Constructivism and the Problem of Explanation: A Review Article

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Mlada Bukovansky, *Legitimacy and Power Politics: The American and French Revolutions in International Political Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Neta Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies; Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

The four books under review here offer insightful and penetrating analyses of the role of such factors as legitimacy, ideas, norms, culture, and identities in world politics. Martha Finnemore's *The Purpose of Intervention* demonstrates that great powers intervene in small states for reasons significantly different from those in the past. Neta Crawford's *Argument and Change in World Politics* chronicles arguments for and against Western imperialism over the past five centuries and contends that those arguments helped bring about the birth, long life, and death of Western formal empires. Mlada Bukovansky's *Legitimacy and Power Politics* examines the social, economic, and political forces at work in the American and French revolutions; she asserts that those events wrought changes in prevailing notions of what makes a state legitimate. Ted Hopf's *Social Construction of International Politics* analyzes discourses in Moscow in 1955 and 1999 and maintains that these discourses are an important cause of Soviet or Russian foreign policy attitudes in the two periods.

Just a decade ago it was common to observe that constructivism was long on philosophical talk but short on empirical research. No one can say that now. These books are exemplary empirical works in the constructivist tradition. But their very successes raise questions about the place of constructivism in international relations research. What makes constructivism unique in its contributions to empirical research in international relations? And what in particular is the relationship of this work to the rationalist scholarship to which constructivism is so often opposed in the study of world politics?

It is common to assert that constructivism (in its "mainstream" version at least) shares with rationalism a common grounding in the fundaments of conventional social science. For many observers, both constructivism and rationalism are broadly positivistic in orientation. While we agree, our review of these four books has convinced us that there is a deep epistemic tension between rationalist and constructivist research. We concur with several standard characterizations of the splits between these two analytical frameworks, such as the claim that constructivism gives more emphasis than rationalism to the role of ideas in social life, that constructivism identifies a distinct logic of social behavior (the "logic of appropriateness" rather than the "logic of consequences"), and that constructivists treat norms differently than rationalists do (seeing them as not merely "useful" but also "right").[1] But these standard formulations do not go deep enough to

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capture the complex relationship between constructivist and rationalist research.

Our broadest claim concerns the relation between agency and structure in rationalist and constructivist accounts of international relations. Roughly, we argue that constructivists view world politics in agent-driven terms while rationalists theorize in terms of the effects of structures. Rationalists explain social outcomes in terms of what the philosopher Karl Popper calls the logic of the situation. In such an account, "[w]e explain and predict [an agent's] behavior in terms of a deductive schema which contains the agent's preferences, goals and objectives, an analysis of his situation, and the general assumption that agents behave adequately or appropriately to the situation."[2] Behavior is understood to be driven by the situation or the conditions of action. This approach makes if-then generalizations possible: we look for patterns connecting certain types of conditions or situations with subsequent kinds of action. For example, we may ask why European states before 1914 bound themselves tightly in military alliances. Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder argue that they did so because of the perception of offensive advantage in military technology.[3] Alliance "chain-ganging" is thus explained in terms of the situational factors that made it expected. The point here is not whether this particular explanation is correct,[4] but that rationalist explanation of an action or outcome is achieved by describing the relevant features of the situation that make that action or outcome predictable.

The constructivists reviewed here rely on an explanatory strategy that very nearly reverses the rationalist logic. They view choice not as rationalists do—as an adequate or appropriate response of actors to objective conditions—but as creative and novel action that makes the conditions of action what they are. The slogan "anarchy is what states make of it" is a good summary of this line of thinking: for the constructivist, anarchy does not dispose actors to do anything in particular; rather, it leaves them free to choose their responses, and it is in these responses one finds anarchy's true meaning.[5] As this example suggests, in constructivist thinking social conduct is shaped not by the environment or a structure, but by the way that environment is defined or interpreted by the actors under study. Explanation is *ideational* rather than situational. And the point of an ideational account is typically not to link recurring conditions of action with repeated patterns of action—that is, it is not to find if-then generalizations—but to deny that the behavior under examination can be fit into such patterns. The claim "anarchy is what states make of it," after all, is consistent with all possible states of the world. It serves less to predict actions than to deny the force of any predictions one might make. In short, constructivists want to show that important things happen in the world not because people react predictably to certain situations, but because people interpret actions and events in new, bold, and creative ways even when there is nothing in the logic of the situation that drives them to do so. That interpretation, in turn, creates a new set of structures.

We believe that this distinction between ideational and situational explanation captures an essential difference between constructivist and rationalist research. It should not be overdrawn. In particular, we emphasize that there is nothing in constructivism to prohibit the analyst from pursuing situational explanations in which they call upon if-then generalizations. But even when constructivists pursue such analysis, they typically do so within a larger explanatory structure meant to show that the objective situations in which social actors find themselves are not determinative. In the first section below, we look more broadly at the question of explanation, particularly as it has been treated in constructivist scholarship. We also note another apparent characteristic difference—this one methodological—between rationalist and constructivist research. Subsequent sections of this essay consider the four constructivist books under review, emphasizing their contributions to our understanding of international relations and examining their explanatory and methodological approaches. We conclude by considering the implications of our review for understanding constructivist IR theory and its relation to rationalism.

Explanation and Methodology in Rationalist and Constructivist Research

If constructivists do not typically draw on the logic of if-then generalizations to explain phenomena in world politics, then what conception of explanation do they use? Here one encounters the distinction between causal and "constitutive" analysis. "Constitutive theorizing," write James Fearon and Alexander Wendt, "seeks to establish conditions of possibility for objects or events by showing what they are made of and how they are organized. As such, the object or event in question is an 'effect' of the conditions that make it possible."[6] Wendt points to "the double-helix model of DNA" and "the kinetic theory of heat" as important constitutive theories in the natural sciences.[7] Such theories, in Wendt's view, answer the how-possible or what questions. "Rather than asking how or why a temporally prior X produced an independently existing Y, how-possible- and what-questions are requests for explications of the structures that constitute X or Y in the first place." Examples of such questions in international relations include "How was World War II possible?" and "What is sovereignty?"[8]

This line of argument leaves unclear the notion of constitutive explanation. Just what is required to "explicate" a structure that constitutes an object of inquiry? Wendt's examples suggest that explicate typically means to describe, as when one describes the structure of DNA as a double-helix. But in this case it is fair to ask whether we have

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explained anything with our description. The epistemological issues here are admittedly complex, and the concept of explanation remains open to significant debate. But surely it strains our ordinary notion of explanation to say that answers to what-questions explain. Suppose we point to an ordinary wooden table and ask, "What is this table?" In Wendt's scheme, the table is a constitutive effect of the "conditions that make it possible," that is, the elements that make it up, such as its legs and top. No doubt we have described the table in detailing the elements that comprise it, and with our description we have introduced terminology ("legs") that help us account for various features of the table, such as its stability when standing. But have we *explained* the table? The very question has an odd ring, for we normally ask for explanations not of things in themselves but of their properties or the events in which they participate. One might ask for an explanation of the table's origins, or its stability, or its ability to bear a heavy weight, or its inability to conduct electricity—all these phenomena admit of explanation. But one would not normally ask for an explanation of the table *tout court.* "Explain the table" is a request that, without further elaboration, simply does not make sense, given our ordinary understanding of explanation. What constructivists call constitutive explanation, we believe, is more accurately termed constitutive *analysis,* or constitutive description.

Mirroring the contrast in explanatory strategies between rationalists and constructivists, we find a contrast in terms of methodology. Rationalists for the most part rely on a deductive strategy of theory development. That is, they use what philosophers call the "hypothetico-deductive method" of theory testing, concisely summarized by Kenneth Waltz in the opening chapter of *Theory of International Politics:* "1. State the theory being tested. 2. Infer hypotheses from it. 3. Subject the hypotheses to experimental or observational tests."[9] In a deductive approach, theory comes first, and empirical cases are introduced only once the theory's main claims have been laid out. A theory is derived from a set of principles that give it generality and connect it to other related theories.

Exemplars of rationalism in international relations include Barry Posen's *Sources of Military Doctrine* (1984), Jack Snyder's *Myths of Empire* (1991), Lisa Martin's *Democratic Commitments* (2000), Helen Milner's *Interests, Institutions, and Information* (1997), David Lake's *Entangling Relations* (1999), and John Ikenberry's *After Victory* (2001), among many others. The degree to which these works are explicitly rationalist—that is, the formality with which they embrace rational or strategic choice—varies. But each follows a hypothetico-deductive strategy of stating a theory, inferring generalizable causal claims from it, and testing these against carefully chosen empirical cases.

Constructivists, by contrast, practice a strongly inductive approach to theory development. It should be emphasized that the extent to which a strategy of theory development is inductive or deductive is a matter of degree. A study may contain deductive argumentation but rely mostly on inductive reasoning to arrive at general conclusions. In calling constructivist work inductive we mean that, in the main, constructivists tend to develop and support their general claims about particular cases by working "upwards" from the details of those cases to theoretically informed claims that capture relevant patterns and relationships within them. We explain how these authors do so in the reviews that follow.

Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*

Finnemore's topic is changes in the purposes of international intervention. In the nineteenth century it was not unusual for a great power to send gunboats to a hapless debtor country, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, to take over a customs house and coerce repayment. This is no longer done. It was also fairly common for European powers to intervene to protect coethnics and coreligionists in Asia. Today, interventions are intended to vindicate not the rights of Christians or whites, but *human* rights, or claims inherent to all human beings. Finally, interventions to preserve or restore international order in the early nineteenth century typically suppressed liberal revolutions and reformations; today they typically have something like the opposite purpose.

For constructivists, who regard norms and intentions as central to analysis, the importance of these shifts in purpose is self-evident. The changes are also noteworthy to rationalists, not least because they imply that over time, of the (nearly infinite) set of all possible interventions, great powers have chosen certain types in the past and certain other types more recently. But we need constructivism to explain which types. Consider the interventions to collect debts. In 1838 Mexico owed various French nationals money. French troops landed at Vera Cruz to exact repayment (p. 28); outrage, at least in Europe, was minimal. In 1995 Mexico was on the brink of defaulting on its massive foreign debt; neither France, the United States, nor any creditor country even considered sending troops to collect. Either states are no longer self-interested—a claim few would take seriously—or they secure their interests through different means; in other words, a rationalism that ignores norms cannot say why some potential interventions do not happen:

> Taking over customs houses and diverting revenues in order to pay creditors of the many weak, insolvent states that exist today is not obviously more difficult materially now than it was in the nineteenth century, probably less so. Yet such an operation would be extremely costly and, if proposed, would be rejected out of hand. The nature of these "costs" highlights this problem, for they are political, legitimacy-related costs (pp. 17–18).

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Here, it seems, social costs matter to actors, and hence a full account of changes in great-power intervention over time must attend to the sources of changes in social costs.

The same is true concerning intervention to help oppressed people. In the early nineteenth century European powers used force to relieve fellow Christians suffering at Muslim hands. Russia helped Greece, a fellow Orthodox Christian people, attain independence from the Muslim Ottoman Empire in the 1820s. In 1860 France led a great-power expedition to aid Maronite Christians in Lebanon and Syria. In 1877 Russia sent troops to Bulgaria to defend Orthodox Christians against the Ottomans. Finnemore also discusses an interesting nonintervention: between 1894 and 1917, when Armenians suffered severe Ottoman persecution, no European state used force on their behalf; Armenians were Christian, but as Monophysites they were not in communion with any European churches, including the Russian Orthodox.

Since 1945, by contrast, great powers have frequently intervened to help religious and ethnic groups other than their own. In addition, it seems that these days humanitarian intervention must be *multilateral* to be legitimate; unilateral interventions such as that of India in East Pakistan in 1971, Tanzania in Uganda in 1979, and Vietnam in Cambodia in 1979 had humanitarian effects but were justified in terms of security. Recent interventions presented as humanitarian have all been multilateral. These include interventions to protect Kurds and Shia Arabs in Iraq in 1991; to end the Cambodian civil war; to halt starvation in Somalia; and to protect Muslim civilians in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995 and Kosovo in 1999. Unless one makes the dubious empirical claim that prior to 1945 Muslims were never oppressed, the conclusion is that the great powers never even considered certain potential humanitarian interventions in the nineteenth century.[10] Again, rationalists should take note.

Finnemore steers clear of the hypothetico-deductive method favored by rationalists in favor of a largely inductive procedure. Indeed, Finnemore's book is the most overtly and unabashedly inductive of the four works considered here.[11] She takes only a few steps in the direction of explanation, conventionally understood. In chapter 5 she offers causal mechanisms for changes in the purposes of intervention. These include, at the collective level, coercion, international institutions and law, professions and epistemic communities, and social movements. At the individual level they include persuasion and communicative action, affective mechanisms, empathy, and social influence plus internalization. To choose an example of Finnemore's methodological strategy from chapter 2, in July 1907 delegates to an international conference at The Hague agreed to cease military interventions to collect on debts. Finnemore argues that it is significant that most of the delegates to this conference were lawyers. At earlier international conferences, such as one in Geneva in 1864 codifying the laws of war, most participants were from nonlegal professions (pp. 38–46). The "legalization" of international conferences, Finnemore infers, had something to do with the substitution of law for force in foreign debt collection; thus the importance she ascribes to professions and epistemic communities (pp. 149–50).

Why does Finnemore reject a hypothetico-deductive approach?

> [T]here are simply no deductive arguments about the changing purpose of force in the international relations literature that are sufficiently well specified to test with dispositive results. Most require some array of ad hoc assumptions to be useful, or, when specification is possible, these arguments are often clearly wrong at the outset (pp. 13–14).

In other words, she is in the early stages of a research project; others are free to derive and test hypotheses from the mechanisms she lists in chapter 5. Although "[t]his book does not . . . offer lawlike statements or if-then predictions about when purpose will change . . . [t]hese mechanisms may inspire others to construct if-then predictions they may wish to test. . . ." But the rest of this sentence is significant: "I expect that much of the value of the mechanisms lie[s] in their contribution to explanation, not prediction" (p. 14).

The significance lies in Finnemore's particular implied distinction between explanation and prediction. We may agree that one may predict an event without explaining it (for example, that the sun will rise every twenty-four hours), but the standard positivist understanding is that one may not explain an event without providing information that would have allowed one to predict it; hence the need for laws or if-then statements in the positivist account of explanation. Finnemore evidently holds to an alternative view, namely, that explanation is possible without laws or predictions. But just what does "explanation" mean in this context? Finnemore appeals to the distinction between causal and constitutive accounts noted above. However, the line between causality and constitution is blurred in her analysis. She maintains, "Causality in this book has an important constitutive component" (p. 14) in that "beliefs about legitimate intervention *constitute* certain behavioral possibilities and, in that sense, *cause* them" (p. 15). This conflation of causal and constitutive analysis pervades the book. Her goal is "to construct constitutive explanations of the type that answer the question, 'how possible'" (p. 15). Yet she signifies the process of norm change by the term "mechanism," which suggests more traditional causal analysis. A "mechanistic" connection between two things, after all, is a type of contingent (causal) rather than logical (constitutive) relation.

Finnemore clearly rejects the rationalist's situational analysis. In her account of the changing norms of debt collection, for example, she stresses that "[Luis] Drago, [Elihu] Root, and Root's delegates to the Hague Conference [of

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1907] are the primary agents of change" (p. 143). Their actions, in her account, are essentially uncaused causes in the sense that these actors did not respond to the logic of the situation in which they found themselves; rather, they acted in light of novel ideas about the forcible collection of sovereign debt that they brought to an international forum that fostered normative change. The same general story holds for Finnemore's two other cases. In that of humanitarian intervention, "a great many agents worked hard to create . . . new social structures" (p. 144). In the case of international order, a series of events that changed legitimate uses of force over time was catalyzed by "participants in the Vienna Congress [who] deliberately replaced [existing] social structures in the treaties they created" (p. 145). In all three stories, Finnemore stresses the creativity of significant agents and the novelty of the actions they took.

In sum, Finnemore makes several important empirical contributions in her book. First, she shows how the constitution of international society and practice has changed along several dimensions in the past two centuries. Second, she demonstrates that such changes affected which potential interventions became actual ones. Finally, she makes a strong case against rationalism's ability to account for these changes in purpose and behavior.

Neta Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics*

Crawford devotes her entire book to a proposition briefly considered by Finnemore, namely, that argument and persuasion affect norms and hence practices (pp. 152–54). Pointing out that most scholars of IR agree that our understanding of stasis is superior to our understanding of change, she chooses decolonization, surely one of the seminal changes in international practice over the past few centuries, as her case study. IR theory does not handle decolonization well, Crawford submits, because it focuses on agents and structures to the neglect of process. Argument is a kind of process (pp. 1–2). Thus we cannot understand decolonization without putting argument and persuasion into the picture.

The cases are structured chronologically, describing in great detail European colonial practices across five centuries, arguments for and against those practices, and the gradual end to the practices. Characterized by "political control, economic expropriation . . . and cultural control, such as forced religious conversion and education in the language of the metropole," colonialism was practiced by early modern Europeans in Africa and the Americas beginning in the late fifteenth century (p. 135). One of Crawford's impressive achievements is the compilation and presentation of the copious arguments for and against colonialism and associated practices over five hundred years. From the start, colonizers said it was natural for the strong to subjugate the weak; that Europeans made better use of the seized resources than the natives did; and that it was good to convert the colonized to Christianity (p. 142). Yet these arguments were opposed from the beginning. In sixteenth-century Spain dissent was lodged against certain coercive practices in South America; most famously, Francisco de Vitoria and Bartolomé de las Casas condemned brutal treatment of the natives in South America (pp. 148–55). For centuries those who favored colonialism had their way, but in the twentieth century opponents began to win. Crawford's stories of the increasing plausibility and apparent efficacy of anticolonial arguments, and the tactics used by those who made the arguments, are often gripping.

Subsequent chapters describe the end of slavery (or the "colonization of bodies"); the "aggressive humanitarianism" of late-nineteenth-century colonialism; the Mandates system of the League of Nations; and finally the end of colonialism. In each chapter Crawford lists and analyzes arguments for and against change. Among the most striking arguments are those of eighteenth-century Evangelicals and Quakers that slavery would invite divine judgment (pp. 174–75); of nineteenth-century humanitarians that colonialism would "uplift" the colonized in Africa (pp. 234–36); of W. E. B. DuBois in favor of the internationalization of Africa (pp. 257–60); and of post–World War II advocates of decolonization linking colonialism to the racial theories discredited in that war (pp. 307–9).

Argument and Change is not entirely inductive; indeed, its structure gives it the appearance of a standard deductive work. Its first chapter is a lengthy review of literature on "argument, belief, and culture"; its second offers a theory of argument and change, ending in a discussion of method and hypotheses; chapters three through seven present case studies; and chapter eight considers counterarguments. An examination of her argument, method, and evidence, however, reveals that her approach is more inductive than it seems at first.

In Crawford's account, ethical arguments "denormalize" (render strange) or delegitimize (render morally questionable) a prevailing norm (pp. 100–117). They advance a "reconstruction" or a plausible and desirable alternative set of practices. Powerful actors then reconceive their interests to render them consistent with the new norm; when they institutionalize the norm, general compliance is made more likely. We know, however, that ethical arguments frequently, perhaps usually, fail to alter prevailing practices. Under what conditions do they succeed? Crawford writes that the arguments must be heard; their advocates must be credible; and they must be shown to fit with some preexisting beliefs or values. An example of the third condition is a plea of Guenter Lewy for the United States to intervene more often for humanitarian purposes: "America was founded on a moral purpose, and its people retain

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a strong commitment to a moral foreign policy. . . . Given able and forceful leadership, it should be possible to generate a spirit of disinterested altruism that will support humanitarian intervention."[12] Here Lewy suggests that reasons to change a U.S. practice show the fit between the proposed change (more humanitarian intervention) and preexisting beliefs.

There is much here that makes good sense. But Crawford's causal story is afflicted by two problems. First, although Crawford offers empirical tests of her argument, she ultimately concedes that it is not falsifiable. Second, the strong role she allows for creative agency undermines her causal claims.

What causes practices to change, in Crawford's account? Suppose that in a given field argument *A* delegitimizes practice *P* by telling a plausible story about how *P* contradicts strongly held belief *B.* Change in *P,* then, is more likely than if no such contradiction existed. In this story, *A* is part of a mechanism linking the contradiction between *P* and *B* with the change. The argument, in other words, is the communication of a contradiction. An argument is a causal process that "transmits" or conveys a contradiction between beliefs and practices from one or more actors to others. We can summarize Crawford's causal theory, then, as follows:

Causal source: belief-practice contradiction →

causal process: argument communicating contradiction →

effect: changed practice

How would we know if this theory were wrong? Crawford lists seven "'tests'" (inverted commas hers) "to see whether the arguments are important causally" (pp. 123–24). Some of the tests are promising, and the example of Britain's violation of material self-interest in opposing the slave trade is impressive (pp. 162–67; 397). But other tests are either consistent with any number of nonconstructivist theories or appear to employ circular logic. Crawford predicts that violators of a norm will justify their violation on ethical grounds; most hard-nosed realists would entirely agree and take such evidence as supporting their cynical interpretation of norms. Crawford writes that after an argument wins the day, behavior should conform to it; but she supplies no way for us to know that an argument "won" without referring to the very behavior it is supposed to explain. Nor is it clear why Crawford does not offer stronger tests of whether arguments really do change minds. For example, if we observed actors saying or writing (especially privately) that an ethical argument changed their minds, or at least gave them pause, Crawford's argument would be supported. But in neither her discussion of method nor any case study do we see this sort of process at work. The closest Crawford comes is in alluding to key actors' ruminations, as when Emperor Charles V "seems to have been swayed by arguments on both sides" of the question of native South Americans (p. 148). Crawford's case studies primarily describe old practices, arguments for and against change, and whatever changes took place.

Crawford does consider several alternative explanations for decolonization. Among these are liberation movements in the colonies (which she might have incorporated into her theory about arguments); changing economic costs and benefits of empire; and imperial overreach. She answers these ably: liberation movements were constant but only worked after 1945, and the costs and benefits of empire are always ambiguous and were contested before and after 1945. In addition to these alternative accounts, Crawford might have considered the "American hegemony" thesis, namely that the opportunity costs of empire increased after 1945 as the United States offered Western Europe wealth and security through a liberal order.[13] Still, arguments might be worked into that story as well.

But Crawford seems less concerned with testing hypotheses than inferring provocative conclusions about arguments and practices. The narratives seldom note any connection to her deductive argument, but instead read like inductive cases. Her inductive method is no surprise, given her explicit skepticism about the hypothetico-deductive method, in particular the possibility of empirically falsifiable hypotheses. "At the most fundamental level," she writes, "I am not sure that any social science theory, especially rational actor theory, is falsifiable. Rather, theories can be more or less useful for understanding" (p. 129).

Consistent with her skepticism about deduction is Crawford's insistence that her "explanatory aims are both constitutive and causal" (p. 1). Unfortunately, she nowhere explains what she means by constitutive, merely citing Wendt.[14] We explained above why the positivist would reject Wendt's argument that constitutive analyses are in themselves explanatory. But regardless of whether constitutive work may be called explanatory, it remains inductive. Crawford's work is indeed constitutive inasmuch as it richly describes various actors and practices, increasing our understanding of who actors were and how they understood their actions and their world. De las Casas, slave traders, slaves, colonizers, the colonized, Victorian reformers of India, DuBois: in Crawford's telling, these are not the spare actors envisaged by rationalism—actors whose beliefs are part of the logic of their situation and hence allow us to predict their behavior. They are, rather, actors constituted by particular beliefs, including beliefs about right and wrong. To see who these actors were, then, one must employ not a deductive theory but rather the hermeneutical approach that Crawford takes.

Thus we see again a rejection of the logic of situational analysis that lies at the heart of rationalist inquiry. Crawford similarly makes explicit her goal of showing that "A focus on argument may also allow us to see room for

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human agency within the operations of seemingly inexorable political and economic forces" (p. 2). It is these political arguments, she contends, that drive the story of decolonization, and there is nothing in the objective conditions of action that drive the arguments. Again, as in Finnemore's work, agency is an uncaused cause of changes in the dependent variable.

Mlada Bukovansky, *Legitimacy and Power Politics*

Bukovansky states her purpose at the outset:

> This book examines a major transformation in both domestic and international politics: the shift from dynastically legitimated monarchical sovereignty to popularly legitimated national sovereignty. . . . I seek to show how this transformation of political legitimacy came about and how it influenced the conduct of international politics (p. 1).

The brief answer to her first how-question—"how this transformation of political legitimacy came about"—is that the American and French revolutions accomplished it. These politically seismic events, she argues, delegitimized the old sovereignty upon which the international system was built and replaced it with a new sovereignty. Her second how-question—"how [that transformation] influenced the conduct of international politics"—has many answers, including some related to wars, alliances, and interventions. Bukovansky's book may be placed alongside other works that explore the roots and results of shifts in the grounding of state sovereignty and hence of the international system itself.[15]

In addressing her first how-question, Bukovansky borrows from the theory of cultural change proffered by sociologist Margaret Archer. Archer posits two properties of cultural systems, contradictory and complementary. A *contradictory* culture is grounded in propositions that are inconsistent. For example, Archer writes that early Christians held both that there was value in pagan culture and that pagan culture must be destroyed. A contradictory situation causes agents to exit or else to reinterpret or "correct" one or both propositions. Thus J. H. Newman, the nineteenth-century churchman, argued that pagan knowledge was fully valid for the Christian but, unlike Christian knowledge, was amoral, that is, could not teach virtue.[16] A *complementary* culture, by contrast, is marked by propositions that are fully consistent. For example, classical (Smithian) economics and utilitarian philosophy were mutually reinforcing. A complementary situation causes agents to protect rather than correct governing norms; it is conducive to stasis rather than change.[17]

In adopting Archer's approach, Bukovansky redefines complementarity as, roughly, newly emerging compatible interests among actors. An example is the common interest of the philosophes and ambitious monarchs in eighteenth-century France in applying Enlightenment principles to society (p. 33). It is not clear that Bukovansky's version of cultural complementarity is anything other than a special case of contradiction, in which two or more groups agree on a strategy for eliminating the contradiction. In any case, here Bukovansky offers a causal theory that implies lawlike statements applicable across cases: contradictions and complementarities make change more likely. Thus, for example, the early Enlightenment made two contradictory assertions: that right reason was universal and hence accessible to all, regardless of heredity or other status; and that monarchy should be absolute. This contradiction was part of what produced the French Revolution and the move from monarchical to popular sovereignty as the grounding of states and the states system (for example, pp. 104–5).

Her second how-question Bukovansky begins to address with a highly general assertion that culture emerges from the interactions of units in a given system and exerts downward causation upon those units, much like Kenneth Waltz's familiar conception of international structure, which emerges from state interaction and socializes states into seeking security.[18] For Bukovansky, in similar fashion, a given international norm of domestic legitimacy—be it monarchical or republican—pressures states to adopt it for instrumental reasons. Bukovansky is convinced that instrumental adoptions of culture, which imply that culture is causal, are frequent in politics and cannot be ignored by constructivists.

Thus far the book appears to hew a deductive line of inquiry. In fact, however, its overall cast is inductive. Most of Bukovansky's empirical arguments about the two revolutions and their effects are not the results of hypothesis tests, but rather conclusions she draws by generalizing from the facts of her case studies. Her study of "Old Regime Political Culture" (chap. 3) does identify complementarities, chiefly that between the philosophical Enlightenment and absolute monarchy, and contradictions, such as conflicts between monarchs and nobles and mercantilism and economic liberalism, and it does make the case that these helped produce the revolutions. Enlightenment discourse was crucial, inasmuch as it "indirectly exacerbated and heightened the level of international competition, on the one hand," by supporting monarchical ("enlightened") absolutism, "while constituting a continuous public commentary on international affairs, on the other," by supporting the free international exchange of ideas (p. 108). However, in Bukovansky's treatment of the revolutions themselves (chaps. 4–5), the potential deductive arguments fade from view. Chapter 4 has little to say directly about the causes of the American Revolution or its effects on international politics. Instead, it describes a number of contradictions in American political culture at the time of the founding, such as that between elites and popular authority; secular republicanism and Christianity; economic liberalism and colonialism; independence

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and the persistence of colonial dependency; Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian political economy; commercial discrimination and free trade; cosmopolitanism and nationalism; and neutral rights and entanglement. Along the way Bukovansky attempts to settle longstanding historiographical debates, such as whether the American founding was liberal or republican. The connection with the book's central arguments here seems to be that the American Revolution was a crucial event in the evolution of legitimacy of a state by virtue of its effects on republican discourse: it made that discourse more democratic, commercial, and nationalistic.

Chapter 5, on the French Revolution, relates more clearly to the book's central concerns. Bukovansky argues that the revolution was caused in part by some of the old regime contradictions described in chapter 3, including that between privilege and equality. She also devotes close attention to her second how-question: how the shift from monarchical to popular sovereignty altered international practice. Thus she seeks to undermine realist interpretations of the consequences of the revolution. Stephen Walt argues that the wars of the French Revolution vindicate his balance-of-threat theory, which sees ideas as of secondary importance;[19] Bukovansky counters that revolutionary discourse heightened threat perceptions in Europe. Barry Posen argues that France's revolutionary ideology was functional to the needs of the French state in a competitive environment;[20] Bukovansky counters that the ideology cannot be so reduced. She argues that revolutionary ideas not only strengthened the French state, but also, owing to their appeal across Europe, made France more threatening than it would have been and hence contributed to the outbreak and conduct of the wars of the 1790s.

Bukovansky's claims about 1789 and international relations are not new, but she argues them with admirable lucidity and brevity. Her more general and central claim, that some time between the eighteenth century and today the locus of legitimate sovereignty changed from dynastic monarchs to the people, is not especially controversial, although it needs some qualification (the Gulf monarchies of today, which enjoy wide diplomatic recognition if not robust domestic stability, are obvious exceptions). More contestable is Bukovansky's claim that the shift came with the American and French revolutions. No doubt those political events were seismic inasmuch as they sparked transnational movements and increased the credibility of republicanism as a stable form of government. But political strife in Europe in the nineteenth century suggests that sovereignty norms were contested for many decades thereafter. As Finnemore reminds us, the absolute monarchies of Europe through 1849 acted according to a norm of monarchical sovereignty, intervening to suppress popular revolutions in Germany, Italy, and Iberia. It might even be said that popular sovereignty became normative in the West only in 1917–18, with the disappearance of Imperial Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary and their norms of monarchism and hierarchy.

Bukovansky's inductive method deserves special attention. "Although studying the political culture of the international system in the manner suggested here does not in and of itself generate definitive, deductive hypotheses about the conditions under which systemic change will occur," she writes, "it does lend insight into necessary if not sufficient preconditions for systemic change" (p. 53). But if one's goal is to refute Walt and Posen, then why not do as they did and follow the hypothetico-deductive method? Because, she asserts,

> [t]he causal arrows run both ways: from culture to strategy and from strategy to culture. To demonstrate these arguments in a strictly positivist way would require several volumes of material, however, and so a less formal and more interpretive approach here has the advantage of parsimony at the cost of decisive demonstration of causal claims.

In other words, no book can do everything; like Finnemore, Bukovansky implicitly invites subsequent researchers to test her causal claims on new evidence.

But also like Finnemore, Bukovansky seems to have more fundamental reasons to choose inductive analysis over deductive. Her causal language notwithstanding, Bukovansky says she also treats culture as constitutive, inasmuch as it "actually helps make the actors who they are" (p. 36). Even actors that adopt a norm for instrumental reasons are embedded within a larger culture (p. 55). Bukovansky sees constructivism as necessary to her analysis because it better captures "broad shifts in the parameters of political legitimacy"; for example, the French revolutionaries sought to rid themselves not only of Louis XVI and other oppressive elites, but "the whole system of rule they thought despotic" (p. 37).

Bukovansky would achieve her dual approach, treating norms or culture as both causal and constitutive, by decomposing questions temporally.[21] It is one thing to ask why a norm was adopted, and the answer may well be for instrumental reasons. It is another to ask whether the adopted norm subsequently shapes and redefines the actors who have adopted it (p. 38). In other words, a monarchical state might adopt (or pretend to adopt) the norm of popular legitimacy in order to preserve its international and domestic interests, and yet over time find itself transformed into a state whose people are indeed sovereign and that acts accordingly. Still, she writes, "the dualism I have adopted leans toward the constitutive approach, which is in line with my constructivist theoretical orientation" (p. 55).

Bukovansky's case studies would not be helpful were they simply tests of her theory of cultural change or of her general claim that culture is causal. But as excavations of the constitution of actors and acts, they are exemplary. They describe in depth predominant norms and

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practices in old-regime Europe and the competing norms—contradictions and complementarities—of America and France during the revolutionary period. One leaves them with a surer understanding of the life-world of these people and their institutions.

It is worth emphasizing in this context that Bukovansky too bases her analysis on a repudiation of the situational logic characteristic of rationalist research. She wrestles with the status of contradictions in the cultural system in world politics. These contradictions might be objective, she notes (which would set up the possibility of generalizing research through the study of a situational logic), or they might simply be the constructions of actors (which would undercut such a possibility). In the end she adopts a "dualistic approach," essentially accepting both the objectivity and subjectivity of the cultural contradictions at the heart of her story—but tellingly she shades her analysis toward the subjective pole. "The cultural system appears to actors as an objective reality, but one that they are more or less free to interpret" (p. 55). This makes her story more agent-driven than structure-driven, in a manner similar to the arguments of Finnemore and Crawford.

Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics*

Hopf's book differs from the other three in a striking way: It seeks to explain changes not in international norms or behavior, but rather foreign policy attitudes or understandings. The dependent variable, in other words, is the outlook of the actors under study, not their actions. "I aim to show how a state's collection of identities, how it understands itself, can affect how that state, or more precisely its decision makers, understands other states in world affairs" (p. xiv). Both the independent and dependent variables in this analysis consist of decision makers' *understandings*. In this sense Hopf's departure from rationalistic social science is more dramatic than that of the other three authors.[22]

Hopf's main focus is the ways that foreign policy thinking is structured within one city, Moscow, at two distinct times, 1955 and 1999. His central argument is that identities are linked, causally and constitutively, to foreign policy attitudes. He never defines "identity," but he clearly means a type of cognitive heuristic: "[A]n individual needs her own identity in order to make sense of herself and others and needs the identities of others to make sense of them and herself" (pp. 4–5); "[a]n individual's identity acts like an axis of interpretation, implying that she will find in the external world what is relevant to that identity" (p. 5). Hopf believes identities are multiple, and this notion is at the core of his approach: "Every individual in society has many identities" (p. 1).

Hopf's argument is novel and derives from a deep and sophisticated reading of social theory. Its general claims are straightforward: identities are constructed "at home," in everyday life. These identities are always relational—always built upon a distinction between Self and Other—but are not necessarily oppositional. An identity produces particular habits of thought and action and thereby makes certain practices, including actions toward other people, seem self-evidently right and others unthinkable. Identity thus shapes notions of interest. Hence, a Soviet or Russian foreign policy maker's understanding of particular foreign states cannot be understood apart from the complex of his identities. Hopf's constructivism is thus "liberal" in the sense that it is about preference formation at the domestic level.[23]

Hopf is not interested in the reasons that people overtly give for their actions, but in the "reasons" that, so to speak, never come up. Eschewing both the logics of consequences and of appropriateness, he builds on the work of sociologists of knowledge and symbolic interactionists to posit a "logic of the everyday" (pp. 12–14). He analyzes the discourse of ordinary life in Moscow in his two periods in order to retrieve identities. The method involves "phenomenology," or "letting subjects speak . . . through texts" (p. 23); Hopf reads the daily press, textbooks, popular novels, and the like. He then organizes the identities into "discursive formations," evidently meaning sets, each of which is constituted by some property that seems important. He finally posits "that any Soviet or Russian foreign policy decision maker is part of a social cognitive structure that comprises the identities and discourses and that they constitute any Soviet decision maker's understanding of himself. His . . . understandings of other states, therefore, must necessarily involve the interaction between this complicated social Self and those external Others" (p. 20).

In the Moscow of 1955 Hopf finds four "primary identities:" "class, modernity, nation, and the New Soviet Man (NSM)" (p. 41). That is, the works he reads suggest that Muscovites saw themselves as workers within a class hierarchy, as moderns, as Russians—and as at least aspiring toward an ideal construct of the best of the other identities: "[The NSM] transcended national and ethnic identities, was an avowed atheist, and had a working-class consciousness" (p. 69). The properties of the NSM, however, were contested. Some conceived of him very precisely and rigidly, while others, in the post-Stalin "thaw," allowed some deviance. Based on these identities, which he sees as composing a single discursive formation, Hopf offers several predictions about the understandings of Soviet foreign policy decision makers. For example, he argues that "[t]he more strictly class analysis was pursued, the more likely the Soviet Union understood its allies in a more constrained and binarized manner," and that the "Soviet modern identity should lead to its potential allies being understood through Soviet understandings of its own modernization" (pp. 81–82). In chapter 3 Hopf finds the evidence to be consistent with his predictions—for example, a presumption that fellow Marxist-Leninist states,

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being ostensibly ruled by their working classes, would be loyal allies—but also finds an extra identity not anticipated by his discursive analysis, namely, the Soviet Union as a great power (p. 83).[24]

In the Moscow of 1999 Hopf finds three discursive structures relevant to foreign policy, which he labels New Western Russian (NWR), New Soviet Russian (NSR), and Liberal Essentialist (LE). The discourses all comprise identities such as democracy and culture. Distinguishing them are such identities as nationalism and the Orthodox Church (NWR rejects them), free markets (NWR embraces, NSR and LE are ambivalent toward them), and the Russian countryside (NWR ignores, NSR embraces, LE is ambivalent toward it). The NWR is also characterized by its embrace of the U.S. model; the LE prefers Europe; and the NSR sets store by neither (table 2, 157–58). From these discourses Hopf predicts preferences: the NWR will prefer an alliance with Europe or the United States; the NSR, with China; and the LE, with Europe and China. The NSR and LE will feel most threatened by America. He predicts Russian interests and understandings contingent upon which discourses were predominant. For example, if the NWR and LE dominated, "Europe would supplant the United States as the most desirable Other" (pp. 209–10). In the event, as Hopf describes in chapter 5, Russian policy in 1999 was ambiguous in many ways, reflecting the failure of any discourse to dominate.

These results are plausible, but in the end it is not always clear what to make of them, inasmuch as Hopf mingles causal and constitutive language. His adducing of predictions, his effort to describe identities and construct discourses prior to describing understandings of foreign policy, and much of his language suggest that he sees his analysis as causal. His stated aim, as summarized above, is "to show how a state's collection of identities . . . can affect how that state, or more precisely its decision makers, understands other states in world affairs" (p. xiv). The verb "affect" implies that identities and understandings of other states are separate. Identities "enable and constrain Soviet alliance choices in 1955," suggesting the identities are separate from the choices (p. 83). His allusions to a psychological approach (chap. 1), in which identities function like heuristics, would also seem to imply causality. Yet in other places Hopf understands his work as constitutive, or an analysis of what makes actors who they are. For him, "identities constitute [discursive] formations" (p. 3), and "an individual's identity implies his interests" (p. 16). The relation between identity and interest, in other words, is logical rather than contingent; it is not that identities cause interests, but that actors of a particular constitution (identity) will by definition have certain interests.

And like our other authors, Hopf adopts a research strategy that is heavily inductive. Indeed, Hopf announces in his preface that he has chosen an approach that is as inductivist as possible:

> I do not choose a priori theories, deduce hypotheses from them, and then gather data against which to test their competing implications. Instead, I try to find which collection of identities existed in Moscow in 1955 and 1999, develop an idea of the kinds of discourses that predominated there, and lay out the boundaries of these discourses for the society as a whole (p. xiv).

Hopf does use a hypothetico-deductive method, but one that assumes very little and is hence what many rationalists would call "weak." As we showed above, the primary causal claim is that identities cause foreign policy preferences; the case studies are intensive efforts to discover and organize the number and content of identities (that is, values of his causal variable) by analyzing discourses. The deductive effort falls short, primarily because like our other authors Hopf conflates causal with constitutive analysis.

Accordingly, the 1999 case study seems constitutive, its findings tautological from a causal perspective. Hopf uses attitudes toward various external Others, such as the United States and Europe, to delineate Muscovite identities and discourses; he then uses those same discourses to explain the attitudes from which he derived them. Since we know NWR people precisely by their identification with the United States, is it any surprise that they favor close relations with the United States? Since we know LR actors in part by their alienation from America, would it not be astonishing if they did favor a close alignment with America? Had Hopf excluded attitudes toward foreign countries from his identities—arguing, for example, that actors who favor free markets would also favor good relations with the United States—then his argument could be causal insofar as free markets and the United States are not logically connected. One can infer, however, that in Muscovite minds in 1999 free markets and America were in fact so connected. Perhaps, then, causal analysis of this case is not possible.

The 1955 study, by contrast, appears causal, insofar as Hopf keeps the Muscovite identities in that year separate from attitudes toward foreign countries. One knows whether an actor's New Soviet Man identity is tolerant by his attitude toward deviance within the USSR, not toward Tito or Nehru. Even here, however, it might be difficult to separate attitudes toward deviance at home and abroad, especially since communists in 1955 were, on their own understanding, internationalists. They retained the Marxist-Leninist deprecation of nationalism and national boundaries.

Perhaps the difficulty of doing deductive analysis concerning identities is what makes Hopf's approach so much more inductive than that of the standard rationalist work. Hopf refuses to assume much about his subjects except that their identities imply their interests. He begs no questions concerning how many identities existed in Moscow

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in 1955 and 1999, their content, whether they presupposed a hostile Other, and so on. Identities are taken as given; Hopf neither theorizes about them nor tries to trace empirically how agents transform them. His inductivism seems to be driven solely by the constitutive nature of his work. If actors' identities entail their preferences, then the analyst's task is primarily to articulate who they are.

As a constitutive analysis of foreign policy discourse and preferences, Hopf's work will set a standard for years to come, both for Soviet-Russian studies and for foreign policy studies more generally. Still, here again rationalists will be discontented. Both of Hopf's case studies leave us with the question of how one discourse or combination comes to dominate. His prototypical decision maker has multiple identities, each of which has some influence; both preferences and policy choices are thus indeterminate. Hopf thus leaves structural IR theories an opening to explain Soviet and Russian foreign policy. In the 1999 case, neorealists (at least, those interested in explaining foreign policy as opposed to international outcomes) will argue that the distribution of power among states will dictate which Muscovite discourse wins; for example, under unipolarity those discourses wishing to counterbalance the United States (the NSR and LE) will win. Hopf might reply that we are still waiting for this to happen,[25] but other structural IR theories would nevertheless have hypotheses. Neoliberal institutionalists and systemic constructivists might expect the winning discourse to depend on how much Europe, the United States, China, and other great powers cooperate with Russia and on what terms.[26]

Conclusion

We have focused on two differences between constructivist and rationalist research. First, while rationalists use a deductive strategy to test their arguments, the constructivists reviewed here rely primarily on induction. Second, whereas rationalists explain behavior in terms of the conditions that drive and shape it, the constructivists in this essay conceptualize action as the novel or creative response of actors to circumstances that gain definition through agency. What are we to make of these differences?

We believe the second of these differences, which is a variant of the agent-structure debate in international relations,[27] is particularly important. Rationalists tend to emphasize the role that conditions play in shaping action. They assume that social actors respond adequately or appropriately to the situation in which they find themselves. For rationalists, social action is explained when we can show that the observed behavior is just what we should have expected in the conditions or circumstances where it is observed. To establish this expectation, we need an if-then generalization establishing a recurrent linkage between the conditions of action and the behavior that follows or accompanies those conditions. The assumption of rationality makes possible the search for these generalizations.

Note the implicit structural determinism in a situational explanation. The antecedent in a rationalist if-then generalization is a description of a type of event or condition (for example, a distribution of power). It describes a salient part of the structure or conditions of action. The generalization amounts to a claim that behavior follows from or conforms to structure in predictable ways. For example, consider the claim, "Bipolarity promotes system stability." This is an if-then generalization that associates bipolarity with stability-inducing behavior. It does not, of course, amount to the claim that bipolar systems are invariably stable. Instability of one sort or another may take hold despite the conditioning effects of bipolarity. But the claim is nonetheless structurally deterministic: it holds that bipolarity has one and just one effect on action, namely to promote a stable system of interaction. The effects of structure are not mediated through the interpretations of actors. Rather, actors are postulated to respond in predictable ways to an objective structure. "Choice" in a rational choice approach is not the creative act envisaged in ordinary language or certain philosophical approaches to social action.

In contrast to this line of reasoning, constructivists stress that any situation must be interpreted or defined by actors before they can have an effect on it. A central claim of constructivism is that the conditions of action are what the actors make them to be.[28] Action follows a course intended by conscious agents, who impose meaning on conditions that affect them only because they are aware of those conditions or interpret them in a particular way. In three of the four works reviewed here, namely those by Finnemore, Crawford, and Bukovansky, heavy emphasis was placed on just this interpretive process.[29] All three authors reject the claim that relevant behavior can be explained by reference to the conditions of actions (an explanatory strategy they label "materialism"). In other words, all three stress the creative role of agency over the determining effects of structure. It is precisely this emphasis that keeps them from explaining with if-then generalizations in a rationalist style.

It is this same emphasis that leads these three authors to follow essentially inductive strategies of theory development. After all, if social practices are rendered unpredictable by the creativity of some actors, then they cannot be deduced or predicted a priori, and their explanation will rely upon a close reading of the actors' behavior. If normative change in international relations is driven by creative agency along the lines that Finnemore, Crawford and Bukovansky trace, we will understand such change only by giving careful, detailed historical analyses that allow us to dissect the details of action as it unfolded. In other words, we will understand such action only by carrying out analyses roughly along the lines that these authors pursue.

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Hopf's approach is likewise inductive, but for somewhat different reasons. Like the other authors, he is skeptical of strong deductive theories. His skepticism, however, leads him not to embrace creative agency, but simply to reject the strong assumptions that rationalists embrace on principle. As we note above, Hopf assumes very little about his actors and hence must induce propositions from his cases.

The break between a conception of actors as passively responding predictably to objective conditions of behavior, and a view of these actors as actively shaping those conditions in their (usually) unpredictable response to them, extends broadly into social theory,[30] philosophy,[31] and the study of history.[32] If these literatures are any guide, it is fair to view rationalism and constructivism as complementary perspectives, but it is a complementarity that complicates synthesis. Ideally one would overcome rationalism's tendency toward determinism and constructivism's tilt toward voluntarism by somehow combining the two approaches, but their contrasting logics defy any straightforward strategies of integration.

Our analysis points to an epistemic break of sorts between constructivism and rationalism, but not necessarily to a deep epistemological fissure or ontological discontinuity that implies an unproductive incommensurability of research efforts. Complementarity, after all, implies connection as much as it does difference. It is clear that our four constructivist authors have profited from reading and incorporating ideas from rationalist research. Indeed, without rationalism the questions that motivate constructivism would not emerge as they do. But we hope that we have also shown that rationalists would profit from reading and incorporating ideas from these four constructivist books. In particular, rationalism must engage the arguments that change in international politics is not determined by structural factors, but that creativity—good and bad—is both possible and consequential.

Notes

1 Fearon and Wendt 2002.
2 Latsis 1983, 123. Crucial to this approach is the recasting of elements that initially appear to be psychological, "such as wishes, motives, memories, and associations" of the actor, into "elements of the situation" (Popper 1976, 102). As Popper summarizes, "The man with certain wishes therefore becomes a man whose situation may be characterized by the fact that he pursues certain objective *aims*; and a man with certain memories or associations becomes a man whose situation can be characterized by the fact that he is equipped objectively with certain theories or with certain information. This enables us then to understand actions in an objective sense" (pp. 102–3).
3 Christensen and Snyder, 1990.
4 For an alternative explanation see Morrow 1993.
5 Wendt 1992.
6 Fearon and Wendt 2002, 58.
7 Wendt 1999, 85.
8 Ibid 83.
9 Waltz 1979, 13; cf. Hempel 1966, 19–32.
10 This of course sets aside the question of colonialism that was ostensibly to help the colonized; for more see the discussion of Crawford below.
11 Finnemore actually uses the term "abduction" to describe her method, which she characterizes as "neither deduction nor induction but a dialectical combination of the two . . . I present deductively derived hypotheses that shape the initial design of the inquiry by quickly prove insufficient to explain events. Consequently I supplement the deductive arguments with inductively derived insights" (p. 13). In our view, though Finnemore uses the term abduction, this process is essentially inductive in character, as induction carries the burden of shaping theoretical hypotheses to fit the case at hand.
12 Lewy 1993, 114.
13 See, for example, Ruggie 1983, Maier 1987, Ikenberry 2001, Lake 1999.
14 Wendt 1998.
15 See, for example, Carr 1945; Mayall 1990; Philpott 2001.
16 Bukovansky and Crawford both employ contradictions as engines of change.
17 Archer 1988, 143–84.
18 Waltz 1979.
19 Walt 1996.
20 Posen 1993.
21 She credits Kratochwil 1989.
22 Hopf occasionally writes that he is explaining "foreign policy choices" (p. 1) and he talks of identities as enabling conditions that increase the probability of certain types of action (p. 149). But these links of understanding to behavior are ancillary to the main thrust of Hopf's project, which focuses rigorously on the factors that determine Soviet/Russian understandings of other actors in the international system. We do not believe that, in the main, Hopf has offered (or intends to offer) a theory of behavior as the other three authors do. See also n. 29.
23 Compare Moravcsik 1997.
24 These predictions might look at first glance to be based on the sort of "if, then" generalizations that rationalists pursue in their explanatory efforts. However, unlike the rationalists, Hopf is concerned to generalize only within cases. See n. 29.
25 Compare Ikenberry 2002.
26 Insofar as cooperativeness by non-Russians explains Russian policy, we can profitably ignore domestic Russian discourses.

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27 Wendt 1987.
28 Jack Snyder makes a similar point about the work of Alexander Wendt, whose metatheoretical explorations have helped pave the way for a good deal of constructivist empirical work. Writes Synder, "Wendt's voluntarism threatens to overwhelm his structuralism. He asserts that 'anarchy as such is an empty vessel and has no intrinsic logic; anarchies only acquire logics as a function of the structure of what we put inside them'" (Snyder 2002, 41).
29 The exception is Hopf, whose work is an outlier in the sense that it accounts for not behavior but an actor's understandings. We consider Hopf's work to be "thick description" along classical Geertzian lines. It is worth noting in this context that Hopf generalizes only within the cases he examines, just as Geertz recommends (1973, p. 26). Hopf writes, "I offer comparisons of the identity terrains in 1955 and 1999 only in passing. An explicit treatment [that generalizes across the two cases] is not warranted on methodological grounds" (p. 153).
30 Dawe 1970; Hollis and Smith 1991.
31 Taylor 1966; Hollis 1977; Flew and Vesey 1987; Yolton 1966.
32 Collingwood 1940.

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