The rise and fall of the Cold War in comparative perspective

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Introduction

Much of the discussion of the end of the Cold War starts from the premise that Gorbachev's domestic reforms and foreign policy initiatives set in motion a process that radically transformed the nature of East-West relations. The emphasis on the Gorbachev period is natural enough given the consensus among Western and Russian scholars that Gorbachev's domestic and foreign policies were the proximate cause of the end of the Cold War. The near exclusive focus on the causes and consequences of Gorbachev's policies nevertheless frames the analytical puzzle too narrowly. The Cold War was not a static conflict that continued unchanged from its origins in the late 1940s to the advent of Gorbachev some forty years later. Gorbachev's initiatives ushered in the terminal stage of a process of accommodation that had been underway, albeit with fits and starts, for several decades. The Gorbachev foreign policy revolution needs to be put into broader historical context.

To understand why the Cold War ended peacefully, it also needs to be compared to other war-threatening rivalries. Some of these rivalries also ended in peaceful accommodations. What, if anything, does the Cold War share in common with these conflicts? Do they reveal patterns that could help us better understand the Cold War, its dénouement and its broader lessons for conflict prevention and management?

I begin by describing the four generic explanations—structure, ideas, domestic politics and leaders—that have been advanced for the end of the Cold War. I then compare them along several analytical dimensions to situate them in a broader temporal and conceptual context. I do the same for the Cold War as a whole, and examine some of the different ways it can be compared to other militarized disputes. I conclude with a discussion of the methodological challenges and possibilities for comparative analysis to help bridge the gap that has developed between neopositivist and interpretivist approaches to the study of politics.

Four theories in search of the Cold War

The controversy surrounding the end of the Cold War represents a continuation of a debate that began almost fifty years ago with the earliest attempts to explain the Cold War. Our four generic explanations are linked to four different conceptions about the nature of the Cold War, and through them to different explanations for the origins of that conflict.

Realism, the most prominent structural explanation, conceives of the Cold War as a power struggle and the almost inevitable consequence of the power vacuum created in Central Europe by the collapse of Germany at the end of World War II. Some realists contend that the conflict assumed an added dimension because of the bipolar structure of the postwar world which transformed a regional conflict into a global one. Realists are found on both sides of the definition divide. Those who embrace the wider definition argue that the Cold War ended when one of the poles (the Soviet Union) recognized that it was no longer able to compete. Gorbachev's foreign policy was an attempt to extricate the Soviet Union from its conflict with the West on the best possible terms. The root cause of the Cold War and its demise was the rise and fall of the Soviet Union as a global power.[1]

The ideas explanation conceives of the Cold War as primarily an ideological struggle. The Soviet Union and the United States represented incompatible social systems, and the clash between them was the continuation of a struggle between Leninist-style socialism and Western capitalism that began with the Bolshevik revolution in 1918. No doubt the ideology on both sides shifted and changed over time. Indeed, according to one view of Soviet history, the USSR under Stalin more or less abandoned the ideal of world revolution altogether. But, still, at the heart of the conflict—and this is what made it especially intense and enduring—were different conceptions of society. And this conflict could only reach a terminal point therefore when one of the sides—in this case the Soviet Union—renounced its ideology and professed adherence to the political and economic values of its former adversaries. From this perspective, learning by Soviet leaders was the underlying cause of the Cold War's end.[2]

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[1] Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 4th edn. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1966), distinguishes between the onset of the Cold War in 1947 and bipolarity, which he does not believe was achieved until the mid-1950s at the earliest. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), and 'The Emerging Structure of International Politics', *International Security* 18 (Fall 1993), pp. 5–43; John J. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War', *International Security*, 15 (Summer 1990), pp. 5–56; William C. Wohlforth, 'Realism and the End of the Cold War', *International Security*, 19 (Winter 1994–95), pp. 91–129; Kenneth A. Oye, 'Explaining the End of the Cold War: Morphological and Behavioral Adaptations to the Nuclear Peace?', in Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen, *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 57–84, describe the Cold War and bipolarity as more or less coterminous. For a review of recent historical literature sympathetic to the realist conception of the Cold War, see Howard Jones and Randall B. Woods, 'The Origins of the Cold War in Europe and the Near East: Recent Historiography and the National Security Imperative', *Diplomatic History*, 17 (Spring 1993), pp. 251–76, and commentaries in the same issue by Emily S. Rosenberg, Anders Stephanson and Barton J. Bernstein. For an overview see Michael Cox, 'From the Truman Doctrine to the Second Superpower Détente: the Rise and Fall of the Cold War', *Journal of Peace Research*, 27:1, 1990, pp. 25–41.

[2] Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*; Fred Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994); Michael W. Doyle, 'Liberalism and the End of the Cold War', in Lebow and Risse-Kappen, *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War*, pp. 85–108. Gaddis, *The Long Peace*, and Thomas Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making and Unmaking of the Cold War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), offer compound explanations of which the clash of visions is part. For extreme statements of this position, see Adam Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–1973*, 2nd edn. (New York: Praeger, 1974); Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992) and Douglas J. Macdonald, 'Communist Bloc Expansion in the Early Cold War: Challenging Realism, Refuting Revisionism', *International Security*, 20 (Winter 1995), pp. 152–88. For a Weberian analysis of the evolution of Marxism and its influence on Soviet foreign policy up through Gorbachev, see Stephen E. Hanson, 'Gorbachev: The Last True Leninist Believer', in Daniel Chirot (ed.), *The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), pp. 74–99. The standard reference for the debate in

The domestic politics explanation comes in several flavours. Its core assertion is that Truman or Stalin—or both—provoked the Cold War to solidify their domestic authority.[3] Some variants stress the role played by domestic politics once the Cold War was underway. The 'military-industrial complexes' of both superpowers profited from the conflict and kept it alive for parochial economic and political reasons. Contenders for power in both superpowers (e.g. Khrushchev and Reagan), and allied leaders (e.g. Kim Il-sung, Ulbricht and Chiang Kai-chek) are also alleged to have provoked confrontations to advance their political interests.[4] The Cold War ended when Gorbachev shifted the basis of his domestic authority and needed to reward a different set of constituencies whose interests required shifting resources away from defence. At least some scholars contend that shifting domestic coalitions in both superpowers were the root causes of the Cold War and its demise.[5]

The leaders explanation also addresses the beginnings and end of the Cold War. Scholars who emphasize the independent role of leaders invoke their goals and subjective understandings of their environments to explain their foreign policies. Individual level explanations tend toward constructivism: the Cold War was (is) what leaders (and now, scholars) make of it. Some Russian and American historians attribute the Cold War to Stalin's expansionist goals, and others to his paranoia, which they contend he made self-fulfilling.[6] It has also been suggested that

the West on the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy is R. N. Carew Hunt, Samuel L. Sharp and Richard Lowenthal, 'Ideology and Power Politics: A Symposium', *Problems of Communism*, 7 (May–June 1958); For an overview of the historical debate on the role of ideology in the Cold War, see Stephen White and Alex Pravda (eds.), *Ideology and Soviet Politics* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1988). For recent takes on ideology, see Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917–91* (New York: Free Press, 1991); Odd Arne Westad, 'Secrets of the Second World: The Russian Archives and the Reinterpretation of Cold War History', *Diplomatic History*, 21 (Spring 1997), pp. 259–72.

[3] John Lewis Gaddis, 'The Tragedy of Cold War History', *Diplomatic History* 17 (Winter 1993), pp. 1–16; Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), chs. 1–3, on Stalin. Frank Kofsky, *Harry S. Truman and the War Scare of 1948: A Successful Campaign to Deceive the Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), is the most extreme statement of this position for Truman.

[4] Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

[5] Thomas Risse-Kappen, 'Ideas Do No Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War', in Lebow and Risse-Kappen, *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War*, pp. 187–222; Matthew Evangelista, 'Transnational Relations, Domestic Structures and Security Policy in the USSR and Russia', in Thomas Risse-Kappen (ed.), *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures and International Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 3–36; Robert G. Herman, 'Identity, Norms and National Security: The Soviet Foreign Policy Revolution and the End of the Cold War', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 271–316; Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977).

[6] For example, J. Garry Clifford, 'Bureaucratic Politics', in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (eds.), *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 141–50. Standard works that argue for the economic roots of American foreign policy and the Cold War include Lloyd C. Gardner, *Architects of Illusion: Men and Ideas in American Foreign Policy, 1941–1949* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970); Gabriel and Joyce Kolko, *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945–1954* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); Thomas J. Paterson, *On Every Front: The Making and Unmaking of the Cold War*, rev. edn. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992); Thomas J. McCormick, *America's Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War*, 2nd edn. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

Gorbachev was equally successful in making his cooperative vision a reality.[7] If leaders' goals and understandings can influence and possibly transform international relations, the Cold War can be described as the emergence and ascendancy of different understandings of East-West relations.

Building bridges

All four explanations offer distinctive accounts of the origins, nature and end of the Cold War. They are nevertheless difficult to compartmentalize because with few exceptions they hold themselves out as only partial explanations for these developments and acknowledge—sometimes only tacitly—the need to rely on one or more of the other explanations to account for the remaining variance. The only exceptions are some of the power transition variants of the structural explanation.[8] They assume that changes in the distribution of power lead ineluctably to predictable changes in behaviour. This relationship is independent of historical epoch, the nature of state or the quality of its leadership. Leaders are assumed to understand the balance of power and its trends, and to respond appropriately. Leaders, like electrons, are interchangeable conveyers of forces who exercise no independent influence on events.

More sophisticated realists have proposed weaker formulations that give primacy to structure but do not succumb to the 'sin' of determinism. Hans Morgenthau, the father of modern realism, always espoused such a variant. He maintained that nuclear bipolarity could promote peace or lead to war; the outcome would depend on the moral qualities of leaders.[9] More recently, both Kenneth Oye and William Wohlforth have treated leaders' perceptions of the balance of power and its future trends as an important intervening variable.[10] Weak structural explanations build bridges to ideas, domestic structures and politics, and leaders, and indeed depend on them to impart subjective meaning to the balance of power and to explain variance under similar structural conditions.

The ideas explanation also bridges to the other explanations.[11] Ideas are prompted by experience and environmental challenges, and in this way are related to structure. *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* were a response to the economic stagnation of

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[7] Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), postscript.

[8] Dimitri Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy* (New York: Grove, Weidenfeld, 1988), ch. 54; Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, pp. 47–53; David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 253–72; On the military lessons of World War II, see Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Soviet Image of Future War* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1959).

[9] Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, pp. 347–49.

[10] Kenneth A. Oye, 'Explaining the End of the Cold War: Morphological and Behavioral Adaptations to the Nuclear Peace', in Lebow and Risse-Kappen, *International Relations and the End of the Cold War*, pp. 57–84; William C. Wohlforth, 'Realism and the End of the Cold War', *International Security*, 19 (Winter 1994–95), pp. 91–129.

[11] The need to link ideas to other explanations is specifically acknowledged by Douglas W. Blum, 'The Soviet Foreign Policy Belief System: Beliefs, Politics and Foreign Policy Outcomes', *International Studies Quarterly*, 37 (December 1993), pp. 373–94, and Jacques Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989: The USSR and the Liberation of Eastern Europe*, trans. Keith Martin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

the Soviet Union and the belief that this was due to the restraining hand of unimaginative, unresponsive party and governmental cadres. The equally important conception of common security was developed as an alternative to confrontational policies that were seen as dangerous, expensive and counter-productive.[12] In a more fundamental sense, the end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union were due to widespread disenchantment with the Leninist model of society.[13] The ideas explanation relies on domestic politics and leaders to translate ideas into policies. Ideas need support in high places, and often among a wider public as well. Ideas depend on what John Kingdon has called 'policy entrepreneurs' to bring them to the attention of policymakers who in turn use them to shape and influence the policy agenda.[14] This process has been well-studied in the Soviet context in the domain of security policy and arms control, where scientific elites and *institutchiki* are said to have been an important conduit of ideas to Gorbachev and his immediate advisors who were attracted to them as solutions to policy or political problems.[15]

The domestic politics explanation recognizes the importance of ideas but reverses the arrow of causation. Ideas sell policies rather than motivate them. Politics is about power, but advocacy of appealing ideas helps office seekers gain power. Ideas are equally essential to coalitions. They form around interests, and, in all but the most corrupt political systems, interests need to be justified to leaders, legislators and other gatekeepers in terms of broader, shared interests or values. Ideas also help

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[12] Eduard Shevardnadze, *The Future Belongs to Freedom* (New York: Free Press, 1991); Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change*; Robert Herman, 'Ideas, Identity and the Redefinition of Interests: The Political and Intellectual Origins of the Soviet Foreign Policy Revolution', PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1996; Coit D. Blacker, 'Learning in the Nuclear Age: Soviet Strategic Arms Control Policy, 1969–1989', in George Breslauer and Philip Tetlock (eds.), *Learning in US and Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991); Sarah Mendelsohn, *Changing Course: Ideas, Politics and the Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[13] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992); Fred Halliday, 'International Society as Homogeneity: Burke, Marx, Fukuyama', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 21:3 (1992), pp. 435–61; Michael Doyle, 'Liberalism and the End of the Cold War', and Rey Koslowski and Friedrich V. Kratochwil, 'Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Union's Demise and the International System', in Lebow and Risse-Kappen, *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War*, pp. 85–108 and 109–26; John Mueller, 'Realism and the End of the Cold War', in Mueller, *Quiet Cataclysm: Reflections on the Recent Transformation in World Politics* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1995), pp. 27–39; Charles W. Kegley, Jr, 'The Neo-Idealist Moment in International Studies? Realist Myths and the New International Realities', *International Studies Quarterly*, 27 (June 1993), pp. 131–47; Alexander Wendt, 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', *American Political Science Review*, 88 (June 1994), pp. 1–13.

[14] Jack Walker, 'The Diffusion of Knowledge, Policy Communities and Agenda Setting', in John Tropman, Robert Lind and Milan Dluhy (eds.), *New Strategic Perspectives on Social Policy* (New York: Pergamon, 1981), pp. 89–91; John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1984). See also, Giandomenico Majone, *Evidence, Argument and Persuasion in the Policy Process* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

[15] Thomas Risse-Kappen, 'Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War', in Lebow and Risse-Kappen, *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War*, pp. 187–222; Jeffrey T. Checkel, *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); Matthew A, Evangelista, 'Sources of Moderation in Soviet Security Policy', in Philip E. Tetlock, et al., *Behavior, Society and Nuclear War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), vol. 2, pp. 254–354, and 'The Paradox of State Strength: Transnational Relations, Domestic Structures, and Security Policy in Russia and the Soviet Union', *International Organization*, 49 (Winter 1995), pp. 1–38; Lévesque, *The Enigma of 1989*, pp. 38–41, and passim.

provide general direction and incentive to bureaucracies charged with policy implementation.

Through ideas, domestic politics and leadership bridge to structural explanations. Only the 'great man in history' approach denies the importance of structure. None of the scholars who emphasize the importance of leaders in creating or ending the Cold War subscribe to this formulation. Even in the case of Stalin, whose idiosyncratic influence is widely recognized to have been extraordinary, the debate is between those who maintain the Soviet Union could have developed less violently and more democratically under a different leader, and their critics who contend that Stalin was the inevitable product of the terror-based political system created by Lenin. This political structure is the starting point for both sides.[16]

These four explanations do not constitute distinct alternatives as much as they do different points of entry into a problem that requires a complex and multi-layered explanation. The controversy about these explanations is really about the relevant point of entry into the problem. For scholars who believe that their preferred explanation accounts for much more of the variance than competitors, this is a significant decision. For those who see their explanation as essential but not necessarily privileged, the choice is one of intellectual appeal and convenience.

The initial task for scholars of either persuasion is to identify the most promising variants of their preferred explanation, specify them sufficiently to permit their evaluation, evaluate them on the basis of the available evidence, and note the kind of additional evidence that would aid in this task. The more important, follow-on task, will then be to build bridges across these variants to construct a more comprehensive explanation for the end of the Cold War.

Bringing in process

All four explanations posit motives for leaders to seek accommodation. Wishes do not always lead to deeds. Leaders who want accommodation must devise strategies to convince protagonists of their sincerity—and may need to convince these adversaries that accommodation is also in their interest. They must then negotiate terms, and mobilize allied and domestic support for them. Attempts at accommodation can fail, stall, or prove of limited duration if leaders fail in any of these tasks. However, many structural explanations ignore process; they assume that accommodations will take place when dictated by interests. Weak structural explanations speak only of the constraints and opportunities created by structures, and do not expect accommodations to occur every time the circumstances appear to be ripe. However, proponents of these explanations only occasionally offer *ex post facto* explanations of accommodations, or failed accommodations that invoke non-structural arguments.

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[16] For recent works on Stalin that address this question, see Dimitri Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy* (New York: Grove, Weidenfeld, 1988); Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1938–1941* (New York: Norton, 1990); Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, and Robert C. Tucker, 'Sovietology and Russian History', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 8 (July-September 1992), pp. 175–96.

The ideas explanation does not address process, nor does it deny its importance. Ideas explanations, and many variants of domestic politics and leaders explanations, define their dependent variable as commitment to seek accommodation. They acknowledge that leaders' commitments are a necessary but insufficient condition for accommodation. Some domestic politics and leader explanations bridge into process to try to offer a fuller explanation. There is a growing literature on two-level games that links international negotiations with domestic politics.[17] Variants of leadership explanations sometimes address process by looking at the ways in which leaders' personalities or past experiences influence their strategies for dealing with allies and adversaries. A case in point is the work of James Goldgeier.[18] Goldgeier contends that Soviet leaders respond to their first major foreign policy crisis with the same strategy they used to win the leadership, whether or not this strategy is relevant to the crisis. Presumably, their past successes and failures would also influence how they pursue accommodation.

Most variants of our four explanations ignore process. However, the end of the Cold War cannot be understood without taking into account the interactions of leaders and bureaucracies within states, within alliances and between the superpowers and their respective blocs.

End games: path dependency

The years 1986–91 were the end game of the Cold War. In chess, an end game follows opening and middle games, but not every game reaches this stage. The structure, strategy and outcome of end games are determined by the number of pieces on the board, their location and who has tempo. End games are highly path dependent. What about the Cold War?

Path dependency is a concept developed in the physical sciences that has been most widely used in economics among the social sciences. Its strongest formulation, most appropriate to evolutionary biology, asserts that what happens at T+3 is entirely dependent on what happened at T+2, T+1 and T. If true, this would make meaningful cross-case comparison, the most common form of quantitative research in the social sciences, much more difficult. Comparisons could only be made among cases whose histories were similar in relevant dimensions. We use a more relaxed conception of path dependency here, which assumes only that the history of a conflict has a significant impact on its subsequent evolution, and that the evolution

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[17] Robert Putnam, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games, *International Organization*, 42 (Summer 1988), pp. 427–460; Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson and Robert D. Putnam (eds.), *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993); David Carment and Patrick James, 'Two-Level Games and Third Party Intervention: Evidence from Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans and South Asia', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 29 (September 1996), pp. 521–54; Jeffrey Knopf, 'Beyond Two-Level Games: Domestic-International Interaction in the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Negations', *International Organization*, 47 (Autumn 1993), pp. 599–628; Keisuke Iida, 'When and How Do Domestic Constraints Matter? Two-Level Games with Uncertainty', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 37 (September 1993), pp. 403–26; Michael McGinnis and John Williams, 'Policy Uncertainty in Two-Level Games: Examples of Correlated Equilibria', *International Studies Quarterly*, 37 (March 1993), pp. 29–54.

[18] Goldgeier, *Leadership Style and Soviet Foreign Policy*.

and outcome of the conflict cannot be understood without taking that history into account.[19]

Strong structural explanations deny dependency. When the power balance changes, leaders are expected to respond accordingly. Prior changes in the balance and past responses to them are irrelevant. Some realists acknowledge that actors do not always perceive power accurately, and weak structural explanations, as we have observed, emphasize the policy importance of perceptions. But they have made no attempt to explain perception with reference to the history of specific conflicts.

The ideas literature has long debated the relationship between ideas and the context in which they arise.[20] Structural explanations for ideas—Marxism is typical—consider them epiphenomena that have no independent existence apart from the structure that gives rise to them. Scholars who argue for the independent role of ideas in international relations acknowledge that they are to some extent context dependent. The environment provides stimuli to which people react, and also a social, political and intellectual setting that helps shape how they react. But there is ample room for individual, group and cultural variation.[21] Social concepts are generally unfalsifiable, and unlike concepts about the physical environment, can make themselves, at least in part, self-fulfilling. Leaders' beliefs that nuclear war should be avoided at almost any cost, and the recognition in the 1960s by each superpower that their adversary felt the same way, fundamentally transformed the character of the Cold War. So did Gorbachev's adoption of common security. To the extent that ideas and structures interact, any ideas-based explanation for the Cold War must to some extent be path dependent.

Domestic leadership explanations have not addressed the question of path dependency. They posit changes in leaders and coalitions that prompt changes in foreign policy, or changes in foreign policy by leaders anxious to maintain the support of coalitions and constituencies. But what produces coalitions and shifts in

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[19] Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (New York: Norton, 1989). In economics, see Brian Arthur, 'Competing Technologies, Increasing Returns, and Lock-In by Historical Events', *Economic Journal*, 106 (March 1989), pp. 116–31, and *Increasing Returns and Path Dependence in the Economy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Robin Cowan and Philip Gunby, 'Sprayed to Death: Path Dependence, Lock-In and Pest Control Strategies', *Economic Journal*, 106 (May 1996), pp. 521–42; Thrainn Eggertsson, 'The Economic of Institutions: Avoiding the Open-Field Syndrome and the Perils of Path Dependence', *Acta Sociologica*, 36:3 (1993), pp. 223–37; Eban Goodstein, 'The Economic Roots of Environmental Decline: Property Rights or Path Dependence?', *Journal of Economic Issues*, 29 (December 1995), pp. 1029–43.

[20] See, Max Weber, 'The Social Psychology of World Religions', in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958); Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory*, 8 (1969), pp. 3–53, 'Conventions and the Understanding of Speech Acts', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 20 (1970), pp. 118–38, and 'Some Problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action', *Political Theory*, 2 (1974), pp. 227–303; Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[21] See, Friedrich V. Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Nicholas Onuf, *World of Our Making* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989); Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization*, 46 (Summer 1992), pp. 391–425; David Dessler, 'What's At Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?', *International Organization*, 43 (Summer 1989), pp. 441–73. For a much narrower take on the role of ideas, see Judith Goldstein, *Ideas, Interests and American Trade Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), and Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (eds.), *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

their membership or preferences? If these phenomena are random, we need not consider their origins, only their consequences. But to the extent that they are shaped by memories of prior leaders or coalitions, their politics and results, they are path dependent. The selection of Soviet leaders is a case in point. Khrushchev, a promoter of radical reform, was succeeded by Brezhnev, a defender of the *status quo*, who was followed by Gorbachev, another radical reformer. This progression was not fortuitous. Brezhnev garnered support for his coup against Khrushchev by warning that the latter's 'hare-brained schemes' threatened the survival of the communist system. Brezhnev's orthodoxy reflected his personal preferences and his political need to maintain the support of the coalition that kept him in power. The latter all but precluded the possibility of major reform even though there was growing recognition among the leadership that the Soviet economy was performing poorly. The *zasto'i*o [stagnation] of the Brezhnev years and growing recognition within the elite that something had to be done about the economy paved the way for another reformer. By his own admission, Gorbachev's reforms were based on a careful reading of where and why Khrushchev had failed.[22] One of the challenges to domestic politics and leadership explanations is to root them in context to try to discover patterns associated with shifts in coalitions and leaders and the kinds of policies they espoused.

In a broader sense, the entire Cold War could be said to have been path dependent. American efforts to deter the Soviet Union through alliances, military buildups, forward deployments and threatening rhetoric, represented the 'lesson of Munich' and were implemented by leaders who had witnessed the failure of appeasement in the 1930s. Appeasement was a reaction to the horrors of World War I and the revisionist belief, that gained wide credence in the 1930s, that Wilhelminian Germany might have been restrained more effectively by a policy of reassurance.[23] From Moscow's perspective, attempts to extend Soviet control as far West as possible were motivated in part by the expectation that World War III would have the same cause as World War II: a crisis of capitalism that would prompt a restored Germany, backed by the Anglo-Americans, to attack the Soviet Union.[24]

The Cold War in comparative perspective

The Cold War and its dénouement need to be compared to other militarized rivalries and their outcomes. Comparison will help us to discover what is idiosyncratic about the Cold War and what it shares in common with other militarized disputes. It is

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[22] Author interviews with Georgyi Shakhnazarov, Vadim Zagladin, Mikhail Gorbachev, Moscow, May 1989.

[23] On the Munich lesson, see Ernest R. May, *'Lessons' of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Richard Ned Lebow, 'Generational Learning and Conflict Management', *International Journal*, 40 (Autumn 1985), pp. 555–85; Yuen Foong Khong, Analogies at War: *Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

[24] Volkogonov, *Stalin*, ch. 54; Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, pp. 47–53; David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 253–72; on the military lessons of World War II, see Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Soviet Image of Future War* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1959).

also essential if we are to develop and evaluate explanations for the end of the Cold War based on more general theories or understandings of conflict.

So far there has been very little comparative analysis of the Cold War. Some realists have employed variants of power transition theories to explain Gorbachev's search for accommodation, and the author has compared Soviet-American rapprochement to that of Egypt-Israel and France-Britain to develop a set of propositions about at least one pathway to accommodation.[25] Several quantitatively oriented researchers have examined the Cold War in conjunction with other rivalries.[26] Working in the interpretivist tradition, Paul Schroeder employs the *Annaliste* concept of the *histoire de longue duré* to root the Cold War in a broader cycle of transformation of the international system.[27] These several efforts are described in the chapters that address structural, domestic politics and leader explanations for the end of the Cold War.

My goal in this section of the article is to encourage comparative study of the Cold War by proposing a framework that would be attractive to a wide range of scholars regardless of which of the four generic explanations they favour. This would require reasonable specification of the dependent variable(s), protocols for case identification and coding, and an appropriate data set of successful and unsuccessful attempts at accommodation. I will argue that such a framework would also be useful to interpretivist scholars.

Recent controversies in international relations scholarship—those surrounding deterrence and the democratic peace, for example—focus at least as much on the coding and interpretation of data as they do on research design or competing explanations for political phenomena. Indeed, the debate is often over whether or not there is any phenomenon to explain. Critics dispute the 'evidence' marshalled in support of immediate deterrence successes and the democratic peace. Such controversies are inevitable and constructive to the extent they draw attention to sloppy or inappropriate case selection and coding. But they are also frustrating when they render comparisons of research findings difficult or meaningless because the scholars involved are working with different dependent variables, data sets and case coding protocols.[28]

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[25] Richard Ned Lebow, 'The Long Peace, the End of the Cold War, and the Failure of Realism', and Kenneth A. Oye, 'Explaining the End of the Cold War: Morphological and Behavioral Adaptations to the Nuclear Peace?', in Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen, *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 23–56 and 57–84. Richard Ned Lebow, 'The Search for Accommodation: Gorbachev in Comparative Perspective', in Lebow and Risse-Kappen, *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War*, pp. 167–86, and 'Transitions and Transformations: Building International Cooperation', *Security Studies*, 6 (Spring 1997), pp. 154–79.

[26] Paul F. Diehl, *The Dynamic of Enduring Rivalries* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl, 'The Initiation and Termination of Enduring Rivalries: The Impact of Political Shocks', *American Journal of Political Science*, 39 (1995), pp. 291–308.

[27] Paul W. Schroeder, 'The End of the Cold War in the Light of History', unpublished paper, January 1997.

[28] Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, 'Deterrence: The Elusive Dependent Variable', *World Politics*, 42 (April 1990), pp. 336–69; Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, 'Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference', *World Politics*, 42 (July 1990), pp. 466–501, on deterrence. The literature on the democratic peace is vast. For a recent and thoughtful review of the controversy, see Steve Chan, 'In Search of Democratic Peace: Problems and Promise', *Mershon International Studies Review*, 41, Supplement 1 (May 1997), pp. 59–92.

It is naive to assume that the latter kind of conflicts can or should be avoided. It would nevertheless be an interesting exercise—and a highly productive one if it succeeded—to try to build a consensus around a research design among a diverse community of scholars. The goal of a common research design is not to preclude other approaches—fortunately, no attempt to impose orthodoxy is ever likely to succeed—but rather to encourage a corpus of research based on the same dependent variables and data that will facilitate meaningful comparisons. The only possible way to build a consensus around a research design is to bring scholars together *before* they have carried out major research projects and have become committed to particular ways of framing the problem or of identifying and coding cases. As so little comparative research has been conducted on the peaceful resolution of militarized rivalries, this might be an attractive problem in which to try such a cooperative strategy.

The starting point for any research design is the dependent variable. Just what is it that we want to explain? Peaceful accommodation is the greatest enigma associated with the Cold War. Even a cursory review of the literature on accommodation reveals that the concept is often left undefined or used differently by different researchers. I propose a three-stage conceptualization of accommodation based on the recognition that the first, and most essential, step toward any meaningful accommodation is reduction of the threat of war. Every accommodation must start with this goal, and some do not go beyond it. Egypt and Israel are currently stalled at this stage. Since the Camp David Accords and the peace treaty they signed in 1979, the threat of war between these former adversaries has significantly diminished. Both countries have redeployed their forces away from each other's borders, adhered to the terms of the political-military agreements to which they are signatories and have refrained from provocative military actions or manoeuvres directed against the other. Egyptian and Israeli analysts, and outside experts, judge the risk of war between them to be extremely low, and this despite acute tensions in the region that have led to deteriorating political relations.

Israeli-Egyptian rapprochement has not progressed beyond the stage of war reduction. There is a limited exchange of tourists, most of them Israelis who visit Cairo and Red Sea beach resorts, hardly any trade, and the Egyptian media remain staunchly anti-Israel in substance and tone. It is possible that in the aftermath of an Israeli-Palestinian accord, and an upturn in the Egyptian economy that reduced the influence of fundamentalists, the two countries might increase their trade and social contacts. Egypt under a different government—the worst case being a fundamentalist regime that encouraged similar movement elsewhere in the Middle East— and a failed peace process between Israel and the Palestinians could escalate tension to the point where another war would become conceivable.

More profound accommodations involve a broader range of positive political, military, economic and social interactions that build a trajectory of cooperation and goodwill between former adversaries. These interactions must involve peoples, businesses, educational and cultural organizations, local and regional authorities, not just national governments. They must become institutionalized at all levels, creating a common interest and mutual expectations of further cooperation and raising the costs of defection. Over time, cooperation must be seen by peoples and leaders alike as the 'natural' order of things, and war, not only unlikely, but almost unthinkable. Karl Deutsch called this stage of accommodation a 'security

community'.[29] The United States and Britain, Britain and France, France and Germany, and the United States and Japan can all be said to have reached this stage of accommodation.

Other accommodations, like Russia and Germany, Russia and the United States, and China and the United States, are best classified as transitional. Foreign relations with former adversaries are focused on the resolution or diminution of political friction and the expansion of trade and other kinds of intercourse. These dyads have passed beyond the first stage of accommodation and their relations are characterized by some of the characteristics that promote security communities. In the American accommodation with Russia and China, intergovernmental tension remains muted to acute over a range of issues (e.g. human rights, nuclear weapons, NATO expansion, Taiwan). Only time will tell if cooperation between these former adversaries deepens, broadens and become more institutionalized, stalls, or slips back toward confrontation.

My threefold categorization attempts to capture distinctive stages of a process that is sequential but neither inevitable nor irreversible. It allows us to track and assess the progress of militarized rivalries toward accommodation, and to make appropriate comparisons across cases. As each stage of the process has different defining features, it is likely to be characterized by a distinct set of dynamics. The catalysts for each stage, and the conditions that facilitate and sustain it, are also likely to be different. For purposes of analysis, the *problematique* of accommodation is best studied in discrete, well-defined stages. This is the implicit assumption of this volume, whose chapters speak primarily to the attainment of stage one.

Judging when and where a particular stage begins or ends, or what stage of accommodation describes specific conflict, will always be a matter of interpretation. It could plausibly be argued that the Cold War moved toward the first stage of accommodation with the détente of the late 1960s, slipped back to confrontation in the middle 1970s, and moved more convincingly into the first stage in the late 1980s. In the early 1990s, following the unification of Germany, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia's relations with the countries of Western Europe and the United States moved into the transitional stage. The periodization of the Cold War, by this or any other scheme, encourages us to think conceptually about the broader context of Gorbachev's foreign policy revolution and the end of the Cold War it helped to bring about. The interpretation I offer above, for example, suggests the proposition that the accommodation initiated by Gorbachev was predicated upon earlier, if temporarily aborted, progress toward significantly reducing the threat of war. Does this hold true in other cases?

If the end of the Cold War represents the decisive attainment of stage one with subsequent progress toward stage two, we would want to compare it to other militarized rivalries that have also at least moved as far toward accommodation. For this, we need an appropriate data that could be used by quantitatively and qualitatively oriented researchers to develop and test a wide range of propositions

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[29] According to Karl W. Deutsch, et al., *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 5–6, a security community exists where 'there is a real assurance that members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way'. Deutsch distinguished between amalgamated security communities, where there has been a formal merger of two more previously independent units, and pluralistic communities in which separate governments retain legal independence.

about accommodation and its causes. Researchers interested in enduring rivalries and militarized rivalries have constructed data sets that could serve as useful starting points for our effort.[30] William Thompson and Paul Diehl and Gary Goertz are both assembling data sets of enduring rivalries. Diehl and Goertz expect to produce a comprehensive list of rivalries for a 175 year period ending in 1992. We could apply our criteria to decide which of these cases to include, and then proceed to identify all attempts at accommodation made by either protagonist, and determine their outcomes. We could also chart the progress any of these rivalries made through different stages of accommodation, and identify those that were resolved peacefully (reached the third stage of accommodation). Other questions could be posed to reflect the interests of participating international relations scholars.

A data set of this kind is a major undertaking that requires the assistance of historians with detailed knowledge of these rivalries. We would need to involve historians whose collective expertise covers the time period, regions and conflicts included in the data set. The political scientists involved in the project would have to provide the historians with appropriate conceptual tools including precise working definitions of attempts at accommodation, success and failure, and of the three stages of accommodation—or of any other typology about which we all concur. If possible, we should ask more than one historian to search and evaluate each conflict, and send controversial cases to a panel of historians for assessment. The historians could also be asked to flag those cases, or aspects of them, they find difficult or problematic to code. In all cases, the historians should provide short written justifications of their judgments concerning attempts at accommodation, their outcomes and the stages these conflicts passed through. If there is considerable variation in judgment across historians concerning particular cases, we could produce more than one version of our data set to allow researchers to see how robust their findings are across these several sets.

The resulting data set would provide the empirical basis for a major collaborative project by a diverse group of international relations scholars. Participants could formulate individual research designs and propositions and use the data set to test them. Quantitatively oriented scholars could do cross-case comparisons, and qualitatively disposed scholars could study a sample of cases in detail. Individual scholars from the two groups should be encouraged to cooperate; scholars with quantitative interests and skills could help their qualitative colleagues test propositions they have developed from cases in larger samples. Scholars with case study skills could help their quantitative colleagues try to establish causation through process tracing in selected cases. Both groups might profit from the deductive theories and insights of formal or computational modellers.

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[30] Charles. S. Gochman and Zeev Maoz, 'Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816–1976', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 28 (December 1984), pp. 585–615; Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl, 'The Empirical Importance of Enduring Rivalries', *International Interactions*, 18:2 (1992), pp. 151–63, and 'The Initiation and Termination of Enduring Rivalries: The Impact of Political Shocks', *American Journal of Political Science*, 39 (February 1995), pp. 30–52, and 'Enduring Rivalries: Theoretical Constructs and Empirical Patterns', *International Studies Quarterly*, 37 (June 1993), pp. 147–71; William R. Thompson, 'Principal Rivalries', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 39 (1995), pp. 195–223; John A. Vasquez, 'Distinguishing Rivals That Go to War from Those That Do Not: A Quantitative Comparative Case Study of the Two Paths to War', *International Studies Quarterly*, 40 (December 1996), pp. 531–58.

We would need the further assistance from the historians after the initial stage of quantitative and case study research. Propositions that appear robust in explaining attempts at accommodation need to be tested against a sample that allows variation on the dependent variable. This should be relatively straightforward for efforts to explain the success and failure of attempts at accommodation because our data set is almost certain to include both outcomes. It is more difficult for explanations of attempts at accommodation because the data set would be composed entirely of such events. I hypothesize that one of the situations in which leaders seek accommodation is when (1) they are committed to domestic reforms that they believe require accommodation with a foreign adversary for strategic and tactical reasons; (2) are convinced that confrontation has failed in the past and will fail again in the future; and (3) expect their conciliatory overtures to be reciprocated. To test the null hypothesis, I would have to go back and search the conflicts for the presence of these conditions on occasions other than those where leaders made or even seriously considered attempts at accommodation. I would have to reconsider my explanation if I find such examples. The help of historians would be essential in testing this and other explanations for attempts at accommodation.

I have described a standard cross-case research design. This research strategy can be problematic in international relations. Cross-case comparison requires independence among cases; the outcome of one cannot be influenced by the outcome of another. It seems self-evident that this condition does not hold in many attempts at accommodation. Successful accommodations can become catalysts for other accommodations because they encourage trust or optimism or because of the strategic dilemmas they create for third parties. The Anglo-French Entente made Anglo-Russian rapprochement possible, and France played an important role behind the scenes in bringing it about. The Israeli-Palestinian breakthrough in Oslo promptly led to an Israeli-Jordanian rapprochement. The end of the Cold War has had global reverberations, and to varying degrees and for different reasons, has been a catalyst for accommodation in interstate and internal conflicts in Northeast and South Asia, the Middle East and Southern Africa.

The end of the Cold War in turn might be understood as the result of a deeper transformation. Some liberals might contend that it was due to the spread of democratic ideas and widespread desires for a market economy, and that this also accounts for recent progress toward accommodation elsewhere in the world. According to Paul Schroeder, the Cold War was a struggle to work out a new, practical definition of peace that could become the basis for legitimate international order. The end of the Cold War, and progress toward accommodations elsewhere, reflect the emergence and wide acceptance of such a definition. Cross-case comparisons that studied conflicts without taking such underlying, contextual features into account could fail to capture the most essential features of the phenomenon under study.

Cross-case comparison can also be insensitive to the internal history of the conflicts. As noted earlier, at least some scholars believe that the kind of accommodation set in motion by Gorbachev's foreign policy revolution would have been difficult to achieve at an earlier stage of the East-West conflict. No Soviet leader would have had the incentive or latitude to make the kinds of unilateral concessions that Gorbachev did or to expect a conciliatory and self-restrained response on the part of the West. Sino-American accommodation is similarly difficult to imagine in

the 1950s or 1960s, given the still-fresh memories of war, unresolved and potentially explosive conflicts concerning Taiwan and the political future of Indochina, and the domestic constraints operating in Peking and Washington. To understand accommodation, conflicts need to be put into historical context in a triple sense. They are dependent on the prior course and evolution of the conflict; developments in other conflicts, especially those to which they are in some way connected; and more general shifts in power capabilities and ideas in the international system or community. Adequate conceptual tools to relate individual conflicts to these contextual influences have yet to be developed.

Quantitative research on accommodation can incorporate contextual features by relying on typologies of conflict that capture salient features of context, and limit comparisons to cases in the same cells. Can such typologies be developed? Neopositivists are likely to be more optimistic than interpretivists, who tend to stress the idiosyncratic features of individual conflicts and the importance of path dependency. Here too, some kind of collaboration could be fruitful. Quantitative and case study researchers, the latter drawn from both neopositivist and more interpretivist perspectives, might work together to understand the different ways in which features of context help and hinder accommodation, and to debate their implications for individual cases and cross-case comparisons.

Test—Evaluate—Verify

The need to develop compound explanations for the end of the Cold War should be recognized by scholars regardless of their point of entry into the analytical puzzle. The starting point of such a venture is identification, specification and evaluation of the most promising variants of our four generic explanations. None of these variants in and of itself can provide a compelling explanation for the end of the Cold War. But they are the building blocks for compound explanations that may succeed in this task and, by doing so, direct our attention to building theories that combine explanations across levels of analysis.

An enterprise of this kind requires agreed-upon protocols to test or evaluate variants of the four generic explanations for the end of the Cold War. I use both the verbs test and evaluate because the proposed enterprise should be open to participants from both the neopositivist and interpretivist traditions.

Testing is relevant to cause-and-effect propositions rooted in the nomothetic idea that recurrent law-like processes exist. Testing takes two forms: prediction and explanation. Prediction attempts to establish association between the expectations of a theory or proposition and real-world behaviour, past, present or future. The data set used for testing must be different from the one from which the theory or propositions may have been derived. Explanation identifies the causal mechanisms responsible for the predicted outcome. In social science, explanation—as distinct from association—is most frequently established by process tracing, where researchers use case studies to document the links between the causal mechanisms that are posited and the behaviour in question.

Evaluation is appropriate to the interpretivist perspective, where understanding (*verstehen*) is the goal, and is rooted in the assumptions that reason and irrationality

are constitutive of actors and the societies in which they are embedded. Interpretivists deny the feasibility of objective theories of social behaviour. The purpose of social science is to help us understand our own lives, individually and collectively. History is a repository of human experience that each generation examines anew from the perspective of its own experience and concerns. There is no one correct way of framing or analysing a problem, but multiple interpretations that generate different and valuable insights. Interpretivist scholarship also aspires to high professional standards. It can be evaluated by the quality of its narrative. Does it provide a coherent explanation that makes sense of the empirical evidence in terms of the subjective understandings relevant actors have of this evidence, themselves and the social context in which they operate? Other accounts may also 'fit' the evidence, and competing accounts ought to be further evaluated on the basis of their 'generative' properties. Do they highlight and draw attention to hitherto unknown or neglected processes, turning points and collective understandings that raise interesting questions and prompt research into them? Such a research agenda may succeed in redefining in fundamental ways our conception of the Cold War. Some interpretivists contend that research can also be evaluated in terms of the insights it offers into contemporary life and its problems.

The two traditions are generally thought of as antithetical, or at least orthogonal, but they intersect in interesting ways. Both base their legitimacy on compelling interpretation of empirical evidence. For many interpretivists case analysis is the ultimate goal, while for positivists it is only a means to the end of theory building and testing. Positivistic approaches to international relations have traditionally placed more emphasis on deductive theory building and statistical techniques of testing than they have on the interpretative problems involved in data set construction and the coding of cases. In recent years, quantitative researchers have become more sensitive to these problems and more open to dialogue with qualitative researchers, some of whom work in the interpretivist tradition. A recent, prominent study of research methods in international relations contends that qualitative researchers should emulate the methodological rigour of their quantitative colleagues.[31] But many quantitative researchers recognize that they can also profit from the methods and experience of qualitative researchers.

Large *n* studies depend on typologies to provide relevant categories of analysis and to code cases either on the dependent or independent variables. In international relations, most typologies are based on structural characteristics (e.g. polarity) of the environment or behaviour (e.g. deterrence) of actors. Case selection is based on the fit of cases with these structural or behavioural criteria, and cases are then selected to provide variation on dependent and independent variables. Typologies, case selection and coding are often treated as unproblematic, or merely technical questions. Interpretivist case research, which emphasizes the intersubjective understandings actors have of themselves, other actors, their relationships with these actors, and the environment, suggests that categories of analysis used by international relations scholars often bear little relationship to the categories and case interpretations actors use to frame problems, evaluate their interests, make policy

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[31] Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Quantitative Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). See also the critical review symposium in *American Political Science Review*, 89 (June 1995), pp. 454–82.

and draw lessons. Interpretivist scholarship suggests that it is necessary to work with the subjective understandings of actors to understand or predict their behaviour.

Theories of unit level behaviour with categories of analysis irrelevant to or different from those of actors are not likely to model their behaviour well. Theories with more appropriate categories, but which rely on observers rather than actors to apply these categories to specific cases, are likely to fail for the same reason. The deterrence literature illustrates both problems. Neopositivist analyses of immediate deterrence have assumed that the military balance and reputation are the decisive categories of analysis for challengers and defenders. Interpretivist case studies indicate otherwise. They also reveal that the roles of challenger and defender—the categories on which the theory and strategy of deterrence are premised—are rarely shared understandings; both sides in so-called immediate deterrence encounters are likely to see themselves as the defender and the other side as the challenger. Interpretivists contend that statistical findings based on the codings of scholar-observers at variance with those of actors are meaningless.[32]

Some neopositivist scholars have rejected this critique out of hand.[33] A more responsive approach would be to construct typologies and other categories of analysis on the basis of actors' subjective understandings of themselves, other actors and their environment. Theories of this kind would be more rigorous in the proper sense of the term and likely to have a better fit with the empirical reality they purport to explain and predict. Such an approach would require a greatly expanded dialogue between large *n* and case researchers, and greater investment in case and data interpretation by quantitative researchers, but the payoff might be commensurate with the effort.

And back to the empirical

Good social science requires explanation as well as prediction. Theories are incomplete if they do not specify the reasons why the outcomes they predict occur. They remain unsubstantiated even if the predicted outcome occurs because it could be the result of co-variation and explained better by some other theory. Case studies are an ideal vehicle for the kind of process that helps to show causation by documenting the links between independent and dependent variables. The nature of these links will vary as a function of the *explanans*. For structural theories that expect actors to react to the constraints and opportunities of the international or domestic environment, it is necessary to show that policymakers understood these constraints and opportunities and formulated the initiatives in response to them. For idea-based explanations, researchers must establish that policymakers were motivated by goals associated with these ideas, or framed the policy problem and their interests in terms

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[32] Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); Beyond Deterrence, George Levinger (ed.), *Journal of Social Issues*, 43:4 (1987); Paul C. Stern, Robert Axelrod, Robert Jervis, Roy Radner (eds.), *Perspectives on Deterrence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); The Rational Deterrence Debate: A Symposium, *World Politics*, 41 (January 1989), pp. 143–266.

[33] Huth and Russett, 'Testing Deterrence Theory', and Lebow and Stein, 'Deterrence: The Elusive Dependent Variable'.

of them. Leader-based explanations must demonstrate the connections between leaders' decisions and their goals, personalities and subjective understanding of their environment.

Process tracing makes heavy requirements on data, and even in data-rich situations it is often difficult to document the motives and calculations of key actors. In the Soviet Union, access to key archives is still restricted and uncertain, and pessimists in this field worry that the window of opportunity we have been exploiting may close in post-Yeltsin Russia. We have also benefited from interviews with former Soviet, American and European officials who were key participants in the decisions that ended the Cold War. Most of these officials are still alive and retain vivid, if not always accurate, memories of these events. Documents are essential for process tracing, but recent studies of Cold War crises indicate that they can be incomplete and sometimes misleading. The Soviet decision to deploy missiles in Cuba in May 1962 was shrouded in secrecy, and very few written records were kept by the handful of officials involved in its planning and initial execution. On the American side, President Kennedy deliberately avoided leaving any paper trail of his agreement to withdraw the Jupiter missiles from Turkey in return for withdrawal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba. In October 1973, Leonid Brezhnev made all the important decisions concerning Soviet Middle East policy in consultation with a small circle of advisors, and few records were kept of their deliberations. Process tracing of the decisions that led to the end of the Cold War must rely on oral as well as written evidence.[34]

The Soviet Union was one of the most secret societies the world has known, and it was not until the era of *glasnost* that Russian or Western scholars could gather the kind of evidence necessary to conduct meaningful case studies. The recent flow of evidence has encouraged high expectations about resolving some of the mysteries of the Soviet system and its leaders, and much of interest has come to light. New evidence from archives, interviews and conferences will never produce a definitive 'answer' to the question of what brought the Cold War to an end.[35] Nor is it likely that a consensus will form around any variant explanation, or combination of variants. An analogy to 1914 is relevant. The outpouring of documents and memoirs on the origins of World War I fuelled, rather than resolved, controversy. But it also encouraged a more sophisticated debate by discrediting early, simplistic explanations (e.g. the Kaiser planned a war of aggression), and elicited more complex and nuanced explanations that built on evidence and insights from social science. By compelling scholars to specify different pathways to war, the *Kriegschuldfrage* also provided conceptual lenses and analogies that proved useful in understanding the Cold War and other conflicts. In sum, the decades-long debate over the origins of World War I, while still unresolved, was an important catalyst for the development both of international relations theory and foreign policy thinking. President Kennedy's reluctance to carry out an air strike in the Cuban missile crisis derived in large part from his earlier reading of Barbara Tuchman's *The Guns of August*, and its portrayal of World War I as a case of runaway, mutual escalation. There is every reason to expect that rigorous study of the end of the Cold War, based on new

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[34] Lebow and Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War*, pp. 9–14, for a fuller discussion of this problem.
[35] This point is also made by William Wohlforth, 'New Evidence on Moscow's Cold War: Ambiguity in Search of Theory', *Diplomatic History*, 21 (Spring 1997), pp. 229–42.

empirical evidence, better specification, and even reformulation of existing explanations, their evaluation by means of an in-depth case study, and subsequently, by comparative analysis, will generate the same kinds of theoretical and policy insights into the process of accommodation.