

**Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer, Volker Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Chapter 6 (pp. 211-224)**

Explore the feasibility of and potential methods for synthesizing the three dominant schools of thought in international regimes to provide greater explanatory power

3 schools of thought coexist in the study of international regimes:

- Neoliberal: stress self-interest as the motive for cooperation and for creation and compliance with international regimes
- Realists: Stress impact of power and relative power on effectiveness, content & robustness of int'l regimes
- Cognitivists: perception of interest & meaning of power capabilities is dependent on actors' causal and social knowledge

Realism & Neoliberalism:

Appear to have high potential for synthesis as a contextual theory

- Both schools are rationalist
- Neither school considers the other altogether wrong; in fact, many argue one is subset of the other (which is which depends on what side you're on)
- Generally concede to the other that the other's predictions are valid IF certain conditions hold

Therefore, going forward one might look at specifying the contexts in which each set of expectations are likely to hold. There appears to be the possibility of a unified, contextual rationalist theory of regimes, with predictions based on situations attributes.

Rationalism + Weak Cognitivism

Best seen as subsequent links in a causal chain, with two options:

1. Use cognitivists to determine preferences, then the rationalists for the game-theoretic
2. Have ideas intervene between preferences and outcomes. Use ideas as focal points - attention to common belief systems assisting in regime formation

The possibility of synthesis does not imply that 1) differences are illusory or 2) that multivariate theories are better. One must evaluate the gain in explanatory power against the loss of parsimony

The above suggestions for synthesis are possible because 1) the theories are plausible; 2) the assumptions are largely compatible. One cannot imagine a synthesis between rationalists and strong cognitivists because of the dire incompatibility of their assumptions.

There are 2 major obstacles to a happy, productive ending:

1. Methodological: positivism vs. interpretivist approaches
2. Substantive: the logic of consequences vs. the logic of appropriateness

However, it may be that there will be no clear winner and no clear synthesis: perhaps the two schools of thought can/should coexist happily, explaining different aspects of the phenomenon under consideration while remaining logically incompatible. In the end, there may be more than one way in which to pursue theoretical progress in the study of international regimes....