquith must be credited or blamed, depending on the viewpoint, with ensuring Britain entered the war with a united government. Finally, as was previously stated, some historians have already pushed the idea that Grey and Asquith worked together to manipulate and drive the Cabinet towards intervention.[557] As Wilson rightly puts it ‘the Cabinet, as such, never did make a decision for war’.[558] Most curiously, though, when you compare the attempts at persuasion of Asquith and Grey, it becomes immediately apparent the impact of Asquith’s emotional approach as opposed to Grey’s initial attempt to sway his Cabinet colleagues with appeals over the legalities of the Belgium treaty. This is not to say that Grey did not outwardly show emotion. As has been previously shown, he did indeed show emotion at several points during the July Crisis. However, his outward showings of emotion appear to be far less performative and manipulative, and, arguably, more a sincere biological marker of the stress he was feeling. Grey did sincerely try to walk the tightrope between Cabinet and the diplomatic crisis unfolding, and did, at least, try to present events and facts to the Cabinet for the most part sincerely.

Grey’s initial approach at hardening the nerve of the non-interventionists was the use of the 1839 Treaty of London, where the neutrality of Belgium was guaranteed by all the major European powers. It is debatable whether Grey truly thought the treaty would sway the non-interventionists towards a harder approach, given that there was a very flimsy legal responsibility for Britain to defend Belgium neutrality. However, at the very least, he surely would have hoped that by using the Belgium treaty he could perhaps sway some of the non-interventionists towards a harder line than outright neutrality. Furthermore, a great many of the Cabinet were legal men, with legal backgrounds. Asquith, Lloyd George,

556 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 25.
557 Also see David Silbey, *The British Working Class and Enthusiasm for War* (2005), 18. Clark, T*he Sleepwalkers*, 539.
558 Wilson, *Decisions for War*, 201.

Haldane, Simon, Harcourt, Morley and Birrell, all had backgrounds in law. This would not have been lost upon Grey, who would have known this well and surely would have hoped that the breaking of an international treaty would outrage those with legal backgrounds. As if to add further weight to the outrage Grey probably hoped to provoke, this treaty was signed by Gladstone himself, a titan amongst the Liberals. This fact would not have been lost on anyone present during the Cabinet meeting.[559] Also, it is important to note that many in Cabinet were either aware, or made aware during Cabinet meetings, that Germany would have to violate Belgium neutrality if it were to invade France, due to its military planning.

As it was, though, Grey's initial attempts to woo his Cabinet colleagues, on 29 July, fell on deaf ears. The use of the treaty did not carry the weight Grey probably expected it to. Even with the weight of Gladstone's name attached to it. As Asquith recalled, the obligations of the treaty were dismissed by Cabinet, and that 'policy' would dictate their action, not 'legal obligation'.[560] Though, Haldane perhaps put it best, immediately following the crisis, when talking to Gosse vis-à-vis the Belgium casus belli;

> *I told him (Haldane) that now everybody was talking of the broken neutrality of Belgium, and I asked him how it was that our long and almost daily talks on the European situation, we had never mentioned the neutrality of Belgium. He (Haldane) replied 'It has always been the most difficult point in our whole programme. We have not been able to build anything definite upon it, and for this reason.* [561]

At the time, Asquith realised that the way to win other the non-interventionists was through his own aforementioned methods. The fact that Grey took on the bulk of the stress of the crisis, as well as handling the diplomatic duties, meant that Asquith was free to pursue the goal of maintaining Cabinet unity. Asquith would probably have calculated, knowing his Cabinet as well as he did, that the question of intervention was, for many members of the Cabinet, always a moral one. Whether to uphold treaty obligations with France, or whether to oppose war for the sake of remaining neutral. Both sides held to their views at almost any cost. This was a question of right or wrong, and a great many of Cabinet were willing to threaten, and even carry out, resignation if they didn't get their way. Take the case of Simon, for example. As was previously shown, Asquith specifically played on Simon's

559 Newton, *Darkest Days,* 57. Otte, *July Crisis*, 388-389.
560 Spender, *Life of Asquith vol. 2*, 81. Asquith to the King, 30 July 1914.
561 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 25-26.

personal loyalty to him, as well as making allusions to a greater duty to the nation. Asquith made no reference to the Belgium treaty in his wooing of Simon. This, despite Simon being amongst those in Cabinet most often accused of being too lawyer like for politics. For example, Lord Riddell recalls Simon, even during the July Crisis, talking of 'precedents', and being too much like a lawyer.[562] Therefore, at first glance, it would surely have been an effective strategy to focus on the legalities of a treaty with Simon at the very least. However, this would have been a superficial take on the nature of the decision to be taken by the statesmen; the view of Simon seems to be one of a lawyer first, a statesman second. Simon's biographer would later summarise his character thus;

> *The notion that he is a lawyer first, and a public man only second, is, as I have shown throughout this book, a foolish one.*[563]

This seems to further demonstrate Asquith's deeper reading of the situation and those around him, because of his ability to remain calm and controlled. Not succumbing to the strains of crisis, Asquith was aware that a different approach was needed with Simon, rather than a superficial focus on the legalities of a treaty, because of his ability to remain calm and to calculate the right approach. Morley, who was the other end of the spectrum from Simon, in terms of his tendency to fall back on the law, immediately saw through Grey's ruse of using the Belgium treaty as a casus belli, in place of upholding Entente commitments. As he later put it;

> *The precipitate and peremptory blaze about Belgium was due less to indignation at the violation of a Treaty than to natural perception of the plea that it would furnish for intervention on behalf of France*. [564]

Interestingly, it was not until after war was declared, or just before said declaration, that many started to use German aggression in Belgium, and later atrocities, to justify their decision for war. This was, arguably, due to the shift in public and press opinion. Public outrage over German aggression in Belgium meant that the Belgium casus belli was, at the very least, a tenable reason for intervention. As was earlier shown, Lloyd George led the charge over German aggression in Belgium, claiming that it made all the difference to him. Or, that he would rather see the 'British Empire bite the dust than allow poor little

562 Ed. McEwen. *Riddell*, 2 August 1914, 87.
563 Roberts, *Simon*, 311.
564 Morley, *Memorandum*, 14.

Belgium to be crushed by this hectoring bully'.[565] These were just two of several comments made by Lloyd George in the aftermath of the crisis in support of the Belgium casus belli. They carry extra weight, because Lloyd George was, as is well-known amongst historians, so well-aware of public and press opinion. He even remarked, in passing, to Riddell, on the 9th of August, that 'the change of opinion during the week had been amazing'.[566] It is not unreasonable to claim that others around him in Cabinet would have been similarly influenced by him, or by public opinion, given his standing. Historian Isabel Hull summarises the current consensus on the use of Belgium neutrality as an 'excuse' for intervention.[567] This study fully agrees with the current consensus. What this study is concerned with, though, is the timing of the swing towards the use of the Belgium casus belli. Just a few days passed between Grey's initial attempt to introduce the Treaty of London, and the later excuses, that Hull summarises as;

> *… an excuse to mobilize the public, to provide embarrassed radicals in the cabinet with a justificaion for abandoning their principled pacifism and thus for staying in office, or, in the more conspiratorial versions, to cover for naked imperial interests.*[568]

Grey's attempt to use the 1870 Belgium treaty, just a few days earlier, was unsuccessful. Yet, Asquith was later successful. True, events were later to unfold, such as the invasion of Belgium by Germany and the news of full mobilisations taking place all over Europe, that would have likely led the members of Cabinet to believe that war was now imminent or unavoidable. An 'excuse' was, thankfully, not yet needed. On the other hand, the case could be made that public opinion was being read by those in Cabinet, and it had not yet fully swung towards war. Politicians, being highly sensitive to public and press opinion would have had their fingers on the pulse. Nonetheless, Newton argues, convincingly and after a detailed presentation of newspaper headlines and articles during the time, that the press, both on the right and the left, were not putting a substantial amount of pressure on the members of Cabinet over Belgium neutrality.[569] At least not around the time the Belgium treaty was introduced. What the Belgium casus belli truly represented was post-decision cognitive dissonance. Post-decision, in that Asquith, as was earlier shown, had

565 Ed. McEwen, *Riddell*, 89. 25 August 1914.
566 Ibid, 88. 9 August 1914.
567 Isabel V Hull, *A Scrap of Paper : Breaking and Making International Law During the Great War* (2014), 33.
568 Ibid, 33.
569 Newton, *Darkest Days*, 75.

already convinced the majority of the non-interventionists that the real issue was to remain with him in Cabinet.

As was previously demonstrated, Asquith had made a great many of his colleagues dependent on him. There was, in essence, no longer a decision to make; it had already been made, due to their dependence on him. At the time, the Belgium casus belli represented a form of collective cognitive dissonance. As was previously shown, cognitive dissonance is a psychological phenomenon that occurs when a person experiences discomfort or tension as a result of holding conflicting beliefs, attitudes, or values, or when their actions contradict their beliefs.[570] This discomfort arises from the inconsistency between their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. One of the key aspects of cognitive dissonance is that it influences how people justify their actions, change their attitudes, and make choices. Cognitive dissonance is a theory that is still active today, with countless studies on its effects still taking place.[571] Although stress does not cause cognitive dissonance, cognitive dissonance has been shown to cause stress.[572] Knowing that stress and cognitive dissonance are linked, it helps us to contextualise some of the behaviours, words, and actions of the statesmen post-decision for intervention. This helps to explain perhaps the most curious case, that of Harcourt. At one time, the so-called leader of the non-interventionists, his behaviour post-decision appears most strange. On 4 August, shortly after the expiry of the ultimatum to Germany, he makes an astonishing suggestion to Asquith, Grey, McKenna, Haldane and Lloyd George. He would suggest the seizure of a ‘wireless German station in Togoland’, and that he may do so tomorrow’, on his own initiative.[573] Quite the turnaround for the former leader of the non-interventionists.

Haldane also remarked to Gosse that Harcourt was a full supporter of intervention, after the 4 August. He claims that Harcourt was now ‘an enthusiastic supporter of the policy of the Prime Minister in the highest spirits over the capture of Togoland’.[574] The very next day, he was chairing a meeting to decide on how best to seize German colonies in Africa, as

570 See, Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (1957), for the origins of cognitive dissonance. See also, E. Aronson, “The Return of the Repressed: Dissonance Theory Makes a Comeback”, *Psychological inquiry*, 3.4 (1992): 303–311. C. Tavris and E. Aronson, *Mistakes were made (but not by ME): Why we justify foolish beliefs, bad decisions, and hurtful acts* (2007).

571 For a review of the most significant studies of cognitive dissonance, see April McGrath, “Dealing with Dissonance: A Review of Cognitive Dissonance Reduction”, *Social and personality psychology compass*, 11.12 (2017): e12362–n/a. See also, D. Vaidis and D. Oberlé, “Approaching opponents and leaving supporters: Adjusting physical proximity to reduce cognitive dissonance. Social Behavior and Personality”, 42 (2014), 1091–1098.

572 See previous footnotes for studies.

573 Harcourt Diary, 4 August 1914. Young, “Harcourt Journal”, 450.

574 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 38.

well as speculating over whether to bribe Italy over to the Entente cause.[575] This is a remarkable turnaround for someone so opposed to war just hours before. Some could accuse him of opportunism, seeking to gain favour with the new status quo. Though, when understood through the lens of cognitive dissonance, we perhaps start to understand his actions better. Here is an individual uncomfortable with the decision he has made, for intervention, and as such starts to justify his decision by throwing himself into his new role. His enthusiasm could just as easily be interpreted as a means of distraction, as opposed to pure, naked opportunism. As for his fellow non-interventionist colleagues, while not being quite as enthusiastic as Harcourt seemed to be quite content towing the line.[576] It was only Simon, who, seemingly genuinely, tried to come to terms with his cognitive dissonance. Post-July Crisis, he is described as being 'bitter', ill at ease with the decision he had made, and going through intense mental anguish.[577] Later that month, he would also appear, to Riddell, still 'very much anti-war'.[578]

To return to Asquith and Lloyd George's roles during the July Crisis, to say who bore more responsibility for keeping Cabinet together between Asquith and Lloyd George is difficult. However, what is invariably clear is that both men managed to keep their heads, whilst others around them were losing them, and were able to play significant roles during the crisis as a consequence. Both men were, in their own way, responsible for preventing the dissolution of Cabinet. Whereas Burns and Morley were openly expressing their anger to those around them, and whilst Harcourt and Churchill were engaging in their own private duel, Asquith and Lloyd George were calculating and considered. They were only able to do so because they were, relatively, unaffected by the stress of crisis. The same could be said of Grey, given the support he received from Haldane. However, the role Haldane played throughout the crisis was, perhaps, the most underappreciated of all. Whereas Grey, Lloyd George and Asquith played overt roles, in that they were openly pushing for their objectives, Haldane's behind the scenes role as Grey's support cannot be underestimated. To some extent, by being Grey's crutch, and thus assuming some of the burden Grey faced, he was able to ensure Grey made it to his 3 August speech with his wits about him. Finally, it is also worth mentioning that by contrast, the failure of the non-interventionist section of Cabinet to mobilise effectively was hampered by the presence of stress. Their inability to change tack, when their strategy of threatening resignation over intervention failed to bear fruit was, to an extent, due to the stress of crisis inhibiting their decision making.

575 See Newton, *Darkest Days*, 279.
576 Ibid, 279-282.
577 Ed. Wilson, *C.P. Scott Diaries*, 96-97. 4 August 1914.
578 Ed. McEwen, *Riddell*, 89. 25 August 1914.

Conclusion

Britain's declaration of war on 4 August proved to be characteristic of the stress that surrounded the statesmen. Thomas Otte notes how the wrong declaration of war was initially sent to the German ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky. Panic then ensued, with the wrong declaration being reclaimed from Lichnowsky's bedchamber in the middle of the night.[579] This final act encapsulated the stress that had escalated rapidly as the July Crisis unfolded. This crisis would prove to be one of the most consequential in history, and it became apparent even at the time that the stakes were high. It was certainly one of the most stressful events that any of the statesmen involved would ever have experienced. Opting to take Britain to war, knowing that it might cost millions of lives and reshape the contours of an entire continent (if not a world) was not a decision taken lightly.

Sir Edward Grey paid a heavy price for his involvement in the crisis, perhaps heavier than any of his Cabinet colleagues. Grey had borne the brunt of the crisis on his own shoulders, at least in its early stages, exposing himself to the attendant stress from the start. The effects of this were apparent immediately after Grey's infamous speech to the House of Commons declaring that an ultimatum to Germany had been issued, when the Foreign Secretary stood in his office, lifted his arms in the air, and shouted 'I hate war! I hate war!'[580] As this thesis has emphasised, stress can lead to physical and psychological markers, whether short- or longer-term. Such markers were apparent in another incident after war had come, when Gosse described Grey as being 'extremely silent' at a dinner party, with Haldane remarking to him that 'Grey takes it all so terribly to heart'.[581] Even months after the crisis, his usual calm demeanour had not returned, Asquith noting that Grey had been 'tired out and hysterical' during recent Cabinet meetings.[582] Grey's biographer provides several eyewitness accounts of Grey's demeanour, appearance, and behaviour that indicate just how broken Grey was by the July Crisis, even postulating that Grey might have suffered a nervous breakdown immediately post-crisis.[583]

It was not only Grey's mental health that took a sustained beating during and after the crisis, as his physical health suffered too. Having already endured problems with his eyesight before the crisis began, the stress of crisis appeared to aggravate them, in the

579 Otte, *July Crisis*, 504.
580 Otte, *Grey*, 534.
581 MSS Ashley, Gosse Diary, 36-37.
582 Ed Brocks, *Margot Asquith Diary*, 84.
583 Otte, *Grey*, 539.

long-term contributing to Grey losing his sight.[584] For an ornithologist and nature lover like Grey, the loss of his eyesight was an almighty price to pay. When Grey made his now famous remark that 'the lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime', he might have been referring not only to European peace but also his own eyesight.[585]

To be sure, Grey suffered greatly from the long-term effects of stress, but he was not alone. By resigning in summer 1914, Morley and Burns effectively ended their political careers, neither ever entering Cabinet again. Morley's mental health also suffered, Gosse noting on 3 August that Morley looked 'very tired and faint, and on the edge of a nervous breakdown'.[586] Simon, also struggled to navigate the stress of the crisis, and he too appeared to be on the cusp of a breakdown. C.P. Scott, noted soon after war had come that 'morally and physically [Simon] was like a man half-dead'.[587] Asquith remarked that it took Simon months to be of any use to him, such was the impact of the events of July and August 1914.[588] Haldane, who had taken on the burden of helping Grey though the crisis, was also struggling to hold things together as the crisis reached its denouement, appearing 'fearfully tired, and almost dazed with exhaustion' in the days after 4 August.[589] Even those ministers who handled the stress of crisis effectively were not entirely immune to its impact. Lloyd George, who functioned effectively during the crisis, also showed a bio-marker of stress, Hobhouse noting on 21 August that Lloyd George was absent from Cabinet with a 'bad cold', due to being 'much overworked'.[590]

Circling back now to the focus of the thesis, and it goes without saying that stress was omnipresent throughout the crisis, and that this stress intensified as the spectre of war increased. That said, although it is widely acknowledged that stress was present, the impact of this on the unfolding of events is little understood. As the introduction to this thesis showed, few have grappled with something that it is difficult to quantify. This thesis has striven to fill this gap in the literature by demonstrating how stress affects human behaviour and physiology, thus allowing stress to be identified in a more tangible and less abstract fashion. Of course, it is simply obvious that certain dramatic events -such as the 24 July Austrian ultimatum to Serbia - would have ratcheted up the levels of stress and

584 Otte, *Grey*, 537-544. Ed. Brocks, 86.
585 Viscount Grey of Fallodon: *Twenty-Five Years*, 1892–1916, 20.
586 MSS Ashley, *Gosse Diary*, 25.
587 Ed. Wilson, *C.P. Scott Diary*, 97.
588 Ed, Brocks, 84.
589 MSS Ashley, *Gosse Diary*, 22.
590 Ed. David, *Hobhouse Diary*, 182.

tension in Whitehall. All diplomatic crises are stressful, but the July Crisis was unusually intense, having seemed to have erupted so surprisingly and escalated so rapidly. Information flew back and forth, both by telegram and word of mouth, and events moved at such a pace that some of this information was outdated within hours of being received and processed. The march of events assumed its own life force, leaving individuals increasingly powerless to influence proceedings. A feeling of collective helplessness enveloped the British Cabinet, a perceived powerlessness ironically exacerbated by meeting so regularly in an effort to prevent the conflict escalating and to prevent the demise of the Liberal government. Within these Cabinet meetings, personalities clashed, emotions were laid bare, and extraordinary scenes emerged. Manipulation and scheming were prevalent, with many looking to serve personal agendas, and the impact of stress would have a significant bearing on how these machinations played out.

One immediate impact of stress was curious phenomenon whereby many of the Cabinet ministers referenced – if not overly blamed – the ‘march of events’ for leading to the outbreak of this unprecedented conflict. The supposed inevitability of events, and the concomitant inability of individuals to control them, provided a collective explanation and excuse for why efforts to maintain peace had failed. But, as has been shown, it was not a case of the European powers ‘sleepwalking’ into an unavoidable catastrophe -those individuals involved in the July Crisis cannot be absolved of blame so easily. References to an irresistible march of events represented a collective expression of helplessness over the uncontrollable nature of a stressor. To be sure, such references provided a ready-made excuse for the decisions taken (or note taken) in summer 1914, but focusing on this obfuscates an alternative explanation, namely that allusions to the ‘march of events’ betray the genuine emotion and angst over the events that were unfolding.

While the ‘march of events’ represented a collective response to stress, there were important differences between key protagonists when it came to enduring, coping, and responding to stress. Sir Edward Grey proved to be remarkably resilient, at least until the moment that the decision to enter the war was taken. Grey has been criticised by both historians and his peers for his performance and conduct during the July Crisis, somewhat unfairly, as he performed admirably in the face of immense pressure. This is not to say that Grey couldn’t have done more to prevent war. Indeed, his post-crisis outbursts and remarks demonstrate that he felt a certain among of personal responsibility for how events played out. Nevertheless, Grey’s ability to withstand and cope with the stress of the crisis was striking, and it was only after the crisis culminated that stress began to affect his

behaviour. That he was able to maintain his composure for so long is testament to his character, but whether he would have been able to maintain such composure without Haldane's ever-present support is questionable. Haldane performed a crucial role in providing social support to Grey, helping the Foreign Secretary retain a significant degree of composure. Haldane's role, often understated by historians of the July Crisis, deserves more attention in the future.

Grey's composure was one of several factors that allowed the Cabinet to remain relatively unified when war was declared, when there had been a very real risk of an irreparable Cabinet split just days earlier. Indeed, the Cabinet had been split over intervention in European affairs for many years prior to the July Crisis, the two camps coming to blows frequently, with the non-interventionists prevailing most often. The heightened intensity of the July Crisis threatened a more significant split, and one of the main (and under-appreciated) explanations for why this didn't happen is stress. Put simply, the non-interventionists lacked leadership and direction, seemingly struggling to cope with the stress of a situation that intensified the likelihood of war. By contrast, some key interventionists – not only Grey, but also Asquith – appeared to cope with stress relatively well. Asquith offered a veneer of control and leadership, and he was able to successfully manipulate and jockey individual members of the non-interventionist group as a result. He did so only through his powers of persuasion, but also because many others were unable to think clearly due to stress. Asquith was able to exploit their bewildered and emotional state for his own gain, convincing waverers through appeals to loyalty, duty, even faith, to support intervention, avoid a split in Cabinet, and prevent his government from falling.

The lack of leadership amongst the non-interventionists could have been very different had they been able to persuade Lloyd George to be their standard-bearer. Lloyd George, like Asquith, seemed to cope with the stress remarkably well, and this allowed him to stand aloof and assess the best course of action as events unfolded. Attentive to perceived changes in public opinion, and able to adapt to these because of his ability to cope with stress, meant that he waited until the last moment before making the calculated choice to support intervention. Without Lloyd George's support, the non-interventionists were deprived of a leader who could rally them or be an effective mouthpiece both inside and outside of Cabinet. Only Burns and Morley were vocal and consistent in support of non-intervention, but neither had the standing within Cabinet, the force of personality, or the calmness under pressure to organise those around them. As a result, the non-interventionists lacked the clarity of thought that would have allowed them to change their

strategy to prevent intervention taking place. Repeated threats of resignation were insufficient, especially as Asquith was able to persuade some of those to change their minds. Eventually, the resignations of Burns and Morley counted for little, with the rest of the non-interventionists eventually falling into line behind Asquith, Grey and Haldane.

To conclude, it is hoped that the methodology employed here study has demonstrated that even a well-documented event like the July Crisis can be approached in novel, revealing, and instructive ways. In particular, the interdisciplinary approach showcases how new historical insights can be gleaned by engaging with other fields of study. A similar approach to that used here could be applied to the other decision-making circles in Europe at the time of the July Crisis, for example. Other diplomatic crises might also benefit from engaging with this kind of methodological approach. The fields of neuroscience and psychology are moving forwards at pace, shedding new light on human behaviour and physiology that historians should not be immune to. Indeed, historians have yet more methodological tools at their disposal to reevaluate even those topics, like the July Crisis, that might appear over-saturated. Of course, such approaches are not without risk, and historians must use sources responsibly and certainly caution against diagnosing from afar. Nonetheless, the rewards of such an approach are definitely worth the risks, as potentially new and exciting questions may be asked of well-worn topics. Not only this, but we may be better placed to assess today's politicians, if we are able to utilise and improve this methodology on historical actors. Finally, that Society has a tendency to focus on the great deeds of statesmen and women, should come as no surprise to anyone. However, we, as a society are also becoming increasingly more focused on what is to be human, more generally. As such, progress in cognitive neuroscience is increasingly revealing to us that human behaviour is intrinsically linked with emotions. In the future, to view the states people of the past as human, rather than focusing solely on their great deeds, would be progress, indeed. As Albert Camus wrote in his novel, *La Peste*;

> *Maintenant je sais que l'homme est capable de grandes actions. Mais s'il n'est pas capable d'une grande sentiment, il ne m'intéresse pas.*
>
> *I know that man is capable of great deeds. But if he isn't capable of great emotion, well, he leaves me cold.*"[591]

[591] Albert Camus, *La Peste* (1947) 101.

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