

Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), at pp. 3-30.

-the edited volume is about how ideas influence/explain political outcomes

-“Our argument is that ideas [defined as beliefs held by individuals] influence policy when the principled or causal beliefs they embody provide road maps that increase actors’ clarity about goals or ends-means relationships, when they affect outcomes of strategic situations in which there is no unique equilibrium, and when they become embedded in political institutions.” [3]

-ideas as well as *interests* have causal weight in explaining action [following Weber] (3-4)

-the study is done b/c many IR thinkers, under the influence of economics and rationalism, have avoided the issue of how ideas influence foreign policy outcomes (4)

-G&K state that ideas are critical; this does not mean that they displace rationality or self-interest, but that ideas are causally important in behaviour and preference formation [5]

-the role of ideas in causing behaviour must be investigated empirically; G&K take a broad swipe at ‘reflectivist’ approaches (Wendt and all) for not being empirically driven: “Without either a well-defined set of propositions about behavior or a rich empirical analysis, the reflectivist critique remains more an expression of understandable frustration than a working research program.” (6)

-as such, they are not concerned with the sources/origins of ideas (that is fuzzy psychological theorizing) but are more concerned with their effects (see critique of cognitive approaches on pp. 6-7)

-three types of ideas

-first, *world views*

-ideas that define the universe of possibilities for action; example: rationality, sovereignty, privacy

-second, *principled beliefs*

-normative ideas; criteria for distinguishing right/wrong, just/unjust

-third, *causal beliefs*

-beliefs about cause-effect relationships; typically come from authorities; a set of shared beliefs

-strategies for the attainment of goals (what Kant calls hypothetical morality)

-three causal mechanisms for ideas influencing policy

-first, *ideas as road maps* (13-17)

-people have incomplete information; ideas about causality mean that the *expected* effects of action influence how individuals act

-ideas guide behaviour in conditions of uncertainty

-second, *ideas as focal points/glue—coordination* (17-20)

-in any game theoretic situation, there are multiple equilibria; ideas are important because the only way to find an acceptable solution is by analyzing the interests and strategic interactions of the players (utility functions and payoffs)

-ideas alleviate coordination problems; they serve as focal points/solutions to problems of incomplete info.

-third, *institutionalization of ideas* (20-24)

-ideas over time have a lasting influence if they become institutionalized

-the methodological problems of ideas as causal mechanisms is discussed—see pp. 26-29