

## International political economy: a tale of two heterodoxies

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### Abstract

International political economy (IPE) originated in the early 1970s. For almost 20 years it has been dominated by separate, largely non-communicating schools, one centred on scholarly institutions in Britain, the other associated with the US journal, *International Organization* (IO). In terms of the evolving norms of both economics and political science, both schools are surprisingly heterodox. Rather than developing strong systematic data collections and systematic theory, the IO school has been characterised by a shifting set of conceptual and metatheoretical debates. The British school, which has tended to take a deliberately critical position, has been characterised by an ever-widening set of concerns topical concerns fuelled by a desire to include more and more voices in the study of IPE. These outcomes are explicable only by tracing the specific historical developments of the two schools.

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Today's field of international political economy (IPE) can be traced back to 1971 when Susan Strange, then at the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House, founded the International Political Economy Group (IPEG). In its early days, this company of scholars, journalists and policy-makers focused on issues such as how to resuscitate the fixed exchange-rate system and on the thesis of another early IPEG convener, Fred Hirsch, that comfortable middle-class people in the industrialised world would come to doubt the utility of further economic growth (Hirsch 1976).

These were not to be the subjects that would lead to the institutionalisation of IPE by attracting funders, shifting the research agendas

of active scholars, initiating graduate programmes, and creating the ubiquitous undergraduate courses in the field that every credible department of political science or international relations now must have. Rather, the key was probably the 1973 October War in the Middle East with its first deployment of the oil weapon and the long recession that followed. Courses sprang up on campuses throughout the English-speaking world. Within three years two competing textbooks were bestsellers (Blake and Walters 1976; Spero 1977). IPEG became a research group of the British International Studies Association (BISA) and a similar IPE Section was established within the largely North American International Studies Association (ISA). For the most part, the field has continued to prosper ever since.

We have watched this process, and sometimes played a role in it, first as graduate students in international relations and then as researchers and teachers in departments of political science and economics. In addition to the rapidity with which IPE has become established institutionally on both sides of the Atlantic, we are struck by two distinctive characteristics.

First, the field is deeply divided between what we will call out of deference to this journal a British school (whose leading proponents are often US citizens or resident in Canada) and what might be called the American school or the *International Organization (IO)* school of IPE, after the US journal that has been the primary site of its development. (Many British school scholars would probably prefer the name 'Critical IPE'.)

Secondly, perhaps paradoxically, even though both schools are successful—as measured by their ability to attract students, publishers and funders—both are somewhat heterodox when compared to either the norms of political science (the field in which they are most often enmeshed), economics (the field to which they wish to make bridges) or even mainstream international relations, at least as it was constituted at the moment of IPE's origin.

Our aim in this article is to shed light on this paradox, but to do so we need first to say something about IPE's division into two schools, especially because scholars in the American or *IO* school are apt to charge British school scholars with heterodoxy and a lack of attention to the scientific norms that the *IO* scholars see themselves as sharing with mainstream political science, economics and the behaviourist tradition in international relations. We do not believe this distinction is valid. Neither school of IPE conforms to norms of 'science' in these terms. Rather, each has become a site of thoughtful commentary on questions of the relations between politics and economics globally. The American school has been characterised more by reflection on recent events in the world, mid-level 'debates' among proponents of different conceptual lenses, and a regular shifting of emphasis,

the British by a critical attitude toward contemporary American-led projects of international economic integration, a greater tendency to make links to other disciplines, and an interest in an ever-greater inclusiveness of issues under consideration.

## Two schools

Scholars who work on both sides of the Atlantic—members, for example, of both IPEG and the IPE Section of the ISA—readily recognise the distinction between the two schools. The British school has its major journals, *Review of International Political Economy (RIPE)* and *New Political Economy* (begun in 1996). In contrast, the leaders of the *IO* school argue that that IPE has been ‘Centred in [the journal] *IO* since 1971’ (Katzenstein, Keohane and Krasner 1999, 645), when Robert O. Keohane, his mentor and collaborator Joseph S. Nye, and a number of scholars of Keohane’s generation of men who had been graduate students at Harvard took control of that journal.

In the 1999 celebration of the role of *IO* in fostering the field of IPE, Keohane and his colleagues note the important roles that Susan Strange and Robert W. Cox played in the early development of IPE within the journal *IO* (Katzenstein, Keohane and Krasner 1999, 651, 657), and the issue itself is dedicated to Strange. Yet neither Cox nor Strange is widely cited in the 415-page issue that aims to present the development and the state of the art in IPE. As a rough measure of citations a count of the number of separate references to specific authors in the volume’s reference list identifies the scholars in the first list below as those who are the most important to the *IO*. All are Americans whose careers have been interconnected at a relatively small number of elite, mostly private, colleges and universities, Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, the University of California at Berkeley, Cornell, Yale, Duke and Swarthmore College.

The second list provides a contrasting list for the British school taken from the number of separate citations in the ‘suggested readings’ sections of the 422-page 2000 edition of Richard Stubbs and Geoffrey D. Underhill’s *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, also dedicated to Susan Strange. Here the group is more international and connected with fewer specific institutions (LSE, linked to both Strange and Tsoukalis, and York in Ontario, linked to Cox and Gill). Unlike the *IO* group, these are not people who went to university with each other or were each other’s teachers and students. Cornell University’s Peter J. Katzenstein provides the only overlap between the two lists.

International  
Organization at 50

- 27 R. O. Keohane
- 16 J. G. Ruggie
- 15 S. D. Krasner
- 15 J. G. March
- 12 E. B. Haas
- 11 G. Garrett
- 11 S. Hoffmann
- 11 K. N. Waltz
- 10 R. Jervis
- 10 P. J. Katzenstein

Political Economy and the  
Changing Global Order

- 33 S. Strange
- 7 R. W. Cox
- 6 S. Gill
- 3 F. Block
- 3 P. G. Cerny
- 3 W. D. Coleman
- 3 E. Helleiner
- 3 P. J. Katzenstein
- 3 K. Polanyi
- 3 L. Tsoukalis

Substantively, the two volumes also contrast. Almost a third of the chapters in Stubbs and Underhill are concerned with globalisation and another quarter with prospects for regional integration in the global south as well as the north. Other topics, in order of the number of chapters devoted to each, include changing structures of production and the relationship between labour and capital, questions of power and knowledge, gender, the environment, international finance, and the role of non-state actors and global networks of political communication. In the *IO* issue at least half of the articles are concerned with contrasting different approaches to the study of IPE, liberal, realist, rationalist and constructivist. The chapters devoted to specific topics focus on connections between domestic and international politics (including questions of globalisation understood in that context), between American security policy and American economic policy, and the dynamics of changes in the normative bases of world affairs.

Arguably, the *IO* volume's purpose of assessing the state of the field is not Stubbs and Underhill's concern with providing a collection of essays that can serve as an introductory IPE text. Gill and Mittelman's (1997) *Innovation and Transformation in International Studies* may provide a better British school comparison. In it, five of the 16 chapters are dedicated to discussions of social theory, with three substantive chapters on globalization and two each on issues of the environment, labour and capital, race and gender, and civil society movements of the disadvantaged. In Frieden and Lake's (2000) *IO* school textbook collection, four of 31 chapters are devoted to contrasting approaches, four to historical studies, six to money, six to trade, four to questions of development and so-called economies in transition, four to multinational corporations and the state, two to globalisation and one to the environment.

However one looks at it, the *IO* school is more concerned with set debates about ways to study international relations. The British school is more focused on questions of globalisation and possible alternatives as well as on the contentious politics of gender, class, race and the environment.

The *IO* school's shifting agenda

The preoccupations of both schools have shifted over time. In his intellectual autobiography Keohane (1989, 408) writes of the 'unfair price' that older members of the board of *IO* may have paid in the early 1970s for inviting him and his colleagues in. They 'proceeded within five or six years totally to reconstitute the board'. The graph below (Figure 1) shows the well-known result. Using the electronic version of the journal we have calculated the average number of mentions in each volume of various terms over five-year periods ending in 1951, 1956, etc. As political economy took off, the journal's historical concern with the UN system and with regions such as Africa where the United Nations was especially involved declined.

Since the year that the journal adopted its IPE focus it has foregrounded its concern with different traditions of research—realist, liberal and Marxist,

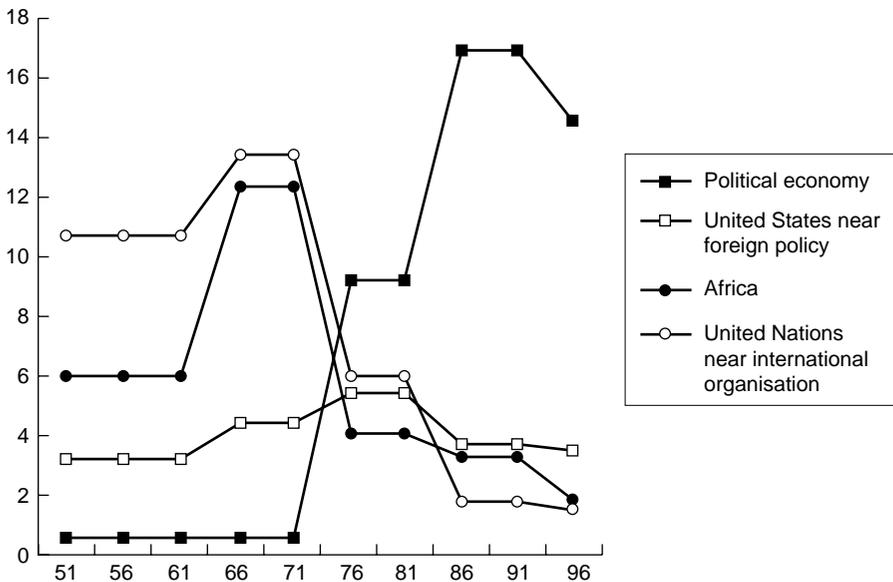


Figure 1. Mentions of terms in *IO*, annual averages for five-year periods: IPE replaces the UN and its concerns

or, more recently, realist versus liberal and rationalist versus constructivist—but the conceptual focus of the typical contribution has changed. In the early IPE era the focus was on ‘interdependence’. As Nye (1989, 207) argues, the concept began to go out of fashion in the Reagan and Bush years, perhaps prematurely, but it provided an intellectual bridge for political scientists to revamp the concept of international regimes to discuss specific forms of multilateral economic and political co-operation. In the early 1990s the emphasis again shifted to what were mostly relatively informal applications of ideas from game theory to problems of bargaining both multilaterally and within the governments of powerful liberal democratic nations.

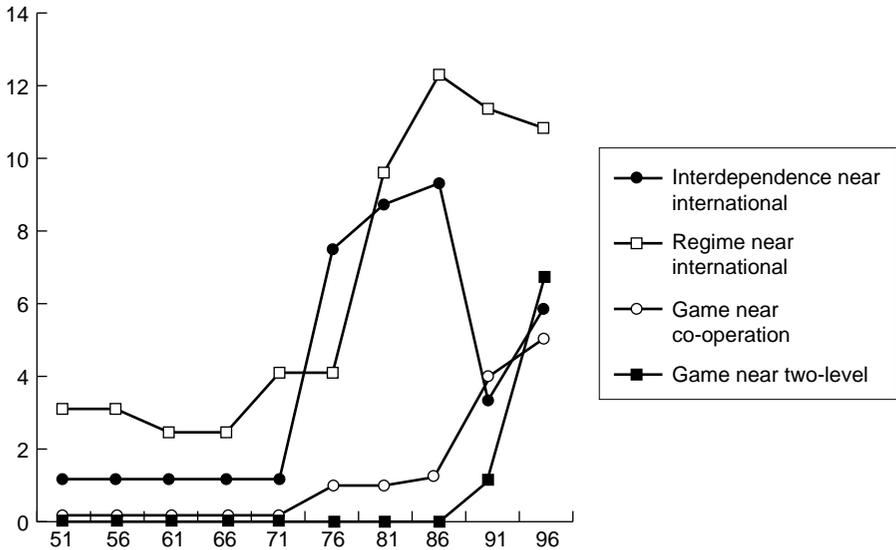


Figure 2. Mentions of terms in *IO*, annual averages for five-year periods: cycles of interest in particular concepts

More recent sets of concepts pervading discussions in *IO* have included reactions to ways in which social constructivist ideas have been brought into international relations from other social sciences (see Ruggie 1999).

### The British school’s expanding concerns

The internal unity and distinctiveness of the British school was slower to develop. No doubt, this is, in part, because its leading figures, Susan

Strange and Robert Cox, have deliberately eschewed any temptation to found a school or to be identified as the centre of one. Strange (1991, 33) argued that IPE should not be a field of study but 'an open range, like the old Wild West, accessible ... to literate people of all walks of life, from all professions, and all political proclivities'. Cox (2001, 59) dismisses the importance of disciplinarity and the ontological perspective underlying most current studies of international politics, arguing that what we can really know is a set of moral and political imperatives for civil society from which we can begin 'working out an ontology that focuses on the key elements in this struggle' that will challenge, according to Cox, 'biospheric collapse, extreme social polarization, [and] exclusionary politics'.

Cox's current agenda is far wider than the concerns about the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates or the social psychological limits to consumerism that troubled Susan Strange and Fred Hirsch in the early 1970s. None the less, there is a connection between the two agendas. Strange's and Hirsch's critiques of the breakdown of the Bretton Woods monetary system were, in large part, critiques of US leadership—in particular, critiques of the shift from a period of relatively benign supremacy in the three decades after the United States entered the Second World War, to one characterised by a more self-interested, even venal, form of leadership. Richard Nixon's unilateral decisions of August 1971 removing the underpinnings of the fixed exchange-rate system served as a marker of this change. What bothered many the early British school scholars was their sense that this shift was in no way necessary. Not only could the United States have served its interests equally well by taking into account those of other nations, what seemed to be the ultimate goal of US policy—maintaining an ever-expanding consumer society—seemed pointless in light of the social limits that Hirsch had identified.

The appeal of Hirsch's thesis waned in the long recession that followed the first oil crisis, but British school questions about US leadership remained. By the early 1980s many of the scholars who would come to cluster around Strange's and Cox's work have come to see themselves as working to articulate visions of the global political economy that would provide alternatives to what Cox called the 'hyperliberalism' promoted by the United States, and, of course, by the Thatcher government. Before 1980 much of Cox's own work had concentrated on the issues of interest to one of the social forces most excluded from global decision-making, labour in all parts of the world. His widely cited 1981 article, 'Social forces, states, and world orders: beyond international relations theory', laid down the gauntlet in its claim that social theorising was always '*for someone and for some purpose*'. British

school scholars made a point of demonstrating that their work was 'for' those excluded from decision-making about the global economy, whether they were unpaid women labouring on African farms, or relatively privileged northern supporters of the marginalised Canadian New Democrats or Britain's (old) Labour party. When *RIPE* was founded in the early 1990s there was a deliberate attempt to cross all the schools of thought that challenged the hegemony of hyperliberalism: eclectic admirers of Susan Strange, those who had joined Cox in finding insight into the contemporary global political economy from the work of Antonio Gramsci and Karl Polanyi, Latin American *Dependentistas*, and representatives of various schools of third-world-oriented world-system theory, the tradition dominated by Immanuel Wallerstein.

The critical intent of the British school fuelled its tendency to expand its agenda both of topics under consideration and of approaches to them. Murphy and Tooze's 1991 textbook-style collection included both a Foucaultian genealogical of the construction of the 'third world' (Johnston 1991) as well as one of the first feminist analyses of IPE (Tickner 1991). By the late 1990s feminist contributions were standard fare in any British school collection, as were articles about environmental issues. Characteristically, it was Eric Helleiner, arguably the scholar with the most perceptive analysis of the consequences of the end of the fixed exchange-rate system (Helleiner 1993), who published the first major article on 'green' IPE in the inaugural issue of *New Political Economy* (Helleiner 1996). One strand of Helleiner's work explained how political leadership, in particular that of the United States, had led to the creation of unprecedented global markets (in this case, the uncontrolled international financial markets of the late 20th century), an example of the British school preoccupation with the ways in which decisions of identifiable powerful actors have created contemporary globalisation. The second strand of his work concentrates on the political economic visions of one set of social movements that believe that the problems on which they focus—environmental issues—have been exacerbated by that globalisation.

Chris Brown (2001, 191), in summing up the current situation in critical international relations scholarship—Critical Security Studies as well as Critical IPE—quotes William Morris writing to a close friend and comrade in the 1880s, 'You ought to read Marx, he is the only completely scientific economist on our side.' Later in the article we will focus on the degree to which British school IPE is 'completely scientific', but here we want only to point out that this school is very much about being 'on our [the critical] side'.

## The norms of science and IPE

In fact, neither school of IPE can claim to be 'completely scientific' even as compared to their most obvious cognate fields—international relations, international economics, and national and comparative political economy. IPE's weaker attachment to the norms of social science current in those other fields is an underlying continuity between the British and American schools and a source of certain ironic differences.

To avoid getting bogged down in details of the debates about the exact characterisation of science and its norms, we will focus on two elements that are central to virtually all attempts to describe the theory and practice of science: *systematic collection and analysis of data* and *systematic theory building*. For our purposes here it will not be necessary to assert the priority of one or the other of these in describing practice, or in constructing narratives of progress, since neither of these is particularly central to the discourse of either school of IPE. We even leave open the normative issue with respect to the norms of science. That is, it may be a good thing that neither school of IPE is attracted to the norms of scientific practice. We simply proceed from the fact that, unlike cognate sub-fields and the broader fields within which it is institutionally embedded, IPE is distinctive in its limited application of these norms.

Consider, first, systematic collection and analysis of data. It is probably unnecessary to stress the centrality of empirical research to the development of economics, especially macroeconomics, but it is interesting that systematic collection essentially independent of the state's need for fiscal data is relatively recent: for example individuals such as Simon Kuznets, James Meade and Colin Clarke, and institutions such as the League of Nations and the National Bureau of Economic Research, are pioneers in this regard. Contemporary data-collection efforts are simply too numerous to cite. Developing in tandem, with exemplars such as Ragnar Frisch, H. O. A. Wold, Jan Tinbergen and Trygve Haavelmo in Europe and Irving Fisher, Jacob Marschak and Tjalling Koopmans in the United States, was the field of econometrics, the systematic analysis of economic data (see Hendry and Morgan 1995). One only need consult undergraduate and graduate curricula in economics for evidence of the centrality of econometrics.<sup>1</sup>

While somewhat later in political science, the behavioural revolution fully established the central role of data collection and analysis by the mid 1960s. In domestic and comparative politics, much of the data-collection effort focused on voting and survey data, with the manifest successes of *The*

*American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960) creating fundamental momentum. Perhaps more strikingly from the perspective of an analysis of IPE, international relations and comparative foreign policy, as fields, were early converts to the behavioural revolution, with major research programmes focused on the correlates of war, and peace, and variation in foreign policies. Early leaders in these areas included Lewis Fry Richardson, Quincy Wright, J. David Singer and Edward E. Azar. With accumulating data, these fields were increasingly concerned with statistical analysis and self-conscious evaluation of cumulation, with leaders such as Robert North, Nazli Choucri and Bruce Russett. It is here, by the way, that the *IO* school makes its one systematic contact with data. Growing out of the fundamental empirical work of Karl Deutsch and Ernst Haas on integration, and Simon Kuznets' work on economic growth, a number of scholars began to focus on measuring interdependence and, in the mid-1970s, this work began to appear in *IO*. Finally, contemporary research on national and comparative political economy, in political science, economics and sociology, retains a strong systematic empirical orientation in work on political business cycles, fiscal consequences of globalisation and the role of domestic political economic institutions in responding to international economic shocks.

The second key norm of social science is an orientation to systematic theory building. At its most basic level, this norm is about clarity of communication and cumulation. That is, the more explicit we are about the assumptions that underlie our analysis and the logical processes by which we get from assumptions to conclusions, the more easily is empirical work linked to the theoretical and, perhaps more importantly, the more easily can critics identify entry points to the analysis. As a purely practical matter, mathematical formalism is an exceptionally useful tool in achieving this clarity.

The formalisation of economics, for better and worse, is an accomplished fact. As an example of the value of such formalisation in disciplining arguments, consider the recent boom in research on globalisation and labour markets. There are pointed arguments between trade and labour economists over issues of modelling, as well as within the community of trade economists over the interpretation of econometric work. What is striking, especially by comparison to similar disputes in related areas, is the extent to which the use of common formalisms has aided understanding and allowed for advance in the development of more inclusive formalisms and more systematic empirical work (see Gaston and Nelson forthcoming). International relations, and particularly strategic studies, have long benefited from

an extensive use of formal theory. From early work by Richardson and Thomas Schelling, formal modelling of international conflict has developed into an increasingly sophisticated body of theory, and made systematic contributions to methodology in this area.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the easiest way to gauge the centrality of the norms of systematic collection and analysis of data and systematic theory building in political science or economics, at least in North America, is simply to open any issue of the major *general* journals such as the *American Political Science Review* or the *American Economic Review*. Sub-field journals show a similar pattern. In North America a notable exception, abstracting from sub-fields with an essentially philosophical orientation (and here only in political science), is the field of IPE where *International Organization* has a substantially lower frequency of quantitative and formal articles than the leading general IR journal, *International Studies Quarterly* (Waever 1999, 702).

Of course, systematic data analysis and formal theory do appear in *IO*, *RIFE* and *New Political Economy*. What is particularly striking is not just that the relative emphasis on social scientific analysis is smaller, but that, even when such analysis is presented, it generally appears not as part of a programme of such analysis but, rather, as part of a broader rhetorical strategy. The characteristic mode of research in the *IO* school focuses on what the proponents see and characterise as 'great debates': realism, idealism, complex interdependence; liberalism, Marxism, statism; neo-realism, neo-liberal institutionalism, constructivism, etc. Consistent with their status as participants in great debates, these are grand theories, not conveniently reducible to formalisation for empirical or formal theoretical analysis. These debates are about how we (academics) should view the international political economy. The debates are essentially internal to the community of *IO* scholars, the contenders are all *prima facie* plausible, and, given the nature of the question, systematic theoretical and empirical frameworks can only be a subordinate part of the discourse.

Interestingly, this way of organising the work of an intellectual community is usually associated with heterodox research programmes that view themselves in conscious opposition to some orthodoxy. Within economics it is Marxist, post-Keynesian and Austrian economists that engage in this sort of scholasticism, not mainstream neo-classical economists. In economics and political science, when reporting results from within mainstream/orthodox research programmes, literature reviews seek to identify points of continuity and distinction with respect to clearly, and fairly narrowly, posed research questions. The main point in such work is the empirical or

theoretical result, not the broader argument. In the characteristic *IO* paper, the reverse is the case.

Characterising the rest of the field of IPE, when faced with a heterodox orthodoxy, is difficult. This is rendered more difficult by the *IO* school's rhetorical, if not substantive, attachment to the language of science. Thus, the language of theory, data and testing are widely deployed throughout the journal, even in the context of work that is essentially discursive. The British school is clearly heterodox relative to American social science in general and the *IO* school in particular. Ironically, given the conscious and programmatic rejection of the norms of science which play a fundamental role in the constitution of American political science, the British school spends a larger part of its published output on direct analysis of issues in the world as they appear. Thus, it is quite striking that *IO* has, for better or worse, been considerably less interested in globalisation per se, and the trailing issues of international finance, poverty, national sovereignty, gender, etc., than *RIPE* or *New Political Economy*, even though many of these were central to the *IO* problematic in the early years of its development. As is argued below, the existence of this heterodox orthodoxy also tends to obscure important, ongoing research on international political economy that is explicitly social scientific in its orientation.

Within the British school, adherence to the norms of orthodox social science is less widespread for at least three reasons. First, as Chris Brown (2001, 192) suggests, as a part of critical international relations, British school IPE has a tendency to become a 'catchall of "the disaffected", an oppositional frame of mind [that] is not, in and of itself, sufficient to delineate an approach', whether scientific, historical, hermeneutic, or anything else. Secondly, the commitment to addressing the largest possible audience bequeathed to the British school by Susan Strange runs counter to the tendency toward some kind of formalisation that marks all sciences. Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, Cox's (1981) admonition to see IPE as the study of how social structures, especially structures of inequality, come into being and are transformed, leads British school scholars toward the epistemological foundations of history and to concern with reflectivist questions about the ways that a social-science observer can shape history through her own work and the entire problem of effective persuasive communication that cannot be formalised easily.

None the less, it is important to recognise that the difference between historical and social scientific norms is far from clear, as E. H. Carr (1967) emphasised in *What is History?*, one of the epistemological touchstones of the British school. When Randall Germain (2000) outlines a systematic

historical approach to globalisation, it is somewhat difficult to distinguish from a comparative, hypothesis-driven, empirical social-science approach aimed at systematic theory building. Significantly, despite their character as a broad, oppositional churches, British IPE's major institutions—IPEG, *RIPE*, *New Political Economy*, texts such as Stubbs and Underhill, and major summaries of theory such as Gill and Mittelman or Germain—rarely invite in the strong (and equally oppositional) post-structuralists and post-modernists who deny the possibility of the scientific project. As Alex Wendt (2001, 221) argues, the champions of critical international relations may be slowly coming to recognise that positivism could actually be a foundation for critical theory rather than always its other, a possibility arguably manifested in the fact that a realist view of science is implicit in Marxism, the origin of contemporary critical theory.

### Explaining a heterodox orthodoxy

The success of British school IPE is relatively easy to explain. American hegemony and the hegemony of *IO* school IPE created opportunities for those who opposed either or both projects. Leading scholars such as Strange and Cox who found themselves increasingly distant from the *IO* orthodoxy, and a diverse generation of younger scholars, had institutional resources in Britain, Canada and elsewhere that allowed them to establish and maintain programmes intellectually separate from the orthodoxy. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the British school produces works that are popular, as a quick search by 'best-selling' on the amazon.co(m) sites in both the Britain and the United States will verify. Three years after her death, Susan Strange's books sell much better on both sides of the Atlantic than works by any of the *IO* scholars, and, even in the United States, Robert W. Cox's best-selling work is just as popular as Robert O. Keohane's.

On the other hand, the hegemonic position of the *IO* school is curious since its leading figures have constructed an orthodoxy on heterodox methodological foundations at a time when the rest of the profession of political science has become increasingly attached to the norms of social science. This is all the more striking in that the field from which it initially developed, and is still a fundamental part, international relations, was one of earliest converts to the behavioural revolution and has long possessed one of the most vibrant communities of formal modellers. Any explanation of this phenomenon must have an internal and an external component. That is, not only must we explain how the research community that

became the *IO* school came to adopt a heterodox framing for their work, but we must also explain how this was sustainable in the context of the acceptance of orthodox social scientific norms by the broader field (American political science) in which the *IO* school of IPE is embedded.

On the internal side, some elements of the explanation are fairly well known. The *IO* school began largely as a self-referential community of scholars whose graduate work was done at Harvard University in the late 1960s. The core of the community eventually expanded to include their students who found placements at 'top' departments on both coasts. The community began as a group sympathetic to the neo-functional scholar-ship on international institutions developed by Ernst Haas at Berkeley and also respectful of the neo-realist arguments developed by Haas's colleague, Kenneth Waltz. As Nye (1989) Keohane (1989) and Waever (1999) all emphasise, a key event in the development of this community was their takeover of an already highly prestigious journal, *International Organization*, at a time when it was possible to shift the content and range of authors who would appear within it.

Significantly, this takeover took place at a time when, in the United States at least, the issues that had earlier been discussed within *IO* were in growing disrepute among US elites. This was the beginning of the era of

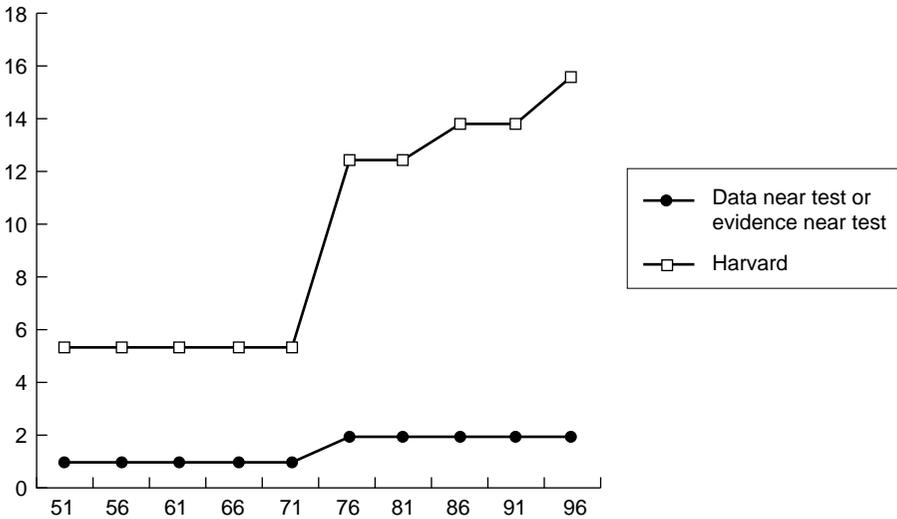


Figure 3. Mentions of terms in *IO*, annual averages for five-year periods: Harvard more prominent than science

US disenchantment with the United Nations due to the north–south struggle, the challenge to US economic leadership posed by the New International Economic Order, Africa (and, hence, the General Assembly's) shift from supporting Israel to supporting the Arab world that began with the 1973 October War, and the resolution equating Zionism with racism (Lyons 1999, 2–3). Given that context, when *IO's* focus changed, there were few in the American academic community who complained, at least initially.

Significantly, though, the Harvard group that took over the journal, despite a 'commitment to developing cumulative knowledge' (Lyons 1999, 14), did not come out of a strong social-science tradition. Rather, the strongest part of the Harvard tradition was that of Keohane's elder mentor, Stanley Hoffmann, whose kind of traditional, historical scholarship and interest in sophisticated journalism is similar to that of Susan Strange. Initially at least, the *IO* school, given its training, simply could not be as scientific as contemporary work in behaviourist international relations as reflected in, say, the *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* or *International Interactions*. This history cast a long shadow over the development of IPE scholarship in the United States as the first generation of *IO* scholars sought to fashion a style of discourse in the mould of the great essayists of the Harvard IR tradition: Hoffmann, Huntington, Nye and the longer tradition of which they were a part (E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, Raymond Aron et al.). Unfortunately, the sort of classical training that produces essayists of this calibre is no longer part of even most liberal arts training. As a result, although the occasional essay of extraordinary insight and craft was produced, and here we think in particular of Ruggie's (1982) fine 'embedded liberalism' essay, the more usual result was the combination of 'great debates' and uneasy rhetorical attachment to the language of science that we have already noted.

Why did the scholars associated with these journals that had earlier moved in a scientific direction not take on the new agenda of topics that were addressed by nascent IPE on both sides of the Atlantic? The complete answer is perhaps less clear, but a partial answer is certainly the incredible investment that had, by the 1970s, already been made in creating data sets and developing tools to analyse the topics that initially engaged scientific international relations: questions of war and peace, of arms races and arms control, of conflict escalation and abatement. The modal response to the new agenda was often for scholars deeply involved in the developing and use of conflict events data to co-operate with international economists, deeply conversant with economic data, in studies that explored their linkage (see, for example, Gasiorowski and Polachek 1982).

Why the broader field of more scientific political science in the United States—in comparative politics and American politics—accepted, initially, the relatively heterodox *IO* school work as a reasonable addition or substitute for more scientific international relations in increasingly orthodox departments may require an even more specific explanation. Part of the story is surely the rhetorical attachment to the norms of social science by the leading figures of the *IO* school. Thus, in the waning years of the wars over the behavioural revolution, many of the then young leaders of what was to become American IPE were strong supporters of introducing a more social-scientific approach in both graduate education and in research. A number of the central figures in the *IO* school, especially Keohane, became major advocates of the scientific approach. Keohane played a central role in bringing a major cohort of scholars doing formal and empirical work to Harvard, an institution whose Government Department remains the most prestigious in the United States, and Keohane worked with two of his Harvard colleagues to write what has become one of the standard scientific methodological texts in the field (King, Keohane and Verba 1994). *IO* itself also looked, in these early years, more committed to social science than it would—with scholars such as Oran Young working on systematic theory building and others, such as Peter Katzenstein and Richard Rosecrance, attempting to measure interdependence in ways that were fully consistent with the sort of work being done in other branches of political science. The kind of scholastic exercises of ‘great debates’ that filled the pages of *IO* may have looked heterodox to many political scientists, but for those committed to science the *IO* school often both looked like it was on the same side and, perhaps, was more in touch with issues that interested students and funders than many of the scientists of international conflict.

None the less, it is hard to avoid the judgement that, especially as the demand for courses, and people to teach them, in IPE grew and established IPE as a sub-field in its own right, an unwillingness to engage in internecine conflict allowed this heterodox orthodoxy not only to grow, but to flourish. Once a sub-field, and the hierarchy of sub-field journals, has been established, most scholars in other fields are justifiably wary about attempting to argue for alternative standards.

### Prospects

Ole Wæver (1999, 726) predicts that US-based IPE, centred on the journal *International Organization*, will become both less heterodox and less

relevant to scholars in other parts of the world. In fact, 'The best hope for a more global, less asymmetrical discipline lies in the American turn to rational choice, which is not going to be copied in Europe.' We believe that Waever is correct, at least to the extent that a basis for a continuing differentiation between the *IO* school and British school IPE will continue to exist. British school IPE will survive and thrive in the social contexts of professional communities that need not respond to the fashions of American foreign policy or of American social science. What will happen in the United States, and whether a truly transnational community will arise concerned with developing a more scientific IPE, is another question.

In our view, much will depend on the extent to which the editors of *International Organization* embrace the norms of science conventional in the cognate fields of international political economy and the extent to which the leading graduate schools engaged in training students in IPE embrace these norms. To a considerable extent, in both cases, this means reaching out to colleagues working in international relations, national and comparative political economy, and economics. By way of example, we mention three broad research programmes in what would have to be called international political economy that are not being carried out within the *IO*/American school tradition and not, on the whole, being published in *International Organization*: research on the 'democratic peace'; comparative political economy of adjustment; and international political economy of macroeconomic policy co-ordination. We select these three because, for all their differences, all three are essentially macro in focus, all three have developed substantial and cumulative bodies of systematic empirical work, and all three have moved to develop systematic theory. We mention the macro focus because we want to make clear that, while formal theory is an exceptionally useful tool, there is no identity between formal theory and rational choice. While all three of these research programmes have seen the application of rational-choice modelling, it is not clear that these are the strongest examples of formal modelling in any of them. On the contrary, one of the ways political science could make a contribution to formal modelling in political economy is to carry on the strong tradition of macro modelling of essentially macro questions. The search for microfoundations is interesting, and important, but should never become a straitjacket. In all three cases, the attempt to forge a solid link between theory and empirical work is a fundamental characteristic. Without obsessing about cumulation, one should worry less about great debates and more about forging the individual links in the chains of theoretical and empirical results that build

slowly toward systematic, though local, knowledge that is a property of the community of scholars engaged in that work, and not attempt to answer questions so broad that their theoretical and empirical provenance is necessarily unclear. Criticism is obviously essential to the growth of knowledge, but if all we have are large questions and large critique, we are going nowhere. We hope for a future in which American IPE can reintegrate itself with the mainstream of political science and economics, to whose norms it has always asserted an attachment. However, the American school has also been an exceptionally successful hegemonic programme within international relations. We are, thus, provoked to ask how probable it is that a field that has been this successful will feel any need to reinvent itself. One of the most interesting stories to watch in this new millennium will be the tension between this hegemonic programme and the pressure of social-scientific successes in closely related fields.

## Notes

1. In addition to the four (soon to be five) volumes of Elsevier's *Handbook of Econometrics*, and with the exceptions of the *Handbooks of Mathematical Economics*, *Game Theory with Economic Applications* and *Social Choice and Welfare*, all the other handbooks feature econometric research prominently.
2. Bueno de Mesquita (2000) provides an excellent bibliography.

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