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International Organization and the Study of World Politics

Peter J. Katzenstein, Robert O. Keohane,
and Stephen D. Krasner

In this article we tell the story of the creation and evolution of a subfield, popularly known as “IPE,” that has been closely associated with *International Organization* (*IO*) for almost thirty years. Initially, IPE was defined by the topics that it investigated, such as trade, finance, raw materials politics, and multinational corporations. Scholars associated with the field drew on economics and on a variety of existing theoretical orientations, notably realism, liberalism, and Marxism at the systemic level, and Marxism, statism, and pluralism at the domestic level.

Over time the boundaries of this subfield, as we define it, have been set less by subject matter than by theoretical perspectives. Whereas some research programs have relied heavily on economics, others have distanced themselves both from the substantive concerns of that discipline and the rationalism it represents. Since we are seeking in this article to describe how theorizing about world politics as represented in *IO* evolved, we focus on IPE, rather than on the substantive issues of international political economy with which it began. We use the term *international political economy* when we refer to real-world connections between politics and economics; we use the term *IPE* when we refer to the subfield of work, centered in *IO* since 1971, that evolved from the study of international political economy to analyze a variety of aspects of world politics.

Like any narrative, our story reflects the viewpoints of its authors; and since we played a role in these events, it inevitably reflects our own experiences and biases. As noted in the preface, we put our account forward as a perspective, not as a canonical representation of what is most important. Furthermore, we make no claim that the

During the writing of this article we received long, thoughtful, and detailed comments on previous drafts. They were enormously helpful in clarifying and equilibrating the historical narrative that we are offering here. Several colleagues offered valuable oral comments as well. We would like to thank Emanuel Adler, David Baldwin, Marc L. Busch, Benjamin J. Cohen, David Dessler, Judith Goldstein, Peter Gourevitch, Stephan Haggard, Ernst B. Haas, Peter Hall, Robert Jervis, Miles Kahler, Charles Kupchan, David Lake, Robert Lieber, Henry Nau, Joseph Nye, M. J. Peterson, Simon Reich, Thomas Risse, John Gerard Ruggie, Bruce Russett, Kiron Skinner, Arthur Stein, Janice Stein, Alexander E. Wendt, and Oran R. Young.

evolving subfield of IPE encompasses the most important work that has been done in international politics over the last thirty years. Major research has been carried out on subjects such as war initiation, the “democratic peace,” and alliance politics, to mention only a few. Some theoretical orientations that have been highly salient for the study of security, especially organization theory and cognitive psychology, have been much less consequential for IPE. Studies generated by large-*N* statistical research programs such as the Correlates of War project have not been prominent in the pages of *IO*. Since this article was written for an anniversary issue of *IO*, it seems appropriate to ground it in the major lines of work for which the journal became known.

Theory in our field has been thought of in a variety of ways. In this article we focus on two of its meanings: general theoretical orientations and specific research programs. *General theoretical orientations* provide heuristics—they suggest relevant variables and causal patterns that provide guidelines for developing specific research programs. Political science is an eclectic discipline that finds many of its most fruitful ideas elsewhere, and many of the general theoretical orientations that have been relevant for IPE were borrowed from other disciplines, especially economics and sociology. Rationalist theories derived from economics, for instance, offer the following heuristic: if you have a puzzle, formulate it as a problem for rational actors with unproblematically specified interests, competing in a situation characterized by scarce resources. Constructivist theories, in contrast, look to the humanities and sociology for insights into how “reality,” including the interests that partially constitute the identity of actors, is socially constructed. We argue in the fourth section of the article that rationalism (encompassing both liberal arguments grounded in economics that emphasize voluntary agreement and realist arguments that focus on power and coercion) and constructivism now provide the major points of contestation for international relations scholarship.

Specific research programs link explanatory variables to a set of outcomes, or dependent variables. What are the effects of various distributions of power, or of democracy, on the propensity of states to fight wars? Under what conditions do international institutions actually promote cooperation? What institutional features of state–society relationships explain variations in the effectiveness of foreign economic policy? When such theories are tested with evidence, answers are proposed—answers that are virtually always contested because of the difficulties of theory specification, testing, and controlled statistical analysis that bedevil the nonexperimental sciences in general, and fields such as ours in particular.

General theoretical orientations—such as realism, Marxism, liberalism, statism, pluralism, historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, and constructivism—have been particularly prominent in the study of international relations. IPE is no exception. Such generic approaches do not disappear easily. They provide suggestions about relevant variables and their possible interrelationships but are consistent with many specific research tasks and clusters of testable hypotheses. We refer to these sets of tasks and hypotheses as *specific research programs*, without necessarily

accepting Imre Lakatos's philosophy of science as applicable to our field.¹ The connection between generic orientations and research programs means that the intellectual standing of generic orientations is affected, though not entirely determined, by empirical evidence. As a result of confrontation with evidence, and also due to shifts in world politics itself, some hypotheses, and the research programs in which they were embedded, have received more support than others. Generic orientations that sheltered productive programs benefited at the expense of competitors; those that seemed to illuminate new developments in the world also gained adherents. Dissatisfaction with existing orientations and research programs, coupled with changes in the world, has created openings for alternative conceptualizations. This evolutionary process is often indirect and imperfect: there are no "decisive experiments" in international relations that discredit a research program much less a generic approach that has spawned research programs.

From its inception IPE has evolved two related though distinctive sites for research: the international system and the interactions between domestic politics and international political economy. The first site focuses at the level of the international system. In the 1970s systemic scholarship on the international political economy drew on realist arguments about the importance of the distribution of power among states, then the prevailing general theoretical orientation in international relations. IPE scholars also developed a variety of liberal research programs that were reflected in discussions of European integration, the growing role of multinational corporations, and increases in international interdependence. In the 1980s the differences between realism and liberalism were sharpened as neorealists and neoliberals debated the relative merits of their contrasting analytical programs.

Our story about the systemic variant of IPE goes as follows. In the late 1960s and mid-1970s some young political scientists studying international relations seized an opening created both by events in the world and in the social sciences. Growing levels of international interdependence pointed to by a few economists helped in the conceptualization of transnational relations theory. This analytical approach provided an alternative to the state-centric, realist approach then dominating the study of international relations more generally. It was the first analytical formulation that one could clearly associate with IPE as a distinct field. Transnationalism was challenged by hegemonic stability theory, which had both liberal and realist variants. These initial research programs were reformulated as a result of their interaction with each other and with some variants of Marxism. Hegemonic stability theory encountered both logical and empirical anomalies. Transnational relations theory was difficult to operationalize. In the 1980s neoliberal institutionalism and a specific realist formulation known as neorealism became the principal interlocutors—institutionalists emphasized the potential for interstate cooperation, whereas realists stressed the importance of state power. Since the late 1980s a new debate between constructivism and rationalism (including both realism and liberalism) has become more prominent as con-

1. Lakatos 1970.

tractivists have built on epistemological challenges rooted in sociological perspectives emphasizing shared norms and values.

The second site for research has been the linkage between domestic politics and the international political economy. Scholars working on these issues inquired into the determinants of the foreign economic policies of states and corporate strategies, which they have investigated with close attention to empirical detail. The questions asked in this line of research focused on the relative influence and autonomy of social forces and political institutions. Research was in general more empirically oriented. Metatheoretical concerns loomed less large for scholars in this area than for those working with systemic level theories, although in domestic as well as systemic analyses general research orientations—such as pluralism, statism, Marxism, rational choice institutionalism, and historical institutionalism—informed specific research programs. Empirically, the focus on state–society relations started with concrete analyses of the OECD countries and Latin American states. It spread from there to encompass the political economy of states in other world regions, specifically the analysis of varieties of state-led development in Asia and the transition out of socialism in eastern Europe and the states of the former Soviet Union.

Scholars of comparative politics insisted that systemic arguments were at best incomplete; variations in domestic structures (defined in terms of social structure as well as group and party alignments) would lead to different national and corporate responses to the same external pressures and opportunities. Some of the earliest domestic politics formulations associated with IPE drew on pluralism, then the prevailing approach to U.S. politics. Over time, a variety of approaches, including historical institutionalism and, more recently, rational choice institutionalism, were applied to a growing number of political economies worldwide.

There was a close interaction between comparative and international relations scholars; indeed, some individuals transcended the boundaries between these two fields. But during the 1970s and 1980s the difference between the international and domestic strands of the IPE field remained salient. That distinction has blurred somewhat in the 1990s because, as we argue later, rationalism (incorporating both realism and liberalism) and constructivism have established a new point of contestation. Some of the specific research programs generated by general theoretical orientations, such as rational choice institutionalism, are more readily applicable across different levels of analysis than was the case for most of the systemic and domestic orientations, such as realism and pluralism, that were prominent in earlier periods.

The difference between international and domestic perspectives does not overshadow, however, a common research practice that has marked empirical work in both of the main branches of IPE. Scholars have specified research problems in a way that was empirically tractable, intellectually interesting, and politically significant. They embedded explanatory variables in causal mechanisms through which outcomes seemed to take place. They conducted research that sought to control for some other explanatory factors. And they sought to determine whether the selected explanatory variable exerted a discernible effect on specified outcomes. Fruitful research programs combined deductive and inductive work in different proportions. But in the

final analysis, any productive research program had to suggest ways in which variables or concepts could be operationalized; and its propositions had to be, at least in principle, empirically falsifiable.

General orientations and their associated specific research programs typically enter into complex mutual interrogations with their previously established counterparts. As a result of such dialogues, orientations are reconfigured or merged; or they remain separate, with one approach losing adherents; or they coexist, competing on relatively equal terms. Thomas Kuhn does not provide an accurate description of the study of IPE or, for that matter, international relations more generally.² IPE has not been characterized by scientific revolutions succeeded by a period of normal science in which a particular general theoretical orientation is uncontested. There has always been vigorous debate between competing general theoretical orientations and associated research programs.

The lines of thinking originally nurtured in *IO*, and largely limited to international political economy and its intersections with comparative politics and international institutions, seem in the 1990s to be merging into a broader and richly reconfigured field of world politics. Insights originally generated in studying the international political economy have been extended to other issue areas, such as environmental or security affairs. Linkages among issues mean that many important phenomena in world politics can no longer be neatly classified by issue area, such as economics or security affairs. And old boundaries between international relations and comparative politics, or between IPE and the rest of international relations, have become increasingly fluid. Responding to these changes, scholars have modified existing lines of research and initiated new ones. They have sharpened some analytical distinctions and erased others. They have sought to advance reformulated synthetic interpretations and focused on new points of intellectual contestation.

Since the mid-1980s a new debate between constructivism and rationalism (including both realism and liberalism) has become more prominent. New theoretical developments in rationalist institutional theory, open-economy economics, and comparative politics provided scholars with new intellectual openings as the Cold War ended. Conventional and critical constructivists, influenced by new trends in the humanities, put forward sociological perspectives that emphasized shared norms and values but which were in epistemological terms sharply differentiated from postmodernism. In the field of national security the discussion between rationalism (in its realist and liberal variants) and constructivism has been more fully joined than in the field of IPE.

We do not presume to predict the future of either world politics or international relations theory. But we do insist on two points. First, the evolution of the subfield of IPE is better described in terms of focal points of contestation and hypothesis testing than as an all-out war leading to the victory of one general orientation over another. Second, current intellectual developments in IPE can be made more comprehensible by comparing them with the last cycle—from the intellectual and political openings

2. Kuhn 1962.

of the 1970s to the relative syntheses of the late 1980s, which presaged another political and intellectual upheaval beginning around 1990. Thus, we interpret the past in order to understand the present.

In the first section of the article we briefly review some aspects of the field in the years between the late 1940s (when *IO* was founded) and 1968. We then discuss the intellectual opening for IPE, beginning in the late 1960s. In the second section we analyze the symbiotic yet contested relationship between realism and liberalism during the last thirty years. In the third section we trace the evolution of domestic politics research and its eventual differentiation into historical-institutionalist and rationalist styles of research. In the fourth section we analyze the new intellectual opening created by the end of the Cold War and argue that efforts from various quarters to understand actor preferences are creating new points of contestation in the study of world politics while blurring some established fault lines. In the conclusion we argue that current scholarship is integrating IPE even more fully into the broader discipline of international relations and into overarching debates in the natural and social sciences and in the humanities.

An Intellectual Opening, 1968–78

IO existed for two decades before 1968, representing an established tradition in the study of international organizations. During the 1960s *IO* published some of the leading work on European integration, work that challenged realism and provided concepts for the analysis of the politics of economic interdependence. As discussed in this section, after 1968 an intellectual opening for the study of international political economy emerged.

IO's First Two Decades, 1947–67

IO was founded at a time of profound and rapid change in international relations. An extensive and untried set of international organizations had been established during and just after World War II. Seeking not only to describe their activities, but also to promote “a comparative study of international organizations and why they have or have not worked in varying circumstances,” the trustees of the World Peace Foundation decided in the spring of 1946 to establish this journal, whose first issue appeared in February 1947.³ By that time, relations between the Soviet Union and its former Western allies had become highly strained, and what later became known as the Cold War was beginning, marked by crises in Iran and Greece and, in the spring of 1947, by the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

IO had the task of analyzing both the formation of new international organizations and the superpower rivalry that threatened to kill or maim them at birth. In the lead

3. The World Peace Foundation was established in 1910 by Edwin Ginn, head of the publishing company bearing his name.

article in the first issue, Leland M. Goodrich argued that the nascent UN was uncomfortably similar to the League of Nations in its design: "Like the League, but for somewhat different technical reasons, the United Nations, in so far as its enforcement activities are concerned, is an organization for the enforcement of peace among the smaller states."⁴ Other articles in the first three years of the journal's existence offered general arguments on the role of international organizations in world politics as well as articles on specific topics such as the politics of international air transport and the operation of the UN Security Council.⁵ Later the journal published trenchant analyses of the UN's adaptation to the Cold War. Some of the outstanding work in this vein, by scholars such as Inis L. Claude, Jr., and Stanley Hoffmann, shrewdly commented on the politics of international organizations and the consequent limits on their potential range of successful operation. UN peacekeeping operations in Suez and the Congo were a particular focus of attention.

This work was not naive. Neither legalism nor moralism—those alleged bugaboos of Americans—obscured the authors' recognition that international organizations are profoundly affected by world politics, and that these organizations' transformative potential is modest, at least in the short run. However, despite its emphasis on realistic descriptive analysis, research was not particularly informed by general social science theory, and it was less concerned with testing alternative arguments than was the case for subsequent work such as Robert Cox and Harold Jacobson's analysis of decision making in international organizations.⁶ Perhaps for these reasons, work published in *IO* in the 1950s and 1960s was closer to policy analysis and commentary than work published in the journal since the mid-1970s. The journal remained sharply focused on formal international organization, with substantial space devoted to summaries of activities in various UN agencies until the late 1960s. Even when behavioralism entered the pages of the journal, it took the form of statistical analysis of General Assembly voting.

If the UN had continued to be as significant in world politics as it briefly became under Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld (1953–61), both the shrewd political analysis and the more systematic behavioral study of politics—within the UN and in comparison to other intergovernmental organizations—might have continued to command a significant audience. But Hammarskjöld's death in a plane crash was followed by the collapse of the UN operation in the Congo and by the "Article 19 Crisis" over whether the Soviet Union could be deprived of its vote in the General Assembly in response to its nonpayment of assessments for UN peacekeeping operations. U.S. intervention in Vietnam took place without significant UN involvement. And in 1967 the UN peacekeeping force was withdrawn from Suez right before the June War. Actions against Israel, including the notorious "Zionism as Racism" resolution, drastically reduced U.S. support for the UN, including several of the specialized agencies. As the UN became increasingly irrelevant to major questions of world politics, students of world politics lost interest in it.

4. Goodrich 1947, 17.

5. See Rothwell 1949; Little 1949; and Dennett 1949.

6. Cox and Jacobson 1973.

The Intellectual Roots of IPE

Realism has been at the center of the theoretical debates of U.S. international relations scholarship for a long time. Historically, realism was a breed alien to the liberal and progressive intellectual and political sensibilities of the United States. At its inception in the early twentieth century, the discipline of international relations was part of the progressive movement that sought to build a systematic social science for the betterment of mankind in the United States and, by implication, worldwide. World War II and the Holocaust, experienced and interpreted by a generation of brilliant intellectuals closely linked to Europe, changed this. And so did the protracted Cold War that held the world in its grip for four decades. Prudent statecraft, realism argued, required a space for diplomacy and strategy that was uncontested by normal domestic politics. The grand debates in the field—idealism and realism in the 1930s, neoliberalism and neorealism in the 1980s—are products of this distinctive historical legacy.

No independently recognized field for studying the international political economy existed in the 1950s and 1960s. Specialists of international relations paid little systematic attention to the political analysis of economic issues. For public policy as well as for the academy, the focus was on security issues and “high politics.” Communism was seen as an omnipresent threat. The Soviet Union, armed with nuclear weapons and rockets—as the successful launch of Sputnik in 1957 indicated—was perceived as a serious military, technological, economic, and ideological rival of the United States. Leading students of world politics analyzed the role of nuclear weapons, techniques of deterrence, and the operation of U.S.-led alliances such as NATO. Thomas Schelling introduced rational choice analysis to international affairs; Henry Kissinger wrote about European statecraft and U.S. nuclear and alliance strategies in Europe; Graham Allison used the Cuban Missile Crisis as a case study to sharpen the theoretical lenses of the discipline.⁷ Innovative analyses also dealt with issues of war and peace, including major conceptual contributions by Kenneth N. Waltz and the development of an impressive data set by the Correlates of War Project led by J. David Singer.⁸

For the study of the international political economy a substantial stock of intellectual capital came from classic works on political economy, such as those of Albert Hirschman, Eugene Staley, Charles Kindleberger, and Jacob Viner.⁹ Hirschman, for example, explained how foreign trade was used as an instrument of political pressure through which Germany built its political sphere of influence in central-eastern Europe. Viner and Kindleberger illuminated the complementarity of power and wealth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and in the international monetary and financial system. Staley examined how barriers against trade with states such as Japan created conditions for political-military conflict. These authors offered

7. See Schelling 1960, 1966; Kissinger 1957a,b, 1965; and Allison 1971.

8. See Waltz 1959; and Singer 1972.

9. See Hirschman [1945] 1980; Staley 1939; Viner 1948; and Kindleberger 1973. See also D. Baldwin 1985.

insights into the way power provided the foundations for the international economy. Within the field of international relations, Edward Hallett Carr used his blend of Marxism and realism to analyze the collapse of the international order, including the international economy, in the interwar period.¹⁰ The analytical focus of these books on material capabilities and asymmetric bargaining power provided the basis for parsimonious accounts of developments in the international economy that had a profound effect on the study of the international political economy in the 1970s.

Students of comparative politics who sought to link their work to international relations drew on a rich tradition of work that emphasized the importance of institutional factors in the shaping of political regimes, notably, in the 1960s, J. P. Nettl's article on the state and Samuel Huntington's analysis of political decay.¹¹ They also drew on economics and economic history, such as works on technology by David Landes and on tariffs by Charles Kindleberger.¹² Some books on U.S. politics were widely read by scholars of comparative politics.¹³ Furthermore, the domestic determinants of foreign policy received extended attention by international relations scholars in the 1960s, a fact that received more than passing notice by comparative politics specialists who were interested in institutions. In 1959 Kenneth Waltz insisted on the primacy of the international system in shaping state policy, foreshadowing his *Theory of International Politics* published twenty years later.¹⁴ A decade later, however, in a brilliant book on democratic foreign policy he offered a theory of foreign policy.¹⁵ In the 1960s and early 1970s Waltz was not alone in pointing to the importance of the domestic determinants (such as political leadership, institutions, and bureaucratic organizations) of state action. Henry Kissinger, Graham Allison, Morton Halperin, and John Steinbruner, among others, published important articles and books on the subject that were widely read, discussed, and cited.¹⁶

Yet, the main source of inspiration for students seeking to connect international relations with domestic politics arose from within the field of comparative politics. In the 1960s discussions in comparative analysis revolved around efforts to explain differences in the paths taken by modern states—toward liberal democracy, fascism, or state socialism, for example. Interactions between international and domestic factors had been largely ignored by the structural-functional approach, which was the focal point of work in comparative politics during the 1960s. But for scholars such as Barrington Moore, Reinhard Bendix, Alexander Gerschenkron, and subsequently Charles Tilly and Theda Skocpol, these trajectories were the result not only of a polity's internal characteristics but also of how it was inserted into the international system both economically and politically.¹⁷ A younger generation of comparative

10. Carr [1946] 1962.

11. See Nettl 1968; and Huntington 1968.

12. See Kindleberger 1962, 1978; and Landes 1969.

13. Bauer, Pool, and Dexter 1972.

14. Waltz 1959.

15. Waltz 1967.

16. See Kissinger 1969; Allison 1971; Halperin 1974; and Steinbruner 1974.

17. See Bendix 1964; Gerschenkron 1962; Moore 1966; Tilly 1975, 1990; and Skocpol 1979.

scholars would soon adapt the insights of these seminal studies to the analysis of the domestic determinants of the international political economy.

Despite this rich intellectual legacy, the 1960s lacked a coherent body of political-economy literature in international relations, and the scattered works that existed were far from the mainstream of international relations. Graduate students could go through international relations programs at major American universities, focusing on diplomatic history, theories of war and peace, and policy issues revolving around deterrence, and remain largely innocent of economics or its links to world politics. It did not help that economists were paying little attention to how political and institutional contexts affected their subject of study. Economics Ph.D. students were increasingly rewarded for their mathematical acumen rather than their analysis of how organizations actually operated; economists could not fashion successful careers by investigating the lending practices of the International Monetary Fund. Hence, in the analysis of international relations neither political science nor economics were conducting sustained research on subjects that would later be termed IPE.

European Integration as an Intellectual Opening

From the early 1960s until the early 1970s, the liveliest debates on international organizations focused on the significance of political integration for the nation-state: “obstinate or obsolete?” as Stanley Hoffmann put it in a famous debate with Ernst Haas.¹⁸ Haas and some younger students and colleagues developed a specific research program about political integration, drawing on modernization theory and on the theory of functionalism as articulated by David Mitrany.¹⁹ This research program reflected a general liberal theoretical orientation that pointed to the possibility of multiple actors in the international system and the importance of voluntary agreement. Their work complemented the analysis of national and supranational community formation that Karl Deutsch and his students had pioneered in the 1950s and 1960s, a research program that foreshadowed what later came to be labeled constructivism. It highlighted the importance of identity formation measured by social transactions and communications.²⁰ By 1970 integration theory had specified a substantial number of economic and social background factors that conditioned a series of political processes. These, in turn, shaped how political actors defined their interests and thus the policy strategies that elites adopted in different states. A nascent field of comparative regional integration studies was formed, based on fieldwork by scholars who went to East Africa and Latin America as well as to Europe.²¹ In 1970 *IO* published a special issue on regional integration edited by Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold. The articles in this volume represented attempts to use behavioral social science to account for variation in the success of efforts at regional integration.²²

18. Hoffmann 1966.

19. See Haas 1958, 1961, 1964b; and Mitrany 1966.

20. See Deutsch 1953; Deutsch et al. 1957; Russett 1963; and Merritt 1966.

21. Outstanding books synthesizing this literature and presenting new findings include Lindberg and Scheingold 1970; and Nye 1971.

22. Lindberg and Scheingold 1971.

Comparative regional integration studies foundered on the overly optimistic assumption of neofunctionalism that such efforts would succeed around the world. Non-European efforts at regional integration in the 1960s failed, and the European effort stagnated after Charles De Gaulle's maneuvers of the mid-1960s and the Luxembourg Compromise of 1966. The field of integration studies atrophied. Formerly optimistic theorists became pessimistic. Their arguments became more indeterminate as an increasing number of explanatory variables was needed to account for the acceleration and retardation of integration processes.

The difficulty encountered after 1966 by neofunctionalism was ironically similar to that faced by neorealism (whose error was excessive pessimism) after 1989. Both approaches involved specific research programs with testable propositions, some of which were invalidated by events. Their arguments were formulated in ways that could be falsified. When disillusionment with integration theory set in, many younger scholars turned to newer themes such as those of international and comparative political economy. Integration theory, however, provided much of the existing analytical capital for investigating the connections between politics and economics. Several years later, Ernst B. Haas published an article on the "obsolescence" of regional integration theory.²³ However, empirical work on the European Community continued in Europe, and when U.S. scholars regained interest in the subject in the late 1980s, they relied heavily on this European work and were less inclined to put forward a general theory of integration processes.²⁴

The Emergence of IPE

As long as security concerns dominated the attention of academics and policymakers, the intellectual vacuum in the study of the international political economy could be ignored. Beginning in the late 1960s, however, a series of developments brought political salience to international economic issues: the revival of the European and Japanese economies, inflationary pressures in the United States, the abandonment of Bretton Woods in 1971, and the OPEC oil embargo in 1973–74 all combined to end the era of overwhelming U.S. dominance of the world economy and the regime constructed in the late 1940s.

A few political scientists began at the end of the 1960s to observe these changes in the international political economy, stimulated especially by work on economic interdependence by Richard Cooper and on multinational enterprises by Raymond Vernon.²⁵ In 1971 *IO* published a special issue on transnational relations.²⁶ This volume was inspired by the work on multinational enterprises done by Vernon and others: over a third of the thirty-one scholarly works referenced in the editors' introduction pertained to the activities of these firms. The editors sought to broaden the study of

23. Haas 1975, 1976.

24. See Moravcsik 1991, 1998; and the collections edited by Wallace 1990; Keohane and Hoffmann 1991; and Sbragia 1992.

25. See Cooper 1968; and Vernon 1971.

26. Keohane and Nye 1972. For a review of the subsequent literature with a twenty-year perspective, see Risse-Kappen 1995b.

world politics to include “transnational relations,” involving the activities of non-state actors, and “transgovernmental relations,” in which subunits of governments dealt directly with their counterparts abroad.²⁷ The transnational relations special issue was chiefly a pointing exercise that made clear how much interesting activity had escaped the attention of analysts imprisoned in the “state-centric” paradigm. No testable theory was presented. The editors focused on the impact of changing economic and technological forces on politics. Their fundamental assumptions were borrowed from pluralism, which was the reigning theoretical orientation on domestic politics, at least in the United States. Actors were the starting point; their preferences were not explained. The fact that actors had different preferences created opportunities for mutually beneficial trade-offs. Beginning with the perceived reality of transnational relations, Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye discussed interstate dependence, and they highlighted the trade-offs between the economic benefits and political costs of interdependence. By considering the implications of transnational relations for state autonomy, they linked the study of interdependence to classic issues in political science.

Robert Gilpin challenged the editors’ liberal orientation with a powerful essay published in the same volume.²⁸ Gilpin argued that transnational relations could only be understood within the context of interstate politics. A central and continuing issue—the interactions between transnational economic changes, on the one hand, and state power, on the other—was embedded in the international political economy debate from the outset. In a subsequent book on multinational corporations, Gilpin developed, systematically and self-consciously, a realist analysis of the international political economy. His trenchant analysis of the role of multinational corporations and U.S. foreign policy fused realism’s analytical, historical, and policy concerns into a powerful synthesis.²⁹ Gilpin showed how realism’s emphasis on power could provide both a political explanation of the emergence of liberal principles and practices in U.S. foreign economic policy and a parsimonious critique of liberal scholarship. His dynamic model of change paralleled some Marxist writings, which interpreted the Vietnam War as a reflection of economic contradictions that drove power-seeking elites to devise, under the flag of international liberalism, a counterrevolutionary imperialist strategy.³⁰

Gilpin’s work helped crystallize a debate about the role of states and markets in the international political economy, which became a major theme during the next decade. Scholars began to conceptualize what they meant by interdependence and to try

27. Keohane and Nye did not invent the phrase “transnational relations.” They quote Arnold Wolfers as using it in an essay first published in 1959. See Keohane and Nye 1972, x. Wolfers treats the “transnational” terminology as conventional, stating that “there is no lack of a suitable vocabulary to identify a set of non-state corporate actors, but it is not without significance that all the terms refer to something called ‘national,’ which is the characteristic feature of the nation-state.” Wolfers 1962, 20.

28. Gilpin 1972.

29. Gilpin 1975. For other outstanding work with a realist cast, albeit not so systematic or powerful as Gilpin’s, see Knorr 1975; and Strange 1976.

30. See Baran and Sweezy 1966; Magdoff 1969; Mandel 1976; and Gilpin 1975, 1981.

to measure it.³¹ The writings of Susan Strange were particularly important in focusing attention on markets and how states interacted with them.³² On one side of the debate in the 1970s were liberal analyses that emphasized economic processes and technological change in the process of modernization.³³ These arguments have their counterparts in some contemporary work on globalization, which, in the words of Strange, contends that “the authority of the governments of all states, large and small, strong and weak, has been weakened as a result of technological and financial change and of the accelerated integration of national economies into one single global market economy.”³⁴ In contrast to these market-oriented arguments is the state-structural orientation of Gilpin or of Stephen Krasner, who argued in 1976 that variations in the degree of openness or closure in foreign trade were inexplicable without understanding configurations of state interests and power. “In recent years,” he declared, “students of international relations have multinationalized, transnationalized, bureaucratized, and transgovernmentalized the state until it has virtually ceased to exist as an analytic construct . . . This perspective is at best profoundly misleading.”³⁵

Whether one emphasized the role of markets or of states, it became clear during the 1970s that neither phenomenon could be adequately analyzed without accounting for the other. As Keohane and Nye explicitly recognized in their book published in 1977, power and interdependence would have to be analyzed together.³⁶

IPE: Liberal Challenges to Realism

During the decade after the publication of Gilpin’s book the various approaches to problems of bargaining and cooperation drew their inspiration from long-standing generic orientations, notably realism, liberalism, and Marxism. Each perspective gave pride of place to a different explanatory variable: the distribution of power for realists, the interests of different groups for liberals, the structure of the economy or, more simplistically, the interests of capitalists for Marxists. Each perspective emphasized different causal relations: power and coercion for realism, mutual agreement and contracting for liberalism, mechanisms of exploitation for Marxism. These generic orientations created specific research programs that were subject to empirical verification, including hegemonic stability theory, liberal regime theory, and dependency theory. The most prominent debates were those between different variants of realism and liberalism, and increasingly between systemic-level analysis (particularly neoliberal institutionalism) and analysis rooted in domestic-level interests and

31. See Waltz 1970; Rosecrance and Stein 1973; and Katzenstein 1975.

32. Strange 1979, 1988.

33. Morse 1970 and 1976. In an investigation of war, Gilpin further explored the relationships between technological change and world politics. Gilpin 1981.

34. Strange 1996, 14.

35. Krasner 1976, 317.

36. See Keohane and Nye 1977; and Baldwin 1979.

institutions, which sought to understand “state interests,” rather than taking them for granted.

Realism and Its Critics in the 1970s

For most American students of international politics, at least through the 1980s, realism was the perspective against which new ideas had to be tested; and during the 1960s, when IPE emerged as an independent field of study, realism was intellectually hegemonic. Hans Morgenthau’s *Politics Among Nations* was the most important text.³⁷ Kenneth Waltz had published his first book in 1959 in which he initiated the intellectual project that culminated in his influential exposition of what came to be termed neorealism twenty years later.³⁸ Systems theory was guided by a realist rhetoric, although, as Waltz later pointed out, these studies were more reductionist than either their authors or readers realized.³⁹

But realism has always been vulnerable, because some of its core assumptions were problematic, and because its empirical validation was never compelling. Realism’s core assumptions can be variously classified, but four are particularly important: (1) states are the key actors in world politics; (2) states can be treated as homogeneous units acting on the basis of self-interest; (3) analysis can proceed on the basis of the assumption that states act as if they were rational; and (4) international anarchy—the absence of any legitimate authority in the international system—means that conflict between self-interested states entails the danger of war and the possibility of coercion. The state-centric assumption was challenged by work on transnational relations, the homogeneity assumption by students of domestic structure and bureaucratic politics, the rationality assumption by analysts of cognitive psychology and group decision making, and the anarchy assumption by theorists of international society and institutions.

During the 1960s and 1970s three major liberal challenges to realism directed their fire at the assumption that states could be treated as unified rational actors: neofunctionalism, bureaucratic politics, and transnational relations and linkage politics.⁴⁰ All three were grounded in a pluralist conception of civil society and the state. Public policy was the result of clashes among different groups with conflicting interests. Groups could often only succeed by building coalitions, which would vary from one issue area to another. Robert Dahl, the most influential American exponent of pluralism, emphasized that these cross-cutting cleavages would preclude the dominance of any one specific group, an observation designed to rebut Marxist arguments about the ability of major capitalists to dominate the formulation of public policy.⁴¹

Neofunctionalism stipulated that institutional change would alter the incentives of groups in civil society, leading them to support policies that would promote still

37. Morgenthau 1948.

38. Waltz 1959, 1979.

39. See Kaplan 1957; Rosecrance 1963; and Waltz 1979, 1986.

40. See Haas 1958, 1964a,b; Allison 1971; Keohane and Nye 1972; and Rosenau 1969a.

41. Dahl 1961.

more integration in a process that would spill over from one issue area to another. But as we have seen, this argument apparently failed to predict or explain the direction taken by the European Community after 1966.⁴² Bureaucratic politics extended pluralist interest group arguments into the government itself: “where you stand depends upon where you sit.”⁴³ Policy, including foreign policy, is a product of compromise among different bureaucratic actors, reflecting the power and intensity of interest of bureaus, which vary from one issue area to another. Coherent foreign policy is elusive, since decisions in different issue areas are being taken by different actors with different preferences. Theories about transnational relations, which were central when IPE emerged as a distinct field in the 1970s, carried the pluralist argument one step further: there could be many different actors in the international environment, including groups from civil society. These nongovernmental actors could be directly linked with their counterparts in other countries, in ties that would not necessarily be controlled by states. Transgovernmental relations were also possible: situations in which there would be direct relations among interested bureaucracies in different countries.⁴⁴

For IPE, bureaucratic politics and transnational relations oriented early work in the field, but these research programs faltered despite the fact that their political ontology, a nuanced landscape composed of many different elements, was much richer than the black-box view of the state provided by realism. Transnational relations posited a world composed of many different actors with different interests and capabilities. Such a model can provide a rich description. But the operationalization of cause and effect relationships is complex because it is difficult to specify interests and capabilities *ex ante*. The larger the number of actors, the greater the diversity of their resources (ideas, money, access, organization); and the wider the number of possible alliances, the more difficult such specification becomes, especially if there are interaction effects among different groups.

Bureaucratic politics captured the complexity involved in policy formulation and implementation in any advanced polity—complexity that eluded realism with its radically simplifying assumptions about the nature of the state. In some instances the interests of bureaucracies were clear, but in others they were more elusive. Some of the initial proponents of bureaucratic politics recognized that the most obvious specification of bureaucratic interests, maximizing budget size, did not always work. For example, the U.S. Army after World War II did not try to keep control of the air force but rather supported the creation of a third independent service that would be coequal with the army and the navy.⁴⁵ Army leaders rejected keeping the air force as part of the army (it was the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II) because it would have changed the “bureaucratic essence,” or what would be called today the collective identity of the army, which was rooted in land warfare and the infantry. Bureaucratic

42. Burley and Mattli suggested that spillover continued through the European judicial process, overlooked by many analysts. Burley and Mattli 1993.

43. Allison attributes this aphorism to Don K. Price. Allison 1971, 316, n. 71.

44. Keohane and Nye 1974. See also Rosenau 1969a.

45. Halperin 1974.

politics, like transnational relations, had great difficulties in operationalizing variables. It did not become a compelling alternative to realist perspectives.

In the mid-1970s a new liberal challenge to realism began to emerge. This challenge focused on the concept of “international regime,” drawn from a long-standing tradition of international law and first used in the political science literature by John Ruggie and subsequently elaborated by Keohane and Nye. Ruggie defined regimes as sets of “mutual expectations, rules and regulations, plans, organizational energies and financial commitments, which have been accepted by a group of states.” Keohane and Nye treated them simply as “governing arrangements that affect relationships of interdependence.”⁴⁶ Ruggie’s understanding was sociological or constructivist, emphasizing the importance of intersubjective, shared understanding that defines rather than just reflects the preferences of actors; Keohane and Nye understood regimes as devices for enhancing the utility of actors whose interests were taken as given. Students of international regimes did not challenge one of the meanings of “anarchy”: that no institutional hierarchy capable of enforcing rules exists in world politics. They did question the frequent implication that anarchy in this sense implied the absence of institutions based on rules.

However, regimes could also be explained in realist terms—as Gilpin and Krasner had, in effect, sought to do. By the end of the 1970s students of international regimes had introduced a potentially important new dependent variable into the analysis of world politics. At that time, however, this new dependent variable was not linked with a distinctive set of explanatory variables through an articulated causal mechanism and, therefore, did not seriously threaten the well-articulated explanatory project of realism based on interests, power, and anarchy.

Support for realist theory was enhanced by the fact that the best-operationalized new research program of these years, hegemonic stability theory, was entirely consistent with realist premises—although, ironically, its first articulation (with somewhat different terminology) was by a liberal economist, Kindleberger.⁴⁷ Hegemonic stability theory maintained that an open international system was most likely to occur when there was a single dominant power in the international economic system. Kindleberger argued that the Great Depression, a market failure of monumental proportions, was caused by the absence of a lender of last resort in the international financial system. There could only be a lender of last resort if there were a single dominant power in the international system. Only a hegemon would have the capacity and interest to provide the public good of financial stability. Thus, Kindleberger used a realist ontology (the actors were states) and a half realist causality (the outcome was determined by the distribution of power among states, although through the voluntary choice of the hegemon not coercion) to analyze a liberal problem, the provision of collective goods in the international system.

Gilpin and Krasner suggested that a similar analysis could be applied to multinational corporations and trade.⁴⁸ Not only were the ontology and causality fully realist,

46. See Ruggie 1975, 570; and Keohane and Nye 1977, 19.

47. Kindleberger 1973.

48. See Gilpin 1975; and Krasner 1976.

but so was the fundamental problem. States were interested in maximizing their own interests. And the promotion of these interests could involve relative gains and distributional conflicts. In their analyses, the distribution of power was the key explanatory variable, accounting for the rules governing multinational corporations, and for trade openness or closure. All states had a few simple goals that they sought to promote in the international economic system—economic utility, growth, social stability, and political leverage. Because it provided economic utility with limited social instability and enhanced the political leverage of the dominant power, for a hegemonic state an open system was the most attractive way to secure these objectives. The firms of the hegemonic power would most benefit from an open system, since they were the most competitive and had the easiest access to capital.

Hegemonic stability theory—or, more generally, arguments about the relationship between the distribution of power and the characteristics of international economic behavior—operationalized the explanatory variable, state power, in terms of some overall measure of size (such as GNP or share of world trade) and the dependent variable, international economic behavior, in terms of openness in the world economy as indicated both by rules and the pattern of exchange. These systemic theories could be proven wrong: either the pattern of international economic behavior changed with the distribution of power among states or it did not. The operationalization of variables, specification of causal relationships, and falsifiability made systemic power theory a fruitful research program. Its findings could be elaborated and systematically criticized.

However, the very clarity of hegemonic stability theory and its ease of operationalization made it vulnerable to persuasive critiques. Timothy McKeown showed that Great Britain's behavior in the nineteenth century was inconsistent with the theory, and Arthur Stein argued that the trade liberalization measures of that century did not emerge from hegemonic policy but from asymmetric bargains that permitted discrimination against the hegemon.⁴⁹ David Lake and Duncan Snidal demonstrated that a hegemonic distribution of power was not the only one that was consistent with an open economic system. Reasoning from ontological and epistemological premises that were entirely consistent with hegemonic stability theory, they demonstrated that a small number of leading states would have the interest and capability to support an open system.⁵⁰ Even though some arresting reconceptualizations of a realist approach to international trade were later put forward,⁵¹ by the middle of the 1980s the general assumption of the field was that hegemonic stability theory had been seriously undermined.

At the end of the 1970s, these refutations to hegemonic stability theory lay in the future. When Ronald Reagan won the presidency, realist analysis still held pride of place in the United States; it was still the theory that had to be refuted before a convincing intellectual challenge could be offered. Realism maintained its dominant position despite alternative arguments that appeared more accurately to describe ac-

49. See McKeown 1983; and Stein 1984.

50. See Lake 1984; and Snidal 1985b. See also, on trade policy, Milner 1987, 1988; and Oye 1992.

51. Gowa 1989, 1994.

tors, and despite the fact that its empirical validation had always been problematic. Realism continued to be *primus inter pares* because liberalism did not offer an alternative research program that specified causality and operationalized variables clearly enough to be falsifiable. The renewal of the Cold War after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of 1979 seemed to reinforce realism's intellectual triumph.

Neoliberal Institutionalism

The development of neoliberal institutionalism posed a serious challenge for realist analysis. A special issue of *IO* laid the foundations in 1982. In his introduction Stephen Krasner presented a definition of regimes, developed by the group of authors writing for this issue: "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area of international relations."⁵² This agreed definition was ambiguous; but it identified regimes as social institutions and avoided debilitating definitional struggles, as advocates of the regimes research program sought to show that their work could illuminate substantive issues of international relations.

In his article in that volume, and more comprehensively two years later in a book, Robert Keohane developed a rationalist argument to explain the existence of international institutions.⁵³ Drawing an analogy to problems of market failure in economics, he argued that high transaction costs and asymmetrical uncertainty could lead, under conditions such as those modeled by Prisoners' Dilemma (PD) games, to suboptimal outcomes. Chiefly by providing information to actors (not by enforcing rules in a centralized manner), institutions could enable states to achieve their own objectives more efficiently. Institutions would alter state strategies by changing the costs of alternatives; institutionalization could thus promote cooperation. Keohane argued that institutions mattered because they could provide information, monitor compliance, increase iterations, facilitate issue linkages, define cheating, and offer salient solutions. Keohane did not deny the importance of power, but within the constraints imposed by the absence of hierarchical global governance, states could reap gains from cooperation by designing appropriate institutions.

The initial inspiration for this line of argument came from new work in economics and from the renewed attention being paid to PD games. Economists had begun to recognize the importance of institutions.⁵⁴ Robert Axelrod suggested that PD could be resolved if the payoff matrix were not skewed too much in favor of the sucker's payoff, if games were iterated frequently and indefinitely, if the costs of monitoring others' behavior and of retaliating were sufficiently low, and if actors did not discount the future at too high a rate.⁵⁵ Institutions could, it was argued, affect the values of these parameters, for instance, by nesting particular games in durable rules, provid-

52. Krasner 1983b, 1.

53. See Keohane 1982 and 1984.

54. See Olson 1965; Akerlof 1970; North 1981 and 1990; and Williamson 1975.

55. See Axelrod 1981, 1984; and Oye 1986. See also Rapoport and Chamnah 1965. For a further development of this line of work, see Axelrod 1997; and Cederman 1997.

ing information about other states' activities, and furnishing standards for evaluating whether cheating was taking place. In the 1990s U.S. and European scholars developed a number of different though complementary approaches to analyzing international regimes.⁵⁶

Where the neoliberal institutionalism research program differed with realist arguments was not on its assumptions about actors, but rather on the nature of the exemplary problem in the international system: were states primarily concerned with market failure or with relative gains and distributional conflicts? Could issues be resolved through the voluntary acceptance of institutions that left all actors better off, or would coercion and power be more important for determining outcomes? Krasner suggested that distributional conflicts rather than market failure or relative gains are the central concern for states in the international system. The issue is not just reaching the Pareto frontier, but the point on the frontier that is chosen; an issue that can be resolved only through bargaining and power, not just optimal institutional design.⁵⁷ Joseph Grieco argued that states were, in fact, concerned with relative gains even in the European Community, which seemed to be designed to enhance absolute well-being.⁵⁸ Robert Powell clarified this relative gains discussion, arguing that even within a realist logic relative gains only mattered if they compromised a state's future ability to secure absolute benefits.⁵⁹ A number of important studies in the early 1990s explored the connections between power and potential gains from political exchange.⁶⁰

Neoliberal institutionalism has offered a set of heuristically powerful deductive arguments that could eventually be made more precise. Indeed, such arguments can be formalized using game theory, as Helen Milner argues in her article in this issue. Hypotheses generated by neoliberal institutionalism were applied to a wide range of empirical problems, such as bargaining between the United Kingdom and the other members of the European Community over the Falklands or the evolution of international regimes for debt rescheduling.⁶¹ The appeal of neoliberal institutionalism was enhanced by its affinity with the reigning king of the social sciences in the United States—economics.

Domestic Politics and IPE

From the outset IPE blurred the boundaries between comparative and international politics. Even analysts who took the state-as-actor approach did so explicitly for convenience—to enable them to develop coherent theories—rather than on phenom-

56. See, for example, Young 1989, 1994, 1997; Lipson 1991; and Rittberger 1993.

57. Krasner 1991.

58. Grieco 1988, 1990.

59. Powell 1991, reprinted in Baldwin 1993. See also Keohane 1993. The relative gains discussion is an example of a controversy that began at the level of competing "isms"—the assumptions of neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism, respectively—that generated some empirical research and eventually yielded to an analytical solution.

60. See Stein 1990; Martin 1992a; and Oye 1992.

61. See Martin 1992c; and Aggarwal 1996.

enological grounds. In fact, realism and liberalism as general research orientations had specific domestic and systemic research programs: statism for realism, and pluralism and various theories of interest aggregation for liberalism. The actors were different at the domestic and international levels, but the causal mechanisms, voluntary exchange as opposed to power and coercion, remained the same. Using class analysis, Marxism offered an integrated view of international and domestic political economy. Analysts of the international political economy continued to emphasize how variations in domestic politics affected foreign policy and to suggest ways in which the international system could affect domestic political structures and interests. We begin this section by discussing what happened to Marxism; we then turn to statist arguments and to a variety of domestic structure approaches.

Marxism

For Marxists, the organization of capitalism determined political and economic outcomes at both the domestic and international levels. Marxism offered a structural or institutional rather than an actor-oriented argument, providing an integrated picture of both domestic and international politics.

Arguing that the state was simply the handmaiden of leading capitalists, instrumental Marxism offered clear causal statements that proved to be empirically problematic. Many of the major public policy initiatives of the twentieth century, such as social security and the recognition of labor unions, had been opposed by leading capitalists. Sophisticated Marxist analysts recognized this problem and proposed structural Marxism as a more persuasive framework that was more consistent with Marx's own formulations. Structural Marxists argued that capitalist states would act in the interest of preserving capitalism as a whole. The state was relatively autonomous from its own economy and society. However, specifying this orientation in an empirically tractable way was difficult. If the state were relatively autonomous, exactly how autonomous could it be? What policy would be inconsistent with this perspective? Both policies that reflected the preferences of the capitalist class and those that did not could be accounted for by structural Marxist analyses.

Scholars influenced by Marxism also emphasized social forces and production relations, as in the work of Robert W. Cox.⁶² One particularly influential research program based on a generic Marxist orientation was dependency theory. In the late 1940s Raoul Prebisch, an Argentinian economist working at the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, argued that the world economy enmeshed poorer countries exporting raw materials in relationships of unequal exchange. Prebisch's arguments, and older ones about imperialism, were developed by social scientists from developing areas, especially Latin America, as well as from North America and Europe, into a research program that explained the poverty of the states of the south in terms of their position in the world economy.⁶³ The world systems research program elaborated by Immanuel Wallerstein and his colleagues presented a similar

62. R. Cox 1981, 1987.

63. See Prebisch 1959; Cohen 1973; and Cardoso and Falleto 1979.

analysis for a much longer time period.⁶⁴ In a 1978 special issue of *IO* James Caporaso emphasized the distinction between dependence and dependency. In contrast to the internationalism of traditional Marxism, dependency theory offered a disguised form of nationalism in which the role of the state loomed large, especially for weak polities. It was not just that the polities of the south were dependent and weak, but that they were in a relationship of dependency that undermined their autonomy and exploited their wealth. These mechanisms of exploitation included both specific economic arrangements and the general penetration of developing states by more powerful and better organized capitalist states of the north.⁶⁵

As the experience of the developing world became more differentiated and as some states and world regions did better than others, dependency theorists suggested that there could be a pattern of dependent development. Some groups within developing states, such as larger capitalists and the military, would ally themselves with powerful actors from the north, such as multinational corporations and northern militaries. States in the south could prosper, but their options would always be truncated by the way in which they were inserted into the world capitalist system.⁶⁶

From the early 1980s onward, dependency theory encountered serious criticism and anomalies. It was criticized for failing to clearly spell out causal regularities that could be empirically supported or falsified.⁶⁷ Furthermore, it had great difficulty explaining the uneven rates of growth in what was known as the Third World, especially the stunning economic development of a number of East Asian countries. Cross-national variations in endowments, institutions, and policies seemed to provide more promising explanations. Political economy work on developing countries increasingly relied on a combination of economics and comparative politics rather than on dependency theory.⁶⁸ One of the leading exponents of dependent development, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, even became the liberal reformist president of Brazil.

The collapse of the Soviet empire and, more importantly, the profound corruption revealed by its demise dealt a heavy blow to the research programs that drew on Marxism for their theoretical orientation. However, Marxism as a theoretical orientation did not disappear. Marxists have grappled with some of the same issues that have engaged liberal scholars. A neo-Gramscian strand of Marxist scholarship has built on a tradition of analysis that emphasizes the importance and sources of legitimating ideas and ideologies.⁶⁹ This scholarship is therefore more consistent with constructivist work (reviewed in the fourth section of this article) that stresses the importance of ideas and culture than are materialist versions of Marxism.

It would be a mistake to judge the insights of Marxist analyses simply in terms of any one specific research program. Marxist analysis poses probing questions about

64. See Wallerstein 1974, 1979, 1991; and Arrighi 1994.

65. Caporaso 1978a.

66. Evans 1979.

67. Packenham 1992.

68. See, for example, Haggard 1990; Wade 1990; Evans 1995; and Haggard and Kaufman 1992, 1995.

69. For a collection of essays on Gramsci and international relations, see Gill 1993, which reprints the seminal essay by Cox 1983.

the relationship between power and wealth. It offers a conceptual apparatus that can be applied both to international and domestic developments and to their connections. And it addresses enduring moral concerns concerning equality and justice. Specific research programs generated by a generic Marxist orientation can, like specific liberal and realist research programs, be called into question by problems of variable specification and empirical evidence. This does not mean, however, that Marxism as a general orientation will necessarily be discarded. Rather, it is precisely the heuristic richness of the major general research orientations that allows them to be reformulated to address changed empirical and political contexts. The fate of a general theoretical orientation does not depend on the success of any one specific research program.

Statism: Reaction Against Liberalism and Marxism

Statism is a general theoretical orientation that has generated several specific research programs, all of which assert the autonomy of state institutions. Statism thus stands in contrast to the societally oriented domestic political perspectives that dominated much of liberal and Marxist political analysis in the 1970s. Statism gave greater attention to state institutions, especially those charged with maintaining the stability and well-being of the polity as a whole. The state could be conceived of as an actor, not simply an arena in which conflicting societal interests struggled to secure their preferred policy objectives. States could be strong or weak, relative to their own societies.⁷⁰

Statist arguments did not have a particularly sophisticated conceptualization of the relationship among state institutions. States could be strong in some issue areas but weak in others. Specifying the trade-off among different issue areas was problematic. Statism had difficulty capturing the nuances of state–society relations. It detached the state not only from particular group pressures but also from the larger polity in which it was embedded.⁷¹

These empirical difficulties led not to the disappearance of statism as a general theoretical orientation but to the reformulation of specific research programs. Instead of a narrow focus on the state, which was itself a reaction to an overly societal perspective, additional work analyzed interactions between different components of the polity. In 1988 John Ikenberry, David Lake, and Michael Mastanduno edited a special issue of *IO* in which authors investigated the effect on U.S. foreign economic policy of different configurations of interest, the ability of state leaders to mobilize societal support, and the consequences of ideas, as well as the discretionary power of the executive.⁷² More recently, discussions of state–society relations employing a

70. Krasner 1977, 1978. See also Katzenstein 1976; Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985; and Evans 1995.

71. In a prescient article that drew on discourse theory, Bruce Andrews suggested that the state could be seen as a rule-governed social actor. This line of analysis lay dormant for more than a decade. Andrews 1975.

72. Ikenberry, Lake, and Mastanduno 1988.

rational choice perspective on institutions, especially the importance of commitment, have shown that some of the factors that statism identified as weaknesses were, in fact, sources of strength. Democratic states are often able to extract more resources from their own societies than are autocratic states, precisely because members of civil society believe that what would have been considered a weak state will keep its promises. In this analytic jujitsu, the notion that states were strong because they were independent of their societies is turned on its head. States can secure resources from their own societies only if they are constrained.⁷³ Reformulated versions of statism focus on state guidance of the economy, the links between political parties and state bureaucracies, how state institutions relate to social movements, and the role of law. As a general theoretical orientation, statism has been refurbished but not abandoned as some of its research programs encountered empirical anomalies.

Domestic Structures and Their Relation to the International System

Students of comparative politics focused their attention on the connections between domestic structures and international relations, which were bracketed by neoliberalism and realism. Katzenstein, for example, relied on a historically informed taxonomy that emphasized different constellations of state and society in different political settings. Drawing insights from Gerschenkron and Moore, Katzenstein argued that early industrializers like Britain differed systematically from late industrializers like Japan in the character of the dominant social coalition and in the degree of centralization and differentiation of state and society.⁷⁴ In sharp contrast to the statist literature that viewed states as actors, the analysis of domestic structures privileged state–society relationships. Different social coalitions define the content of policy. And differences in domestic policy networks have discernible effects on the formulation and implementation of foreign economic policies in different economic issues such as money and trade. John Zysman extended this perspective to the politics of industry and finance.⁷⁵

In various policy domains, both foreign and domestic, scholars analyzed contrasts between the liberal market brand of Anglo-American capitalism, welfare state capitalism on the European continent, and developmental state capitalism in Japan and East Asia. Ellen Comisso and Laura Tyson edited a special issue of *IO* on comparative socialism.⁷⁶ Subsequently, comparative political economy spread to encompass Latin America, the transitions from socialism in the successor states of the Soviet Union and east-central Europe, and even the Leninist capitalism emerging in the People's Republic of China.⁷⁷ This body of research specified, in contextual and

73. See North and Weingast 1989; Fearon 1994b; and Schultz 1996.

74. Katzenstein 1978.

75. Zysman 1977, 1983.

76. Comisso and Tyson 1986.

77. The literature is too large to be listed here. Since the early 1980s, *Cornell Studies in Political Economy*, for example, comprise more than seventy volumes on this subject.

historical detail, incentives for states, governments, or corporate actors to choose specific strategies.

Peter Gourevitch emphasized the pervasive influences that the international state system and the international political economy can have on domestic structures and the policy preferences of groups.⁷⁸ Following Gourevitch's lead, analysts pointed to two different ways in which enmeshment in the world economy could affect different polities: first, involvement could influence the basic institutional structures of polities, including their governing norms; second, it could affect the capabilities and strategic opportunities of different interest groups. This research program included analyses of the effects of the international system on the democratic corporatism of the small European welfare states, on societal groups or economic sectors, and on coalitions, institutions, ideologies, and economic structures.⁷⁹

The concept of two-level games elaborated by Robert Putnam was one effort to systematically integrate domestic structures, systemic opportunities and constraints, and foreign economic policy.⁸⁰ Any international agreements must satisfy both other states and domestic constituencies. The bargaining power of a state could be enhanced if its rulers can demonstrate that their domestic supporters would only accept a narrow range of outcomes. In more recent work, Andrew Moravcsik has elaborated a related perspective on domestic-international interactions that emphasizes how societal interests shape the policies of states.⁸¹

One difficulty encountered with this line of research was the absence of a general and systematic taxonomy for classifying domestic structures. In a bold and imaginative book Ronald Rogowski offered one answer to this taxonomic issue. He applied the elegant reasoning of the Stolper-Samuelson model of international trade to show how, in general, trade policies and practices would affect social cleavages. Export-oriented goods used intensively the factors of production with which a country was relatively well-endowed. If trade became more open, the abundant factor would benefit. If it became more closed, the relatively scarce factor would be advantaged. In general a more open international trading system would be supported by, and would strengthen, the relatively abundant factor in different states. These changes in the domestic position of different factors, such as labor and the ownership of land and capital, could influence policy.⁸² Using basically the same logic, Jeffrey Frieden emphasized the importance of factor specificity; factors of production such as labor were not homogeneous but rather were associated with specific economic sectors. Moreover, macroeconomic policy, not just trade policy, could affect and be affected by a country's openness to the world economy.⁸³

78. Gourevitch 1978.

79. See Cameron 1978; Kurth 1979; Katzenstein 1984, 1985; Snyder 1991; Kupchan 1994; and Simmons 1994.

80. See Putnam 1988; and Evans, Jacobson, and Putnam 1993.

81. Moravcsik 1997.

82. Rogowski 1989.

83. Frieden 1991.

Rogowski, Frieden, and others who followed their lead were fully aware that their perspective offered no easy way of incorporating variations in institutional arrangements, a shortcoming that Helen Milner and David Lake, among others, have sought to correct.⁸⁴ But they provided a parsimonious, general explanation that links the world economy to domestic interests and policies. Their analytic framework requires no specific knowledge about context. It can be applied to any political system. In the framework's sparse formulation the preferences of actors can be read directly off material structures, bypassing the analysis of political processes and ideational phenomena. Although it required information about which factors were relatively abundant, it did not require any institutional knowledge about specific polities. However, such general structural theories encounter numerous empirical anomalies, as Rogowski's historical discussion revealed.

Globalization and Domestic Politics

Increasing levels of transboundary movements and their associated effects, what has come to be termed globalization, encourage a more intimate analytic relationship between international and domestic politics. High levels of cross-border flows are not an unprecedented development. Labor migration reached its highest levels in the nineteenth century. By some measures international capital markets were more integrated at the end of the nineteenth century than they are now, since financial flows fell dramatically with the two world wars and the Great Depression. Trade flows have followed a similar pattern, increasing sharply during the nineteenth century, then falling in the first part of the twentieth, and reaching unprecedented levels for some countries, most notably the United States, in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Technology has dramatically reduced the costs of communications. Social movements have been mobilized in specific locales for global issues such as the environment, human rights, and feminism. Illicit activities including organized crime and trade in drugs have become more salient. All of these developments, lumped under the label of globalization, have affected both national polities and the international system.⁸⁵

Globalization draws our attention to the increasing political salience of transboundary activities. Is the growing enmeshment of polities in the international political economy making institutions and policies, groups and individuals more alike, or are they retaining most of their differences? Is globalization altering "inter"national relations marginally, or is it fundamentally transforming them to "trans"national relations? Those who emphasize how globalization is remaking world politics stress how policy preferences and political coalitions at home change as a result of changing international pressures. Conversely, analyses, including Geoffrey Garrett's contribution to this issue, that emphasize the persistence of distinctive national practices

84. See Frieden and Rogowski 1996, 42–47; Milner 1997; and Lake 1996 and forthcoming.

85. See Keohane and Milner 1996, 10–14; Feldstein and Horioka 1980; Oman 1994; Shaw 1994; Jones 1995; Rodrik 1997; and Obstfeld and Taylor 1997.

have shown how domestic institutions block price signals, freeze existing political coalitions and policies, and shape the national response to global change.⁸⁶

Both of these arguments focus on domestic political institutions, firms, interests groups, and economic sectors as units of analyses. An alternative conceptualization focuses not on the units themselves, but rather on the relationships among them and makes problematic the nature of these units in the first place. Households, communities, regions, and social movements, among others, reconstitute themselves in a global setting. This conceptualization points to processes of “glocalization” that are transforming the identities, interests, and strategies of actors through a combination of global and local processes and are thus adding new political actors and processes to an increasingly global politics.⁸⁷

Globalization, however conceived, is a reflection of a phenomenon that scholars associated with IPE have recognized since the inception of the field: international and domestic politics cannot be isolated from each other. Neorealists and neoliberals did not incorporate domestic politics into their theoretical formulations, but they never denied its importance. States did not all respond in the same way to the opportunities and constraints presented by the international system. Studies of domestic politics enhanced our understanding of what neorealists and neoliberals took for granted in their theories in the 1980s: “state preferences.” Domestic structure analysis suggested that preferences could be understood in two possibly complementary ways: either as the result of institutionalized norms or as the aggregations of the preferences of individuals, firms, and groups. Historical-institutional research on the reciprocal effects of domestic structures and the international political economy has been complemented by a decidedly economic and materialist variant that pays virtually no attention to the role of ideas, norms, and institutions. Different interpretations of the process of globalization reflect this difference in orientation.

A Post–Cold War Opening: Rationalism and Sociology Revisited

Even during the Cold War, there was substantial dissatisfaction with reigning realist and liberal approaches to international relations, especially outside the United States and in the related field of comparative politics. The end of the Cold War was a catalyst in several ways. It raised new issues for the ongoing rationalist debate, which pitted realists, who stressed the role of coercion, against liberals, who emphasized contractual relationships. The end of the Cold War also opened up space for cultural and sociological perspectives, often referred to as “constructivist,” that had been neglected by both realists and liberals. And the discussions that ensued highlighted conceptual differences between possible points of complementarity of rationalism and constructivism.

86. See Keohane and Milner 1996; Garrett and Lange 1995 (reprinted in Keohane and Milner 1996); Pauly and Reich 1997; and Samuels 1994.

87. See Rosenau 1990, 1997; and Appadurai 1996.

Rationalism: Realism and Liberalism After the Cold War

Realism has been not only a salient general theoretical orientation but also part of a more enduring normative discourse, like liberalism and constructivism, about the most appropriate way to secure peace, stability, and justice in human society. Its self-conscious intellectual pedigree is long and impressive. It will not disappear.

However, recent developments in world politics and within specific research programs have confronted realism with much greater challenges than it has faced since the founding of *IO*. For realism, power and conflict are inherent aspects of international politics. The interests of states will differ. Force and coercion are always available options. The astonishingly peaceful end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union are not what a realist would have expected.⁸⁸ Realism has not been silent, of course. The simplest explanation for the end of the Cold War is that Soviet power declined; the Soviet Union was a challenger that could no longer challenge. Predictions about relative changes in state capability have rarely been incorporated into realist research programs, and realism did not predict this decline.⁸⁹ Realists, especially Waltz, have emphasized the importance of nuclear weapons in altering the likelihood of war. With secure second-strike capability, it is more evident now than at any other time in human history that a conflict among the major powers would reduce the well-being of all states. At least some observers view this situation as a change in the nature of the international system itself, not just an alteration in the characteristics of individual states.⁹⁰ From a realist perspective, in a nonnuclear world it would have been much riskier for the Soviet Union to abandon its empire in eastern Europe and for any leader to break up the Soviet Union itself, acts that would have left even Russia's core territory more vulnerable to invasion.

Nevertheless, in the 1980s analysts working within a realist framework were arguing that bipolarity would continue. And they assumed that neither pole could disappear peacefully. When the Soviet Union did collapse, realists were skeptical about the robustness of international institutions, especially those related to international security, such as NATO, and the prospects for continued cooperation in the international economy. Over the last decade things have turned out much better than realists had any right to expect.⁹¹

The challenges to realism presented by the peaceful end of the Cold War were aggravated by the intellectual salience of neorealism as a specific research program. Waltz's most important contribution was to force analysts to make a fundamental distinction between what he called structural and reductionist arguments. Waltz was, of course, aware of the importance of domestic political factors, but he insisted that neorealism was concerned only with the distribution of power among states. States

88. See Lebow 1994; and Stein 1994.

89. Wohlforth 1994.

90. See Waltz 1990; and Snyder 1996.

91. See Mearsheimer 1990; and Waltz 1993. See also Mearsheimer 1994 and the subsequent exchange in *International Security*.

were interested in security, not in expanding their power. Treating all states as if the international relations goals were the same was a departure from earlier realist discussion, much of which had been based on the assertion that it was necessary to distinguish between revisionist and status quo states.⁹² The conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States was consistent with both a strictly neorealist analysis (the poles in a bipolar world would be in conflict) and with realist arguments that posited the importance of exogenously given variations in state objectives (a revisionist Soviet Union would be in conflict with a status quo United States).

With the end of the Cold War, neorealism offered less purchase on international conflict that appeared to be embedded primarily in variations in the goals of states or, in the case of ethnic conflict, substate actors. Many scholars argued that the materialist assumptions of neorealist analysis prevented it from explaining the rapid changes observed in core national security issues. According to these authors, historically constructed norms, ideas, and discourses needed to be analyzed before one could make sense of patterns of stability and change in world politics.⁹³ Some realists responded to this challenge by rejecting the sparse assumption of neorealism that all states would seek security and embracing instead the recognition that state objectives could vary because of domestic, not systemic factors. States' goals could be aggressive or passive, revolutionary or status quo, ethnonationalist or tolerant. The extent to which the presence of revisionist states would result in confrontations, especially war, would still depend on the distribution of material power in the international system. The rulers of greedy states would not commit suicide by attacking a manifestly stronger enemy. But knowledge of the distribution of power alone would not allow analysts to understand patterns of international conflict and cooperation.⁹⁴

The burgeoning of ethnic conflict in the last decade has presented the kinds of problems that realist perspectives were designed to analyze, although not necessarily with states as the most salient actors. Ethnic conflicts have arisen between states and among groups within states, albeit groups operating in environments where authority structures have eroded or disappeared and where security dilemmas operate at the substate level.⁹⁵ However, this return to a focus on the importance of variations in state objectives (of which ethnic conflict is only one example), as a result of factors exogenous to the distribution of power in the system as a whole, confronts realist analysis with the challenge of explaining why such variations should exist—a challenge that can only be met through a more systematic integration of realism with domestic politics.

In international political economy the specific research programs that reflect a general realist theoretical orientation have focused on the possibility of coercion that can leave some actors worse off, on the consequences of bargaining asymmetries, and on the problems of commitment in an anarchic environment. Some of these specific projects reflect the influence of constructivist or liberal perspectives. More

92. See Morgenthau 1948, chap. 2, 3; and Schweller 1996.

93. See Katzenstein 1996b; and Lapid and Kratochwil 1996.

94. For example, Frankel 1996.

95. See Fearon and Laitin 1996; and Posen 1993a.

powerful states may be in a position to alter the conceptions that weaker actors have of their own self-interest, especially when economic and military power has delegitimized ideological convictions in weaker or defeated polities. The United States, for instance, pressed for a particular vision of how international society should be ordered after World War II and renewed and reinvigorated this project after the end of the Cold War. The goal was not simply to promote a particular set of objectives, but to alter how other societies conceived of their own goals. This emphasis on what Nye has called soft power engages both conventional realist concerns about relative capabilities and constructivism's focus on beliefs and identity.⁹⁶

Powerful states can also alter strategic options in ways that skew payoffs in some cases by unilaterally changing their own policies.⁹⁷ They may be able to establish institutional arrangements that preclude certain initiatives or facilitate the strategic use of information.⁹⁸ Commitment problems may make states reluctant to engage in arrangements that provide them with absolute benefits in the short term, especially if they may be relatively worse off in the long term. If a state's future bargaining leverage would be compromised, it might reject immediate gains because of its anxiety about potential future losses.⁹⁹ Arguments emphasizing the importance of agenda setting, uncertainty, and strategic manipulation are based on the same game-theoretic formulations that have guided much recent work from more liberal perspectives emphasizing the mutual benefits of cooperation. In the post-Cold War world realist projects have become more sensitive to variations in state objectives and to a more complicated set of relationships between absolute gains and distributional conflicts.

Neoliberal institutionalism correctly anticipated that the end of the Cold War would not undermine such institutions as NATO and the European Union, so it did not go through an "agonizing reappraisal" such as that experienced by some realists. Indeed, institutionalists began to apply their theory to security institutions such as alliances and to interpret post-Cold War politics in institutionalist terms.¹⁰⁰ And, as the articles in this issue by Lisa Martin and Beth Simmons and by Helen Milner indicate, institutionalist work drew heavily on scholarship from other fields, notably U.S. politics, to become theoretically more rigorous. Since institutionalist work is so well discussed in these two articles, there is no need for us to review it in detail here. Brevity should not be interpreted as indicating insignificance.

Institutionalist thinking has made a big impact on IPE during the last fifteen years, stimulating a set of research programs that have illuminated relationships among interests, power, and institutions. But it was of less value in understanding shifting identity politics afterwards. Advocates of domestic structure approaches had for several decades criticized international relations research, including neoliberal institutionalism, for taking for granted the preferences or identities of the actors whom it studied. Neoliberal institutionalism paid virtually no attention, for example, to the

96. See Nye 1990; and Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990.

97. See Scott and Lake 1989; and Nau 1990.

98. Morrow 1994b.

99. Fearon 1995.

100. See Keohane, Nye, and Hoffmann 1993; and Wallander 1998.

phenomenon of nationalism. And it could not capture the fact that during the 1980s increased interest in human rights and environmental issues seemed driven largely by normative concerns. After 1989, some rationalists began to think of ideas as variables that affected the solutions to games—for instance, by reducing uncertainty or providing focal points.¹⁰¹ Ideas could be incorporated into an institutional framework by emphasizing how particular conceptions become institutionalized and, therefore, persist over time.¹⁰² Since it was not wedded exclusively to a materialist conception of structure, neoliberalism could engage some of the issues of changing beliefs or identities posed by end of the Cold War.

The Revival of Sociological and Cultural Perspectives

Sociological perspectives have always been important for comparative politics and have never been completely absent from international studies. In Europe, where the boundary between international and domestic politics was never particularly salient, the sociological bent of scholarship differed from prevailing American perspectives. This was true, for example, of Scandinavian and German peace research, which remained largely unnoticed in the United States and was often regarded as politically suspect when read. The theoretical contributions of the French School, represented by Stanley Hoffmann's writings and those of Raymond Aron, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, and of the British School, clustering in the 1970s and 1980s around the writings of Hedley Bull and Martin Wight, remained uninterested in the debates between the general theoretical orientations that dominated American scholarship, such as realism and liberalism.¹⁰³ These schools of thought were at odds with the emphasis in American international relations scholarship on clearly stated causal propositions and their systematic exploration in methodologically rigorous ways.

In the United States Ruggie published a series of papers demonstrating the value of a sociological orientation. He argued that the postwar international economic regime reflected what he termed embedded liberalism, identified by a shared intersubjective understanding that open international markets would be tempered by the need to maintain social stability. He criticized Waltz's theory for its lack of sociological content and for failing to explain systemic change.¹⁰⁴ And, together with Friedrich Kratochwil, he pointed out that analysts had failed to investigate the shared understandings that led to the convergence of actor expectations on which, by some accounts, regime stability depended. They argued also that the treatment of principles and norms as "independent" or "intervening" variables, linking material structures to outcomes, was not easily accommodated within the epistemological foundations of institutional and normative analysis. Subsequently, Kratochwil and Nicholas Onuf

101. See Goldstein and Keohane 1993b; and Garrett and Weingast 1993.

102. Goldstein 1993, 1996. See also Hall 1989b; and Sikkink 1991, 1993a,b.

103. Raymond Aron's massive sociological study of war and peace did not play a major role in graduate training in the United States, and Hedley Bull's major book on international society had little impact until about a decade after its publication. See Aron 1966; Bull 1977; and Hoffmann 1986, 1987.

104. Ruggie 1983a,b, 1998.

put forward a conception of rules informed by, among others, philosophy, linguistics, and sociology.¹⁰⁵ And in several papers Wendt suggested a social theory of international relations that engaged the claims of neorealism head on.¹⁰⁶

This sociological turn was intellectually deeply indebted to fields of scholarship well beyond the confines of IPE. Philosophy, structural linguistics, critical theory, geography, science and technology studies, postmodern political theory, anthropology, media studies, and literary criticism, among others, all had, in different though related ways, grappled with the project of modernity gone awry in the twentieth century.¹⁰⁷ There is a growing body of work in international relations and in security studies but, significantly, not yet in IPE that is self-conscious in conducting empirical research from a constructivist perspective. Sociological work falls into three broad clusters: conventional, critical, and postmodern.¹⁰⁸

Conventional constructivists insist that sociological perspectives offer a general theoretical orientation and specific research programs that can rival or complement rationalism. In this view a full understanding of preferences requires an analysis of the social processes by which norms evolve and identities are constituted. Since they emphasize how ideational or normative structures constitute agents and their interests, conventional constructivists differ sharply from rationalists on questions of ontology. Furthermore, constructivists insist that agents and structure are mutually constitutive and thus hope to give social science a more dynamic conception of change of system structures. On issues of epistemology and methodology, however, no great differences divide conventional constructivists from rationalists.

Outstanding among constructivist contributions is the research program of the sociologist John Meyer and his colleagues. Informed by a cognitive approach to world culture, this research program demonstrated an astonishing degree of similarity in formal national practices relating to issues as diverse as censuses, social security, education, and science despite great variations in national socioeconomic and ideological characteristics. For Meyer and his associates, the key to understanding this story is the script of modernity, often presented by international organizations, which suggested to national leaders what policies they ought to adopt if they wanted to appear, to themselves and others, to be modern and progressive.¹⁰⁹

Sociologically inclined scholars have in recent years analyzed empirically a number of cases to bolster this research program in international relations and security studies. Slavery and child labor, for example, were accepted for millennia as acceptable social practices; in the course of barely a century they became incompatible with

105. See Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986; Onuf 1989; and Kratochwil 1989, especially chap. 4.

106. Wendt 1992 and forthcoming.

107. For a brilliant discussion of the constructivist perspective from a philosophical standpoint, see Searle 1995.

108. We choose the three categories here for heuristic purposes and in full awareness of the fact that considerable differences exist within each of these clusters, borders between clusters are porous, and scholars may change positions in different publications. Our discussion is influenced by Price and Reus-Smit 1998; and Hopf 1998.

109. See Meyer 1980; Thomas, Meyer, Ramirez, and Boli 1987; Strang 1991; and Finnemore 1996a,b.

civilized society.¹¹⁰ International war may possibly be relegated to a similar status.¹¹¹ Half a century ago it was normal and appropriate for Japanese and German young men to volunteer to die for emperor and fatherland. By the 1990s the institutionalization of identities and norms that have marked Japanese and German politics since 1945 make such individual choices and social practices a rare exception.¹¹² In national security studies a growing number of mostly younger scholars addressed conventional topics—such as the spread of weapons of mass destruction, deterrence, arms races, strategic culture, or alliance politics—with unconventional sociological and cultural approaches.¹¹³ And during the last two decades feminists have been successfully redefining the meaning of human rights to encompass gender identities.¹¹⁴

Conventional constructivist studies have focused both on critical historical junctures from which new structural arrangements emerge and on interactions between existing structures and agents. Ruggie's historical arguments about the replacement of feudalism by the modern state system have made a major impact on international relations theory.¹¹⁵ Recent analyses of how actors and structures are reproduced in contemporary world politics include studies on Japanese norms indicating that drastic changes in Japan's security policies are highly unlikely and studies on changes in norms about weapons indicating that some classes of weapons may be seen as illegitimate, regardless of their strategic usefulness.¹¹⁶

As a general theoretical orientation constructivist research illuminates the sources of both conflict and cooperation. Iain Johnston, for example, has formulated a constructivist argument that seeks to account for China's consistently militant security strategy. The balance of material capabilities in the international system changed greatly over the last decades and centuries; China's *parabellum* strategic culture did not. Hence it is the latter that offers a compelling explanation of security policy.¹¹⁷ Similarly, Henry Nau has combined constructivist and realist insights in his writing to address central elements in U.S. foreign policy.¹¹⁸

In rejecting rationalist conceptions of human nature, critical constructivists agree with conventional constructivists on the issue of ontology. Like conventional constructivists, they are interested in how actors and systems are constituted and co-evolve. Their research program focuses on identity issues that include, besides nationalism, subjects such as race, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality. Critical constructivists also accept the possibility of social scientific knowledge based on empirical research. They are, however, deeply skeptical of the possibility of formulating general covering laws, and they are pluralistic about appropriate research methodologies. Institu-

110. Keck and Sikkink 1998.

111. Mueller 1989.

112. See Katzenstein 1996a; and Berger 1996.

113. See the contributions in Katzenstein 1996b. See also Kier 1997.

114. See Tickner 1992; and Keck and Sikkink 1998.

115. Ruggie 1983a.

116. See Katzenstein 1996a; and Price 1997.

117. Johnston 1995a.

118. Nau 1990, 1997.

tional arrangements, norms, and identities are embedded in specific historical contexts that can vary so dramatically that they can only be investigated through an ideographic rather than a nomothetic approach. Emphasis is placed on the detailed study of texts to understand the symbolic systems that govern actors' discourses, rather than on an analysis of a large number of cases.¹¹⁹

Critical constructivists insist that scholars' work has normative consequences. A scientist may try to find a cure for cancer or instead develop a more virulent strain of anthrax. This choice, however, does not alter the mechanisms that cause cancer or anthrax. Critical constructivists, however, understand their project not simply as revealing relationships that exist independent of the investigator, but also as having the potential to alter these relationships themselves.

Critical constructivists are developing a research program that is generating new and significant insights on important issues in world politics for which rationalist analysis has lacked compelling answers. For example, constructivists offer analyses of the transformative shift from the medieval to the modern state system; of the end of the Cold War as a recent, significant change within that system; and effects on the international system of variations in the moral purposes of states and different systems of procedural justice.¹²⁰ Constructivist arguments about issues ranging from the role of norms in sanctions against South Africa to why chemical weapons are viewed as "weapons of mass destruction" even when their destructive power may be smaller than that of "conventional" weapons both complement and challenge rationalist accounts.¹²¹

This research program is open to rationalist critiques on the use of evidence and the limits of interpretation, the possibility and the status of generalizations, the use of alternative explanations, and problems of variability and comparability. Rationalists may view critical constructivists working closely with texts as postmodernists. This is a mistaken impression. What separates critical constructivism and postmodernism is not the shared focus on discourse, but the acknowledgment by critical constructivists of the possibility of a social science and a willingness to engage openly in scholarly debate with rationalism.

On both scores postmodernists differ sharply from critical constructivists, whom postmodernists charge with bringing in rationalism and positivism through the backdoor.¹²² Postmodernists insist that there is no firm foundation for any knowledge. Since there is no position from which to pass scientific or ethical judgments, postmodernist analysis is restricted to the task of unmasking the power relations that are concealed in all knowledge claims, including their own, and all forms of communicative rationality. Through a close analysis of language, postmodernism points our attention to the inherent instability of all symbolic and political orders. Since subjects only understand the world through language, and control of language implies power,

119. See Risse 1997; and Adler and Barnett 1998.

120. See Ruggie 1983a, 1992, 1998; Koslowski and Kratochwil 1994; Risse-Kappen 1994; and Reus-Smit forthcoming.

121. See Klotz 1995c; and Price 1997.

122. George 1994.

linguistic presentations are always open to cognitive and political processes of destabilization. Postmodernist analysis seeks out these sources of potential instability. It is interested in decentering established discourse, including its own, by paying attention to what is marginal or silent.

Since the mid-1980s, postmodernist analysis has grown substantially both inside and outside of the United States, although primarily in the humanities. Richard Ashley was one of the first in international relations who suggested that neorealism's totalizing vision determined not only international relations research but also diplomacy. Thus, it obscured issues of human agency to which realism had remained responsive.¹²³ For postmodernism, reality is a creation of the analytical and ideological categories through which that theory perceives the world and in the name of which it exercises a coercive power that precludes the emergence of communicative rationality.

Little of this debate was published in *IO*, since *IO* has been committed to an enterprise that postmodernism denies: the use of evidence to adjudicate between truth claims. In contrast to conventional and critical constructivism, postmodernism falls clearly outside of the social science enterprise, and in international relations research it risks becoming self-referential and disengaged from the world, protests to the contrary notwithstanding.

Yet it is easy to underestimate the direct importance and indirect influence of this intellectual current. Postmodernism has found many adherents both in the broader international studies field in the United States and in Europe where major journals and book series are dedicated to publishing the results of this work. Especially younger scholars of constructivist persuasion have experienced not so much a "turn" but an evolution of views that was rooted in the postmodernist challenge. The power of the rationalist and empiricist currents of social science research in the United States makes critical engagement with rationalism more compelling than isolation. Hence, in different ways both conventional and critical constructivists have positioned themselves quite self-consciously between rationalist theoretical orientations, such as realism or liberalism, and postmodernist orientations.¹²⁴

Terminological Differences and Research Complementarities

Both the differences and complementarities between constructivism and rationalism promise to make the interaction between these two theoretical orientations a productive point of contestation. Both are concerned with what in ordinary language are called beliefs, but they understand this concept in different ways and use different terms in their analyses. The key terms for rationalists are preferences, information, strategies, and common knowledge. The key terms for constructivists are identities, norms, knowledge, and interests. Rationalist orientations do not offer a way to understand common knowledge. Constructivist arguments do not provide a way to analyze

123. Ashley 1984.

124. See Katzenstein 1996a,b; and Adler 1997.

strategies. Yet both strategy and common knowledge are usually necessary to understand political outcomes. We first discuss terminology, then turn to some differences and complementarities in how rationalists and constructivists analyze the role of beliefs.

Terminology. All rationalists rely on the assumption of instrumental rationality to provide the crucial link between the environment and actor behavior. Game theory provides a useful language for rationalist analysis more generally. For game theory to offer a tractable analytic framework it must assume that actors have common knowledge. They all share the same view of the game, including the payoff matrix, the strategic choice points, the types of actors they are playing against, and the probability of each type. Players know the options from which they can choose. If they are uncertain about the nature of their opponent, they may have the opportunity to update their probability assessments as the game progresses because of information that is revealed by the moves taken in the game. Given preferences, probabilities, and choice points, it is possible to derive a complete set of strategies, choices that players will make at every node in the game, and equilibrium outcomes, of which there may be many.

All rationalists use the assumption of rationality to provide the crucial link between features of the environment—power, interests, and institutional rules—and actor behavior. But on the issue of the importance of information, they are divided. Rationalists who subscribe to a materialist view of how to study the international political economy, such as Rogowski and Frieden, assume preferences for more wealth and infer strategies from structure, especially the competitive positions of factors, sectors, or firms in the world political economy.¹²⁵ Variations in information are unimportant in their analysis. These authors expect actors to understand the world accurately, and they do not conceptualize actors' choices in terms of game theory involving interdependent decisions.

In contrast, rationalists whose thinking is more indebted to game theory emphasize the importance of imperfect information and strategic interaction. They stress how changes in information can account for variations in strategies, even if the preferences of actors remain unchanged. Small changes in information can have a profound impact on equilibrium outcomes. Institutions or rules can be consequential because they can alter information and empower players to set the agenda, make amendments, and accept or reject the final package.¹²⁶

Constructivists insist on the primacy of intersubjective structures that give the material world meaning.¹²⁷ These structures have different components that help in specifying the interests that motivate action: norms, identity, knowledge, and culture. Norms typically describe collective expectations with “regulative” effects on the

125. See Rogowski 1989; and Frieden 1991.

126. See Shepsle 1986; Morrow 1994b; and Fearon 1995. It should be noted, however, that game-theoretic rationalism typically shows that multiple equilibria exist, which undermines any deterministic predictions of behavior.

127. Katzenstein 1996b.

proper behavior of actors with a given identity. In some situations norms operate like rules that define the identity of actors; they have “constitutive” effects that specify the actions that will cause relevant others to recognize a particular identity. Epistemic knowledge is also part of a social process by which the material world acquires meaning. Finally, culture is a broad label that denotes collective models of authority or identity, carried by custom or law. Culture refers to both evaluative standards (such as norms and values) and cognitive standards (such as rules and models) that define the social actors that exist in a system, how they operate, and how they relate to one another.

Constructivist research is not cut from one cloth, as Finnemore and Sikkink argue in this issue. Conventional and critical constructivist analyses often focus on different components of a common constructivist research program—norms, identity, knowledge, and culture—and, in empirical research, accord different weights to each of them. And they are divided on whether the relationship between these components is definitional, conceptual, causal, or empirical. These disagreements are reflected also in the inevitable tensions that accompany their joint effort to engage rationalism, despite some differences in the approach each takes to issues of epistemology and methodology.

Common knowledge: A point of complementarity. Rationalism and constructivism are generic theoretical orientations that are complementary on some crucial points. Game-theoretic rationalists typically assume the existence of actors, who have preexisting preferences and who share common knowledge of the game, which enables them to engage in strategic bargaining. Constructivist research focuses on the sources of actors’ identities—in game-theoretic terms, their preferences—and of their interpretations of the context of their action: common knowledge. Hence, rationalism and constructivism share an interest in beliefs or knowledge.

Game theory provides a vocabulary and a visual image that highlight not only where rationalist and constructivist arguments part ways but also where they might come together. Any rationalist analysis must stipulate the nature of the actors in the sense of specifying their preferences and their capabilities. What do actors desire? What moves can they make? Moreover, for any formal game theoretic analysis to work, it is necessary to assume common knowledge. The players have to share the same knowledge about the game. They must know what they do not know because of imperfect information, and they must share the same view of the payoff matrix and the available set of strategies. Rationalist accounts make very limited claims about the insights they can offer into the origins of such common knowledge.

Some rationalist accounts suggest that normative structures can be generated from institutions that have been created to promote material interests. David Kreps, for instance, has argued that what he terms corporate culture is developed because it is impossible to fully specify the duties of employees in any complex environment. The world is too complicated for complete contracts to be written. Corporate culture provides a set of norms or guidelines that can guide behavior in situations not cov-

ered by formal arrangements.¹²⁸ Following David Hume and Blaise Pascal, Robert Sugden points out that practices initially developed to promote specific interests can acquire a normative element if they are widely understood and practiced within a given social setting.¹²⁹ An actor who violates existing practices will be normatively sanctioned by other members of the community. This is a line of analysis that puts rationalists at the border of constructivism. Norms are based on material interests, but they can take on an aura of authority that transcends their initial purpose.

Norms can also be consequential, because they can provide focal points in situations of multiple equilibria; that is, where there are many possible solutions to the game. Game theory has shown that such situations are very common in games of incomplete information. A rationalist analysis can stipulate that one of these outcomes can be chosen, but it does not tell us which one it will be. Shared cultural norms offer one way of selecting which equilibrium will be salient for the players.¹³⁰ In the late 1950s Thomas Schelling, then teaching at Yale, asked about forty acquaintances where and when they would meet a friend in New York City; more than half coordinated on the information booth at Grand Central Station (where the trains arrived from New Haven) at noon.¹³¹ For professors at Columbia University in 1959, the time might have been the same, but Grand Central Station would hardly have been as salient. Common knowledge is contextualized within a specific social setting.

Not all common knowledge can be explained by practices and institutions designed to maximize material interests, for example, by resolving problems of multiple equilibria. Norms that define the options available to players, and that shape their preferences, are often prior to these instrumental practices and institutions. For example, slavery was a conventional option for securing the labor of conquered lands in earlier periods; it is not an option for contemporary states. Capturing slaves as spoils of war is no longer an available move. The medieval guilds, the holders of English capital in the late seventeenth century, the burghers of Amsterdam, and Michael Milken were all concerned about enhancing their material wealth, but the options available to them (the moves they could make) were hardly the same.

Constructivists seek to understand how preferences are formed and knowledge is generated, prior to the exercise of instrumental rationality. Constructivism analyzes discourses and practices that continuously recreate what rationalists refer to as common knowledge. Constructivists do not emphasize misperception: cognitive or emotional biases that distort rationality and can be corrected through the analysis of new information.¹³² They are more interested in the collective processes that students of social psychology have identified.¹³³ Constructivists focus on discursive and social

128. Kreps 1990a.

129. Sugden 1989. Sugden mentions Hume's argument in the eighteenth century. Pascal made a similar argument a century earlier; see N. Keohane 1980, 278–81.

130. Ferejohn 1991.

131. Schelling 1960, 55–56.

132. Jervis 1976.

133. Janis 1983.

practices that define the identity of actors and the normative order within which they make their moves. We can think of these processes in two different ways: in terms of ideas about cause–effect relations and regulatory norms¹³⁴ or as more or less contested processes of identity formation.¹³⁵

The differences and complementarities between rationalism and constructivism are illustrated by their treatments of persuasion.¹³⁶ Rationalists interpret persuasion in the language of incentives, strategic bargaining, and information. They analyze the provision of new information, sometimes through costly signaling, and appeals to audiences. For a consistent rationalist, it would be anomalous to think of persuasion in terms of changing others' deepest preferences. Constructivists, by contrast, insist on the importance of social processes that generate changes in normative beliefs, such as those prompted by the antislavery movement of the nineteenth century, the contemporary campaign for women's rights as human rights, or nationalist propaganda. For constructivists, persuasion involves changing preferences by appealing to identities, moral obligations, and norms conceived of as standards of appropriate behavior.

The different styles of analysis—"thin" information for rationalists versus "thick" norms and identities for constructivists—to some extent reflect the familiar contest in social science between economic and sociological traditions.¹³⁷ Constructivism is ideographic, whereas rationalism is nomothetic. Neither perspective is adequate to cover all aspects of social reality. But at one critical point they are joined. Both recognize—constructivism as a central research project and rationalism as a background condition—that human beings operate in a socially constructed environment, which changes over time. Hence, both analytical perspectives focus in one way or another on common knowledge—constructivism on how it is created, rationalism on how it affects strategic decision making. The core of the constructivist project is to explicate variations in preferences, available strategies, and the nature of the players, across space and time. The core of the rationalist project is to explain strategies, given preferences, information, and common knowledge. Neither project can be complete without the other.

Conclusion

The history of *IO* and the emergence of IPE as a field were built on a rich intellectual tradition that developed in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Many of the major lines of arguments that have preoccupied scholars of IPE and international relations for the

134. See Goldstein and Keohane 1993b; Haas 1993, 1997; Sikkink 1993a,b; Adler and Haas 1992; Adler 1987; and Haas 1992c.

135. Wendt 1987, 1992, forthcoming. See also March and Olsen 1989; Powell and DiMaggio 1991; and Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996.

136. On persuasion, see Finnemore 1996a; and a long tradition of legal scholarship, including Franck 1990; and Chayes and Chayes 1995.

137. Swedberg 1991.

last three decades were developed during these years. Then as now scholars continue to analyze the interaction between power, wealth, and social purpose.

The history of *IO* and the emergence of IPE have been part of the elaboration of more complex and self-consciously analytical formulations with which scholars have analyzed enduring problems of world politics. No historical narrative can reproduce the complex and idiosyncratic evolution of scholarship. For ease of presentation and because it reflects important aspects of our own intellectual autobiographies, our story has followed two distinctive strands: the interplay between realist and liberal currents of theory in the evolution of the analysis of IPE and the analysis of domestic politics and IPE.

We have argued that in the 1990s some of the major points of contestation shifted. Influenced by strong currents in economics and cultural studies, debates between rationalism and constructivism are becoming more important. They offer contrasting analytical orientations for research in the social sciences at large and in international relations and IPE. The greatest promise in the intellectual debate between proponents of rationalism and constructivism does not lie in the insistence that reality can only be analyzed in one conceptual language—the one preferred by the analyst. Insisting on one's own language is a sterile intellectual exercise. Knowledge and understanding are promoted by debates among the proponents of different research orientations and research programs. But one should never forget that at the end of the day orientations and programs are only useful if they are deployed to specify intellectually tractable and substantively important questions.

Analytical progress in the study of IPE is possible in research programs despite continuing contestations between general theoretical orientations. We believe that the field has become increasingly sophisticated; we have better conceptual tools and richer interpretations than we had in the 1970s. Our substantive findings, however, remain meager: counterintuitive, well-documented causal arguments are rare. And some analytical advances have told us why we cannot make strong predictions rather than how to go about doing so, as is the case for the revelation from game theory of the frequency of multiple equilibria. Nevertheless, we know a great deal more than we did thirty years ago about a number of processes that are central to how the world political economy works, such as how power is deployed under various conditions of vulnerability, how international regimes affect government policies, and how domestic institutions and world politics affect each other through institutional processes. Many of the articles in this issue could not have been written without the accumulation of substantive research findings in issues ranging from trade and industry, money and energy, and finance and investment to, among others, the environment and human rights.

In international politics and in the world of scholarship well-established boundaries are being blurred and new ones are being created. World politics is witnessing enormous change in the wake of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the end of strategic bipolarity, and the peaceful disintegration of the Soviet Union. We are observing different types of democratization processes in different world regions, ethnic conflicts over the control of territory, and growing conflicts over the spread of weapons

of mass destruction to regional powers. We are also seeing far-reaching experiments with economic integration in some world regions and continuing marginalization in others, expanded trade under the auspices of a revamped World Trade Organization, and the redefinition of the role of the International Monetary Fund and other governance mechanisms in the wake of Asia's financial crisis. At the same time, religious fundamentalism is gaining ground in much of the Muslim world. And strong secular social movements championing environmentalism, feminism, and human rights are active worldwide. Many opportunities exist for building innovative links across disciplinary and subdisciplinary boundaries. All of these developments illustrate the complexity of contemporary world politics and the opportunity to draw new connections across generic theoretical orientations and between specific research programs.

The rubric for this era of increasing transboundary activity is variously called "internationalization" or "globalization." This is not an unprecedented development. International financial markets were highly integrated at the end of the nineteenth century—perhaps even more so than they have been since, at least until very recently. Trade flows were also much higher at this time than for most of the twentieth century. New technologies have opened new opportunities, but it is not evident how they will affect the control and authority structures in state and society. How extensively national policies and practices will be reshaped by globalization—and how effectively institutions will resist such pressures—remains to be seen. Such research will focus again on issues of the relationships that have been central to the literature of the last thirty years: between wealth and power, states and markets, interests and institutions, the international political economy and domestic politics. Constraints and opportunities will change and so may the identity of the key actors and the norms they accept. But observers of this new reality will still be able to learn from the accomplishments, and the mistakes, of previous generations of IPE scholars.

The sophistication of work in IPE has not made it directly applicable to policy. As noted earlier, we cannot point to clear scientific "findings" about cause and effect that policymakers can readily apply. At the same time, the application of more rigorous social scientific standards by referees for *IO* seems to have discouraged policy commentary: policy-relevant articles have become few and far between. Hence, the pages of *IO* reflect the gulf that has developed between scholarship and practice in international relations.

Yet even if the links between scholarship and policy are not close, connections can be made. More significant than the specific debates or even findings in the literature are the interpretations of changing reality that have been put forward by analysts: concepts and broad "theorizing" in which the field has engaged. A number of ideas originally formulated in the literature are being taken for granted in policy discussions. Whether this reflects an *effect* of the international relations literature or simply parallel understandings in the policy and academic worlds is not clear. At any rate, it is conventional wisdom now that interdependence has implications for power as well as for wealth, that international institutions constitute a valuable set of instruments for promoting the interests of states through cooperation, and that understanding

domestic political economy requires not just examining domestic interests but also taking into consideration domestic and international institutions as well as the structure of the world political economy. The significance of interactions between non-state and state actors is also increasingly understood in the policy world.

The specific approach that scholars choose to follow in their work will depend on whether they are principally committed to advancing a theoretical viewpoint or to solving specific empirical problems, their own analytical predispositions, their methodological tools, the data to which they have access, the resources at their disposal, and the values they hold. None of us should be too sure that our own choices will be intellectually productive. Even though we build on works of earlier generations of outstanding social scientists, our vision is limited. Our nearsightedness should make us skeptical that the latest turn of the screw of a particular methodological, theoretical, or epistemological debate will magically bring our analytical binoculars into sharper focus. Yet new intellectual debates about aspects of world politics that change, and those that do not, point to high returns from an increasing integration of IPE scholarship into broader social science debates. This is a welcome opportunity for any author and an intellectually exciting prospect for the editors and readers of *IO*.