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Book Review: Contexts of International Politics, by Gary Goertz

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The Political Economy of Power: Hegemony and Economic Liberalism. By Anthony Tuo-Kofi Gadzey. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994. 205p. \$45.00.

Kathleen R. McNamara, *Princeton University*

Hegemonic stability theory (HST) has been one of the most influential approaches in the contemporary field of international political economy, yet recently its academic popularity has waned. One reason may be the tendency of HST to be all things to all people: While it appears to be a parsimonious theory, using one variable (the distribution of state power) to explain important outcomes (cooperation or conflict in the international system), its broader argument masks a range of theories with quite different, and often contradictory, logics and empirical implications. This book offers a useful corrective to the literature on hegemony by clearly defining the main competing strands of HST, probing their analytical logic, and using both quantitative and qualitative methods to test their predictions in the post-1945 era. It also provides an array of suggestive insights beyond the confines of the HST debate, on topics including the linkages between economic and security policy, the larger normative issues raised by the role of the United States in the postwar era, and implications for future stability in the international system.

Gadzey's main question is whether the liberal international economic regimes that developed in the postwar era are best viewed, as has been argued by some international relations theorists, as public goods provided by U.S. hegemony. The book begins, laudably, by examining the commonly used definitions of "hegemony" and "public goods" and presenting explicit models derived from those definitions. Alongside the familiar models of the benevolent hegemon, which provides undisputable public goods, and the mercantilist hegemon, which sets up international regimes as mechanisms to enhance its own power, Gadzey presents an alternative understanding of hegemony. He calls his version "embedded hegemony," and defines it as a situation where power concentration is not automatically translated into systemic stability, but is closely dependent on the nature of bargaining between states. In this model, one state may be preponderant, but rarely can it achieve its goals without the consent of the weaker states and thus must engage in a series of bilateral bargains. Gadzey argues that the resulting hegemonic regimes tend to reflect a series of exclusionary arrangements between hegemon and follower states that do not always produce true system stability. Thus, instead of viewing the postwar system as a series of public goods provided by the United States, we should see these regimes as indicating a much more restrictive U.S. commitment to a liberal international order, one tempered by broader American security concerns and solidified through multilateral bargains.

Subsequent chapters examine the post-World War II experience to compare the author's version of "embedded hegemony" with the more common public goods theories of hegemonic stability. Chapter 2 provides quantitative assessments of the correlation between concentration of power and trade openness in the OECD from the late 1940s to late 1980s. Gadzey's measures of hegemony are useful confirmations of the convention wisdom—that the United States moved from a position of multi-issue dominance in the first decades after the war to a position of military, but not economic, preeminence by the mid-1970s. More innovative is his analysis of which states have borne the cost of keeping the international trading system open, a key test of the predictions of the coercive and benign strands of HST. He

compares the average share of OECD trade captured by each state with its share of overall OECD subsidies and tariffs, and argues that his results indicate that the pattern of costs and benefits from the postwar trading system are most reflective of the particular security interests of the United States. That is, those states strategically important to the United States have been allowed to free ride, with high levels of both trade and subsidies and tariffs.

The balance of the book is devoted to case studies, all of which take issue with the characterization of U.S. postwar hegemony as one of public good provision. Chapter 3 briefly surveys the history of U.S. tariff policy, contending that the GATT enshrined a series of bilateral concessions and compromises meant to shore up U.S. security interests with the onset of the Cold War. A chapter on the Marshall Plan focuses on the compelling U.S. national security interests at stake in the reconstruction of Europe, and somewhat provocatively argues that the Marshall Plan was a relatively unsuccessful instrument for containing the Soviet Union, so it cannot be considered as providing the public good of security to U.S. allies. A final empirical chapter surveys the literature on the Bretton Woods system. Here, the author rejects the public goods interpretation of U.S. policy by focusing on the unilateral nature of U.S. policy and the costs the system placed on the follower states. By calling attention to the overarching national security interests shaping U.S. policy, these case studies provide a somewhat different angle on familiar material.

The concluding chapter focuses on some implications of Gadzey's findings for the future of the international system. He notes that his analysis "cautions against too much reliance on the effects of power for the successful formation and operation of international regimes," and instead points to the complex interaction between large and small states, and between security and economic issues, in producing the bargains that bring about cooperation. He also offers some thoughts on the role of the United States in NATO and the relationship between U.S. hegemony and bipolarity.

Gadzey's book would have been strengthened by a tighter focus on the main thesis, as both the theoretical and empirical chapters sometimes become overburdened with a multitude of lines of inquiry. For this reviewer's taste, a more narrowly defined analysis of U.S. economic statecraft focusing more closely on bargaining dynamics in one issue area, instead of providing a macrohistorical overview of the range of postwar regimes, might have produced a more satisfying and original work. Yet in calling attention to the need to examine the mechanics of hegemony and in critically probing the nature of U.S. power and its exercise in the postwar era, this book is a useful addition to the hegemonic stability literature.

Contexts of International Politics. By Gary Goertz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. 296p. \$59.95 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

Harvey Starr, *University of South Carolina*

On the first page the author says simply: "This book examines some contexts and how they influence the way states act." The rich, complex, and important analyses that follow belie the simplicity of that statement. In this book Gary Goertz confronts the reader with an array of issues that are central to the logic of inquiry—how are we to think about theory?—and the logic linking theory to both research design and its consequent methodology. Goertz does this by focusing on the "*problematic* of context" (p. 2).

That is, he is concerned with the possible relationships between entities and their environments, with the mechanisms that connect decisionmakers, governments, and/or states, and with the environments in which they are nested.

This book's utility to all scholars who attempt to theorize about international phenomena, and especially to graduate students who are learning the craft (and art) of theory and research, resides in the complexity of its conceptualization of context. Goertz provides three broad meanings: context as cause, context as barrier, and context as changing meaning. The core of the book is found in chapter 2, "Modes of Context," where the author elaborates on these different perspectives on context. Goertz displays a deep concern with *which* metaphor to use, and how each different approach to context affects the way we think about the entity and the environment, the individual and its context. This type of appreciation for context is crucial. For many realist and neorealist thinkers context is confined to system structure (either in its overall "anarchic" condition or in terms of the distribution of military capabilities). Goertz goes well beyond such realist views of context, which can be encompassed in his notion of context as cause. Context as cause is seen as a "default category," where context is neither necessary nor sufficient, but in combination with other factors makes certain outcomes more or less likely.

With his conception of context as barrier (elaborated in chapter 6), Goertz goes into the complexities of context as constraint and opportunity, context as both constraining and enabling the behavioral entities under study. Here he draws upon the Sprouts' idea of environmental possibilism (as well as elaborations such as opportunity and willingness (p. 111), to view context as a necessary condition. As is developed in earlier work on the logic of inquiry, Goertz also distinguishes between barrier-possibilism-opportunity-necessity and causal views of context that are stated in terms of sufficiency. This is vital if theory and research design are to be compatible and coherent. For instance, Goertz points to some neorealist analyses of international security that set up their arguments in terms of sufficiency but then treat the central concepts as necessary conditions. Goertz also provides a compelling demonstration of how context as barrier can explain both stability and rapid change: "Barrier models provide one possible answer to the question about dramatic change. The collapse of a barrier presents new opportunities that are quickly seized upon by interested parties" (p. 95). Barrier models are then used to structure case studies of oil nationalization in the 1918–80 period (chapter 7), and the continuity and change in Eastern European politics, 1945–89 (chapter 8).

Context as changing meaning (elaborated in chapter 3) raises the additional complication that changing contexts alter the *meaning* of concepts as well as their indicators (with the discussion of indicators developed in chapter 4). Similar to ideas such as Most and Starr's "nice laws" (*Inquiry, Logic, and International Politics* 1989), context is here concerned with which theories or relationships hold under what specific conditions. How meanings change (what is the "same"?) is critically important in designing comparative studies, particularly cross-temporal comparisons. One of the especially valuable aspects of Goertz's work is his demonstration of how the different views of context affect the conduct of analysis. He does this by showing how the different views of context could be translated into regression models. Thus, he demonstrates how context not only affects the logic of the research design, the nature and meaning of the indicators used, but also the form of the relationship under study.

A second valuable feature of the presentation is Goertz's use of diffusion models and rational actor models as two "different visions" of entity-environment relationships with their different emphases and metaphors (developed in depth in chapter 5). While I think Goertz overemphasizes the distinctions between the two approaches early in chapter 5, he does a good job of bringing them together at the end of the chapter (a section on "Mixed Models") and in chapter 6 on barrier models. Playing off the two approaches effectively strengthens and clarifies his overall argumentation.

Finally, various strands of this argumentation are pulled together in the discussion of two forms of international context often overlooked in standard (especially realist) studies of international relations. First, Goertz addresses historical contexts (chapter 9) as necessary elements in explanation or prediction, and how they are particularly important in understanding forces of inertia. One key component of a state's historical context is the existence of enduring rivalries, which are considered specifically as elements of context in chapter 10. Both chapters 9 and 10 return to questions of temporal context, changing meanings, and their theoretical-methodological implications. Secondly, the context of international norms is examined in chapter 11 (with the norm of decolonization specifically considered in chapter 12). Again, context as changing meaning demands understanding the normative or rule-based environment of actors (in my terms, such elements of opportunity have crucial effects on willingness through their impact on the incentive calculus of policymakers).

In this well-crafted book Gary Goertz has addressed the central question of entity and environment, of individual and context. The issues raised by this question have been addressed in the philosophy of science as well as the various social sciences. These issues are at the heart of the agent-structure discourse. Goertz has, however, raised such fundamental theoretical and epistemological issues *without* having to stand outside the enterprise of systematic empirical research. As in Most and Starr, the challenges Goertz presents to the social science researcher are severe, but they are both understandable and potentially solvable through careful specification of theory and creative research design. Goertz has provided a number of clues as to how we can address many of the problems of social science research without abandoning social science.

When Opponents Cooperate: Great Power Conflict and Collaboration in World Politics. By Benjamin Miller. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995. 354p. \$49.50.

Stephen R. Rock, *Vassar College*

Whither the post-Cold War world? Neorealists, citing changes in the structure of the international system, especially the breakdown of bipolarity, predict increasing turmoil and conflict. Liberals, focusing their attention on unit-level developments, particularly movement toward democratization and the establishment of interdependent capitalist economies, foresee a more stable future. In this impressive work, Miller employs an innovative synthesis of these competing viewpoints to offer a nuanced, sophisticated vision of what lies ahead.

Miller seeks to resolve the paradigmatic debate—and the related level-of-analysis problem in international politics—by distinguishing between two contexts in which states interact. In times of crisis, he suggests, structural factors account for outcomes. In "normal" times, unit-level factors