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Contents

Introduction by Christy Thornton, Johns Hopkins University .......................................................... 2

Review by Cornel Ban, Copenhagen Business School ................................................................. 5

Review by Hyoung-kyu Chey, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Tokyo ....10

Review by Kathleen R. McNamara, Georgetown University ...................................................... 15

Review by Erin A. Snider, Texas A&M University ........................................................................ 18

Review by Troy Vettese, European University Institute ............................................................ 22

Response by Eric Helleiner, University of Waterloo ................................................................. 27
When I was approached by H-Diplo’s Thomas Maddux about whether Eric Helleiner’s latest book, The Contested World Economy: The Deep and Global Roots of International Political Economy warranted a roundtable, he wondered if this book was more than a textbook: was it just meant to be a kind of synthetic teaching tool? As I assured him, and as the reviews in this forum make more than clear, while it will be incredibly useful for teaching, this work is, in fact, a major interpretive revision of the history of international political economy, one that fundamentally challenges key assumptions of the field and sets out multiple new agendas for future research. And the resulting roundtable, gathered here, is useful in its own right: A read through the footnotes of these reviews, in fact, could structure a quite comprehensive graduate field exam in the history of international political economy.

All of the reviewers agree that the book is, as Erin Snider puts it, an “exciting and pathbreaking contribution.” This is a book that “stands to define the way the International Political Economy (IPE) community sees itself,” as Cornell Ban argues, arguing that the book will usher in an epochal change in how IPE is taught, researched, and understood as a field. Traditional narratives of the history of IPE that emerged after the 1970s focused on what one reviewer calls the field’s “three orthodoxies”—liberalism, neomercantilism, and Marxism—and did so almost entirely in Western perspective. Helleiner’s book fundamentally rewrites this history, not only adding perspectives from beyond the Western cannon, but also adding new thematic emphases—particularly feminist and environmentalist thought—that have fallen outside the core of IPE’s own self-narration as a field. As Troy Vettese puts it, Helleiner has done “yeoman’s service in collating a wide array of thinkers who have never before been put into conversation with one another.”

The reviews highlight some key contributions of the book. Against a the traditional diffusionist narrative that centers the history of economic thought in Europe, for example, the reviewers note that a core theme is the idea that “the international flows of IPE ideas were multidirectional, moving not only from the West to the rest of the world but in the reverse directions as well,” as Hyoung-kyu Chey puts it. Thus, as Cornell Ban argues, the field has actually been structured not by Western diffusion, but instead by “reflexive translations that cut both ways and, most importantly, often independent originations of ideas in the Global South, with many of them impossible to fit in the Procrustean bed that is the IPE trinity.” In addition, the book highlights that, as Erin Snider notes, “contemporary concerns in IPE about both the environment and feminism have far deeper roots than most scholars realize.” Further, the reviewers emphasize, Helleiner not only widens the lens on the history of economic thought, but he also highlights what Chey calls “the internal divisions within each of the three orthodoxies,” to demonstrate the active, contested debates that occurred within the parameters of what we came to understand as liberalism, neomercantilism, and Marxism.

Also key, as multiple reviewers note, is the emphasis on the importance of normative ideas to this history of economic thought, what Kathleen McNamara calls “debates about what ‘should’ be, instead of only more narrowly positivist hypotheses.” The thinkers Helleiner covers stress “how the world economy should work,” as Chey puts it, “in other words, how we should run and build it.” Snider echoes this, arguing that these are perspectives that “mainstream IPE analyses often ignore to the detriment of the field’s development and reach.”

In this light, both Vettese and Ban focus on what this book can tell us about perhaps the most important contemporary debate about the global economy: how to structure the transition away from fossil fuels and toward a green energy future. While the reviews by scholars of International Political Economy are overwhelmingly positive, Vettese’s review is the outlier here—not only because it takes a historian’s perspective, rather than that of an IPE scholar, but because he argues specifically for the utility of the Marxist perspective in particular. The author responds at length to Vettese’s criticisms, making for a lively debate.
Finally, the reviews also note that the book opens up numerous avenues of future research. Multiple reviewers suggest that there is more work to be done on what McNamara calls “the phenomenon of localization,” or on the ways in which ideas about the global economy were shaped by the context in which they were constructed; as Chey suggests, about the “actual influence of economic liberal ideas that emerged endogenously, in the regions of their emergence and especially in those outside the Western world.” This work of deeply contextualizing economic thinkers in their own political-economic contexts and addressing “the question of why certain ideas win out over others,” as McNamara puts it, is a promising avenue for future research, not only by IPE scholars but perhaps even more fruitfully by historians with language skills and area expertise.

But Helleiner’s book, the reviewers agree, has implications far beyond historiography. As McNamara puts it, there are lessons here for “debates about where we should go today after the neoliberal international order.” As Chey asks, given the surprising “decentralized universality” of some of the ideas covered here, “does it suggest that the foundation of contemporary neoliberalism may be more fragile than it currently looks?” As these reviews make clear, although The Contested World Economy limits is coverage to the period before 1945, it speaks to some of our most pressing questions about the way the global economy works today.

Contributors:

Eric Helleiner is Professor and University Research Chair in the Department of Political Science at the University of Waterloo. His most recent books include The Contested World Economy: The Deep and Global Roots of International Political Economy (Cambridge University Press, 2023), The Neomercantilists: A Global Intellectual History (Cornell University Press, 2021), The Status Quo Crisis: Global Financial Governance after the 2008 Meltdown (Oxford University Press, 2014), and Forgotten Foundations of Brett. On Woods: International Development and the Making of the Postwar World (Cornell University Press, 2014). He is currently researching how the IPE of finance and money is intersecting with global environmental politics.

Christy Thornton is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and the co-chair of the Program in Latin American, Caribbean, and the Latinx Studies at Johns Hopkins University. She also co-directs, with Quinn Slobodian, the History and Political Economy Project. She is the author of Revolution in Development: Mexico and the Governance of the Global Economy (University of California Press, 2021).

Cornel Ban is an Associate Professor of International Political Economy at Copenhagen Business School and has previously taught at Brown University and Boston University. His research covers the political economy of the translation of economic ideas, the financialization of growth models and policy change in international economic institutions. His book Ruling Ideas: How Neoliberalism Goes Local (Oxford University Press 2016) deals with the translation of neoliberalism in Spain and Romania while his current book project deals with the macro-financial regimes of US, European and Chinese approaches to decarbonization.

Kathleen R. McNamara is Professor of Government and Foreign Service at Georgetown University. Her work focuses on central banking, industrial policy, the European Union, and the transatlantic relationship, with particular interest in how markets, power, and culture interact. She is the author of *The Politics of Everyday Europe: Constructing Political Authority in the European Union* (Oxford University Press, 2015) and *The Currency of Ideas: Monetary Politics in the European Union* (Cornell University Press, 1998), as well as articles in *Comparative Political Studies, International Organization, JCMS, Journal of European Public Policy*, and *Review of International Political Economy*. At Georgetown, she co-directs, with Professor Abe Newman, the Global Political Economy Project, which seeks to reinvent the study of globalization in a post-neoliberal world. McNamara received her PhD in Political Science from Columbia University and her BA Honours in Geography from McGill University.

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Troy Vettese is an environmental historian based at the European University Institute in Fiesole, where he is affiliated with ECOINT (https://www.ecoint.org/). Since graduating from New York University in 2019, Vettese has held post-doctoral positions at Harvard University and the University of Copenhagen. His scholarly and popular writing has appeared in *Critical Historical Studies, Historical Materialism, New Left Review, the Guardian, n+1, the New Statesman, and Boston Review*. He is currently writing a book on neoliberal environmental thought.
“Globalizing and Deepening the Intellectual History of International Political Economy”

Eric Helleiner has penned a momentous book of intellectual history that stands to define the way the International Political Economy (IPE) community sees itself. This tour de force poses a dramatic and, to this reader, page-turning challenge to the memorialization of IPE in the existing classic works as a post-1945 field of Western academia that is organized intellectually around three orthodoxies steeped in British and North-American academia: liberalism, neomercantilism and Marxism. While discussions of the blind spots in IPE led some scholars to distinguish between conceptual and empirical blind spots, this book tells us that they have had intellectual history blind spots all along. As such, Helleiner’s book, which dovetails with his recent work on de-centering Western-centric perspectives on key political economy events (Bretton Woods) and ideas (neomercantilism) does for the intellectual history of IPE what John Hobson recently did for the material history of the global economy as it is conventionally narrated: retell with gusto and erudition a global and much older story.

Specifically, in Helleiner’s accounts we see non-Western figures not just translating the three Western orthodoxies in very creative ways but also developing strands of thought that do not fit the conceptual boundaries of those orthodoxies, while influencing Western thought in the process. Helleiner shows that the codification of the three Western orthodoxies is riveted with essentialization problems and leads to the erasure of an entire raft of traditions that may, at times, go a longer way than the orthodox trinity itself in explaining the past or our agonizing polycrisis puzzles, from environmentalism and feminism to Pan-Islamism and economic regionalism while, in many cases, blending progressive and imperialist economics in unexpected ways. Helleiner’s opus, instead, sees IPE as a more polyphonic and better historicized intellectual space in which the usual hierarchies collapse. If decolonizing the syllabus is the natural consequence of the self-critical conversation being carried out in the field has been seen by many scholars as a daunting enterprise, it should not have been after Contesting the Global Economy hit the bookstores.

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1 The most monumental memorialization of IPE as a field was authored by Ben Cohen in his International Political Economy: An Intellectual History (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).
Still, this book’s revisionist intellectual history of IPE starts with Adam Smith rather than, say, Ibn Khaldoun or Chen Hongmou because Smith’s 1776 *Wealth of Nations* was the first book with a global impact, with authors from places as different as Japan and India seeing it as a point of inception beginning with the late nineteenth century. As such, *Contesting* rereads the orthodox IPE trinity with an eye that brings into relief contradictions and tensions riveting the supposed intellectual cohesion and prescriptive flatness of each of the three schools of thought. For example, this reader was particularly struck by major disruptions in the conventional narrative of liberalism by the myriad of illiberal exceptions to, say, comparative advantage or the role of military force in a liberal world. Equally disrupting are highlights of the ideas for which celebrity names are not well-known for. John Maynard Keynes, for example, is celebrated in IPE as the pillar of modern macroeconomics and architect of the regulated, yet, ultimately, globalized trade and financial system were ushered in by the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference. Helleiner makes us confront our clichés and bring out the lesser known Keynes of the pleas for culturally cosmopolitan autarky in the name of resilience, environmental sustainability (and, of course, this being Keynes…beauty). Autarky in Communist and Nazi economics is not surprising, but Keynes’ liberal autarky is.

Equally interesting are the translations of liberalism by non-European traditions. For example, Indian thought in the early nineteenth century saw in liberalism an anti-extractivist weapon at the time when the combination of native suppression of private enterprise and British exploitation through the East India Company devastated the Indian economy. At the same time, some Indian thinkers translated liberalism through a developmental set of lenses. For example, mid-nineteenth century reformer Rammohun Roy presciently envisaged that liberal trade was a double-edged sword: emancipatory for local producers but also skewed in favor of commodity traders and landlords. In Roy’s view, a reflexive Indian liberal should have supported the development of a manufacturing sector using European technology and capital, so as to boost manufactured, not commodity exports. That Roy saw in British imperialism in self-orientalizing mode, as an enabling condition of development (providing that settlement would be limited to Europeans of means) makes easy categorization of such translations as emancipatory always and everywhere quite difficult, however. Similarly developmental translations of liberalism were specific to East Asian and Latin American thought as well, a pattern that points at a distinctive hybridity in the deep history of liberalism in the Global South.

Similarly, in Africa, liberalism was deployed in anti-slavery campaigns not just by European abolitionists like Adam Smith, but also by locals, such as Benin-born Olaudah Equiano, an ex-slave himself, whose book published in 1789 saw translations in many languages. A century later, other African liberals followed Latin American and Asian liberals in putting a developmental spin on liberalism, with arguments for state-led infrastructure development and subsidies for infant industries so as to avoid the European empires’ extractivist traps.

Neomercantilism and Marxism also saw extensive translations of their concepts and arguments. From China to Egypt, non-European neomercantilism generated a plethora of distinctive policy ideas that do not appear in American or European thought: state trading companies, multinational public business zones, and the public management of foreign capital. Again, easy intellectual correlations often defy contemporary expectations and sensibilities. Indeed, many of the figures of European Marxism and non-European
liberalism (but also neomercantilism) resist easy integration into contemporary sensibilities and correlations, as arguments that are in one way traceable to emancipatory goals are in other ways steeped in demands for empire (be it British or Ottoman) or the compensation of slave owners (as suggested by liberal Hassouna d’Ghies, a Francophile Libyan son of a slave owning family).

Interestingly, the economic case for China as a counter-hegemon and even dominant empire was made by neomercantilists like Ling Chao who in the early twentieth century embraced the German historical school’s support for imperialism to make the case for China as the world’s most prominent empire. Revisionist Marxists like Eduard Bernstein made civilizational arguments in favor of imperialism while Rosa Luxembourg, a revered figure of the Marxist tradition, made passionate cases for Japanese imperialism as a way to remove Western imperialism from Asia, modernize the continent and, in the process, lay the foundations of a powerful proletariat that could bring the Communist revolution in that part of the world.

On this issue, Helleiner aptly contextualizes debates showing how difficult it was for Marxists to cope with real-world issues when their reverence for Marx clashed with the master’s woefully flawed assumption that revolutions would lead to a federation of socialist countries, leaving Marxists to grab at straws. Thus, while some embraced the imperative of autarkic national Communist economies, such as in the work of the less known Georg Vollmar¹¹ and Carl Ballod,¹² or of cooperative free trade eventually embedded in rational planning, such as in the case of the anti-nationalist Rolf Hilferding, whose thought might be of interest to the IPE of decarbonization through ecological planning, for example.

Current interest in dealing with the blind spots of IPE could benefit from Helleiner’s mapping of radical adaptations of Marxism to the study of racism, imperialism, and religion. Peruvian Marxist Jose Carlos Mariategui, for example, appears as a particularly interesting figure here, with his pleas for decolonizing Marxist thought through the valuing of indigenous experiences in the lived socialism of Latin American peoples that the Comintern arrogantly dismissed. While Mao Zedong’s Sinification of Marxism is well-known, the Indonesian Tan Malaka’s is not. This is a big loss considering his rich work on linking Marxist and Islamist political economic thought and even making, in the Comintern no less, the case for an alliance between Communism and Islam to fight imperialism, a point which is not remote from the discourse (if less frequently the systematic thinking) of some parts of Marxists today.

This reader felt even more grateful to Helleiner for pointing out that not everything in the IPE triptych was a translation of Western thought. Chinese and Japanese thinkers, for example, developed liberal ideas in the eighteenth century independently of European liberals like Adam Smith and François Quesnay. Key ideas we attribute to the Wealth of Nations were published by Chinese scholars five years before Smith’s celebrated opus. Likewise, Chinese neomercantilist thought, such as that of late nineteenth-century merchant and reformer Zheng Guanying¹³ or Sun Yat-sen,¹⁴ the much storied statesman and theorist of the early twentieth century, was crafted independently of European and American neomercantilist writings and was instead steeped in China’s ancient legalist tradition. As such, basic international institutions that we take for granted, such as the concept of a world bank owned by all states, are first mentioned in Chinese rather than European

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¹² Carl Ballod. Die Lebensfähigkeit der städtischen und ländlichen Bevölkerung (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1897).
thought. Furthermore, IPE courses attribute the connection between imperialism, war, and revolution to Lenin and Luxembourg, yet it is Japanese Marxist Kotoku Shusui who first worked on it.\textsuperscript{15}

Helleiner’s book a rich source of pre-1945 intellectual history for IPE scholars who are working on the climate crisis in both anthropocentric and ecocentric ways,\textsuperscript{16} or in green growth\textsuperscript{17} or post-growth ways.\textsuperscript{18} IPE scholars often situate environmentalism completely outside the liberal tradition by citing Smith’s crass extractivism. Instead, Helleiner reminds us that it was liberal German scientist (and polymath) Alexander von Humboldt,\textsuperscript{19} a monumental figure of late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries who pioneered modern environmentalism by tracing the mechanisms of environmental degradation to modern mechanisms such as monocrops, deforestation, and imperialism. Similarly, the principle of subordinating commerce to environmental considerations, including via green clauses in trade treaties, was first defended by British economist Stanley Jevons, whose name is largely remembered in the context of the Jevons paradox of fame\textsuperscript{20} and role as inspirer of Keynes.\textsuperscript{21} No less astonishing for contemporary degrowth scholars, whose normative and analytical proclivities are affixed to Marxism more often than not, is that liberal John Stuart Mill first made the case for a political economy leading to a stationary state. Indeed, while Helleiner defends Marx against those who accuse him of indifference to environmental degradation and highlights his-now fashionable-concept of “metabolic interactions between man and earth” that were destroyed by capitalism, he also shows that Marx made at best incidental remarks on how capitalism robs both worker and soil. Tragically missing in Marx was systematic thinking on the matter, a problem that dogged the entire Marxist tradition until 1945.

Autarkists were, of course, more inclined to explore environmentalism but the first to do so were non-Europeans autarkists in late nineteenth-century Japan who, presciently, redefined prosperity as the consumption of educational, recreational, and leisure activities, rather than of carbon-based manufactured goods, a very common argument in degrowth-infused IPE today. Still, it was the 1930s when thinking about


the international sources of environmental degradation was most systematically articulated in the US and UK. Here, Helleiner is particularly “decolonial” in his analysis and highlights the thinking of both scholars of European descent and of indigenous and colonized people writing books that dissected the havoc wrought on humans and nature by settler colonialism.

Helleiner’s book also highlights the global and older origins of feminist political economy thinking on the discrimination of women through the property regime, wage levels, labor terms, access to education, exit from discrimination through equal pay versus unpaid work compensation, dissolution of the traditional family versus the bolstering of women’s position in it, etc. Again, Helleiner celebrates the global roots of feminist ideas by bringing to the fore the work of feminists from the Global South who are seldom mentioned in the liberal or socialist canon, such as early twentieth-century Chinese anarchist feminist He Yin-Zhen, who produced an analysis connecting the deleterious effects on women’s economic position by the changing dynamics of globalized trade, the erosion of cottage manufacturing, that the striving neomercantilism for power.

At a time when geoeconomic competition eats away at the architectures of liberal trade and finance, pointing at a future of neomercantilist blocs, Helleiner’s review of the regionalist ideas of the 1940s is of particular interest. One will find striking (indeed, chilling) similarities between the contemporary European far right’s understanding of Europe as a racial entity demanding neomercantilist regionalism and the geoconomics of Nazi economists like Gottfried Feder. At the opposite end stands the anti-imperialism of Latin American regionalists like Peruvian politician and progressive intellectual Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, whose ideas resemble today’s agenda in critical IPE and ended up shaping specific elements of the Latin American macro-financial order after the war.

Eric Helleiner has written the widest intellectual history to date of IPE as a field of inquiry. It is a book that takes seriously the importance of granularity, globality, and local agency in the production and spatial translation of the economic and political ideas that constitute this field. Indeed, Helleiner, with whose books my generation of IPE scholars cut its teeth with, shows that there is no such thing as the diffusion of the IPE trinity of liberalism, neomercantilism, and Marxism from Western core to peripheries. There are only reflexive translations that cut both ways and, most importantly, often independent originations of ideas in the Global South, with many of them impossible to fit in the Procrustean bed that is the IPE trinity. As a general rule, IPE scholars do not teach IPE environmentalism, feminism, and regionalism as self-standing approaches in their own right, do not value the intellectual diversity and historical controversies within each of the currents making up the IPE trinity, and do not consider the analytical and pedagogical consequences of this closing of the IPE mind as opposed to taking the broader view espoused in this book. After Contesting the Global Economy, the state of the art in teaching, research and, indeed, scholars’ own intellectual self-representation as members of a professional field is bound to change more than ever in the past half a century.

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Review by Hyoung-kyu Chey, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Tokyo

Eric Helleiner’s *The Contested World Economy* is a masterpiece for scholars in and students of International Political Economy (IPE) that rewrites this discipline’s intellectual history from a truly “international” perspective. Helleiner digs into and reveals the deep and broad intellectual roots of IPE prior to 1945, engaging with numerous thinkers from all around the world and going far beyond the three traditional orthodoxies of economic liberalism, neomercantilism, and Marxism. This book builds a deeper, more inclusive, and global history of the contesting perspectives on the world economy.

The importance of the book’s temporal focus on the pre-1945 era must be stressed. It is widely understood that IPE as a modern academic discipline was born in the early 1970s, largely through the work of pioneering International Relations (IR) scholars. That is true, and the intellectual history of IPE since that time has been well analyzed, led by Benjamin J. Cohen’s influential 2008 book and its follow-ups. It is also a fact, however, that IPE thought has much longer and deeper historical origins. Yet there has been no comprehensive textbook covering the history of IPE perspectives in earlier times, which may have hindered IPE students in developing interest in it. Against this backdrop, this book provides the first book-length study of IPE perspectives in the era of classical political economy, exploring the debates about the world economy from the time of publication of Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776 up until the Bretton Woods conference in 1944. It thereby invites IPE students to investigate the deep historical roots of IPE, while providing a useful map for navigating them.

To be sure, many existing IPE textbooks do begin with or cover pre-1945 IPE thought. However, their coverage tends to be highly narrow, focusing almost exclusively on a small number of well-known prominent Western figures of the three orthodoxies of economic liberalism, neomercantilism, and Marxism—Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Friedrich List, Alexander Hamilton, Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and so on. This narrow approach to classical political economy thought has been the standard one in the field of IPE until today. It has two serious shortcomings, however: its Euro- or West-centrism in terms of its geographical scope, and its shallow coverage of the issues debated by early IPE thinkers.

The field’s limited focus on the European and US pioneers of the three orthodoxies may be a result of entrenched Eurocentrism, but it has also played important roles in reproducing it, creating what Helleiner calls in his book “intellectual path dependence” (270). As a result, IPE thinkers from outside the Western world, and their perspectives, have been seriously underrepresented or hidden in the IPE literature; most scholars and students in the field today tend to see Western Europe as the place from which IPE thought originated, and its intellectual history as having also been massively dominated by Western thinkers. It is highly improbable, however, that forms of IPE perspectives did not exist at all in the regions outside the West, if one considers their rich histories. In fact, there have been increasing recognition and disapproval of Eurocentrism in IPE (and also in IR) in recent years. And some significant precursory works have begun to take place to build a more global IPE by embracing a wider range of histories, experiences and perspectives.

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from outside the Western world. Helleiner himself, in fact, has been at the center of the efforts to widen the intellectual history of IPE.

*The Contested World Economy* is an illustrious agglomeration of these efforts by Helleiner. In vivid contrast to the conventional West-centric approach, it engages with fascinating IPE thinkers from all parts of the world, including Africa, Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, East Asia, Eastern Europe, India, Latin America, Mexico, the Middle East, Russia, South Asia and Turkey, as well as Western Europe and the United States. Remarkably, Helleiner illustrates that, in addition to creatively adopting Western perspectives in view of their own regions’ specific experiences and contexts, non-Western thinkers independently developed indigenous perspectives comparable to the three main Western orthodoxies, as well as other perspectives ranging from autarkism to distinct visions of economic regionalism. Moreover, Helleiner highlights that non-Western thinkers sometimes even influenced their European and American counterparts. For example, the ideas of the father of modern China, Sun Yat-sen, about and Latin American proposals for international development cooperation informed the thinking of some US “embedded liberals” at the time of Breton Woods. Such developments show that the international flows of IPE ideas were multidirectional, moving not only from the West to the rest of the world but in the reverse directions as well. This fascinating study of the global roots of classical IPE thought breaks down the strong Western bias and parochialism in the field and constructs a more truly “world” history of IPE perspectives.

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Moreover, this volume widens the intellectual history of IPE by bringing into it perspectives that go beyond the three orthodoxies of economic liberalism, neomercantilism, and Marxism. The entire six chapters in the second section of the book are devoted to this task, addressing autarkism, environmentalism, feminism, Pan-Africanism, Pan-Islamism, Pan-Asianism and some distinct visions of economic regionalism. While these have hardly been discussed in the existing IPE textbooks, as Helleiner demonstrates, they did contribute significantly to the debates on the world economy in the period before 1945. This study of these diverse IPE perspectives reminds us that there are other ways of viewing and organizing the world economy than the three orthodoxies, and that those orthodoxies do not need to be seen as the major ones either. Also, as Helleiner notes, the central issues of many of those other perspectives—such as national self-sufficiency, environmental degradation, gender inequality, racism, religious world views, civilizational values and economic regionalism—have recently gained growing attention (although they were marginalized at Bretton Woods). This book can thus provide useful insights for the contemporary debates over them as well.

In the meantime, this title also emphasizes that much more notable divisions existed within each of the three orthodoxies than is commonly depicted in the existing IPE textbooks, which downplay those important internal divisions. This helps to provide a deeper understanding of the three orthodoxies, as stressed by the author. In addition, some divisions within each of the three orthodoxies may offer grounds for constructing testable IPE theories. They include differences in the claimed links between free trade and peace among economic liberals, diverse accounts among neomercantilists of how trade protectionism may generate peace in the long run, and competing views among Marxists as to the relationship between capitalism and war.

Furthermore, consideration of the internal divisions within each of the three orthodoxies suggests that the differences among the three schools of thought are much more limited than is generally known. This appears to be especially so with regard to the differences between economic liberalism and neomercantilism. The book shows that certain protectionist measures were endorsed by some economic liberals, including Smith and John Stuart Mill, and that many Latin American developmental liberals combined their support for free trade with advocacy of domestic government economic activism to promote their countries’ exports. In the meantime, neomercantilists such as List and Henry Carey, ultimately envisioned the creation of a liberal world of free trade in the long run. Indeed, Helleiner notes that the differences between economic liberals and neomercantilists should not be overstated.

Meanwhile, if one goes further to take a closer look, there are in fact some perspectives that do not fit comfortably into either of economic liberalism or neomercantilism. One example may be that of Korea’s Gaehwa (enlightenment) thinkers. Although they are labelled as neomercantilists in the book, they did embrace much of economic liberalism, with deep commitments to “opening” their country to the world. Hence, both neomercantilism and economic liberalism appear to have limitations in reflecting their ideas precisely, raising the question of whether it might not be desirable or necessary to create a new label for such a perspective. In this regard, it may be worth noting that recent psychological research on Koreans finds that they often confl ate, without feeling much contradiction, things that are usually seen as conflicting by Westerners, with this Korean disposition explained as tied to their Confucian mindset as reflected for example in the concept of zhongyong (the doctrine of the mean). According to the zhongyong dialectics, two opposites interact in an immanently inclusive way, depending upon and complementing each other and co-evolving into a new

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7 See also Chey, “International Political Economy Thought in Pre-modern and Colonial Korea,” 18-22.
synthesis so as to reach the ideal state of harmony. Thus, from this Confucian worldview, similar to the dynamic harmony of yin and yang (which is embodied in the design of the South Korean national flag), neomercantilism and economic liberalism might be combined without great contradiction—although this may be viewed as contradictory or inconsistent from the Western perspective (which tends to adopt a noncontradiction theorem that typifies “either-or” logic, i.e. either an A or a non-A). Given the strong Confucian traditions in China and Japan as well, it seems possible that people in those countries may share such a Confucian mindset. All of this might suggest that the “Western” categories of IPE thought may not be so well suited for use to characterize some non-Western perspectives.

Along with this, the deep and wide global history of classical IPE thought built by The Contested World Economy opens numerous new avenues for future research, while raising diverse questions. Among these may be the questions of why a certain IPE perspective emerged and gained influence in a particular region at a particular time; which factors led to the influence of each of the IPE perspectives; whether international systemic factors matter; whether domestic factors including culture and history also matter; and which factors contributed to the international diffusion of a certain perspective. In fact, in his 2021 book that focuses on neomercantilism, Helleiner discusses a group of factors that likely promoted neomercantilist ideas, including the underdevelopment of a country’s domestic industry, concerns about a relative decline of the wealth and power of a country vis-à-vis more advanced industrialized nations, and international conjunctural circumstances such as growing geopolitical uncertainty and intensifying economic integration and dislocation. However, in this new volume Helleiner does not explain such factors, most likely because of the extensive number of the perspectives that it addresses.

Related to this issue, one noteworthy finding in the book is that certain perspectives, such as neomercantilism and autarkism, emerged and gained prominence independently in various regions. Helleiner notes that “List was a far less central figure to the emergence of neomercantilism than Smith and Marx were to the rise of economic liberalism and Marxism, respectively” (11). What explains this strong decentralized universality of those perspectives? And does it suggest that the foundation of contemporary neoliberalism may be more fragile than it currently looks? In this regard, the actual influence of economic liberal ideas that emerged endogenously, in the regions of their emergence and especially in those outside the Western world, may also be worth examining. The book introduces the claims of Chinese and Japanese thinkers that liberal economic principles are found in Confucianism—albeit without investigating their actual validity. Whether ideas similar to economic liberalism exercised meaningful influences in China or Japan, or any other countries with strong Confucian cultures during the era analyzed in the book, is debatable. It is not unthinkable that those thinkers might have overstated or overstretched the economic liberal ideas said to be found in Confucianism so as to defend or justify the civilizations of their own countries.

Another issue for future research may be whether endogenously-developed IPE perspectives have enduring influences in their own regions in the contemporary world. For instance, it might be worth addressing whether the classical IPE perspectives in East Asia have had significant influences on the modern East Asian economic development model. In fact, while there has been a vigorous debate between neoliberal economists and neostatists over how to explain the “East Asian miracle” (owing largely to the active but market-friendly characteristics of the government policies in that region), few studies link it to the indigenous developments
of neomercantilist and economic liberal ideas in the region depicted in this volume. It might also be interesting to examine whether North Korea’s persistent highly-closed economic system of today has been affected by the autarkic ideas that were prominent in Korea during the time of its economic opening in the second half of the nineteenth century, which is discussed in chapter 8 of this book. Of course, as noted by Helleiner, the linkage between historical Chinese IPE perspectives prior to 1945 and China’s contemporary economic policy, or that between autarkic thought in various regions in the pre-1945 period and the growing trends of deglobalization in recent years may be worth studying as well.

These outstanding contributions of the deeper, more inclusive and more global history of IPE perspectives constructed in this volume cannot be overemphasized. As stressed by Helleiner in the first chapter, they are not mere theoretical accounts analyzing the world economy but also ideologies that set out strong distinct normative goals and visions concerning how the world economy should work, in other words, how we should run and build it. They accordingly do shape the actual world political economy; ideas matter. In recent years, the influence of emerging economies has grown substantially and continues to grow, as symbolized by the rise of the Group of Twenty as the premier forum for discussing world economic issues, as well as the emergence of BRICS, the grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. In this era, it should be more important than ever to develop a better understanding of the intellectual foundations underpinning the economic policies around the globe, going beyond the three traditional West-centric orthodoxies. *The Contested World Economy* lays a brilliant cornerstone for this.

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One of the hardest things we face as scholars is to not be prisoners of the time and the place we are writing in, and writing from. It is human nature to seek to stabilize the complexities of our lived realities into continuities and certainties, and to do so, we often myopically assume that things have always been the way they are now. This has meant that international political economists have tended, in large part, to take for granted as pre-determined and uncontested the ideological triumph of markets, neoliberalism, and unfettered globalization over the past three decades. Yet today’s resurgence of overt, activist market interventions around industrial policy and geoeconomics, particularly in the United States and in the European Union, has challenged scholars and policymakers alike to overcome their blind spots and grapple with the new reality.

Eric Helleiner’s new book, *The Contested World Economy: The Deep & Global Roots of International Political Economy*, could not be better timed for this transformative moment, as it very much rectifies this tendency to “presentism.” By shining a light on the rich diversity of voices, ideas, and approaches to global markets prior to 1945 and the post-war era, this book provides a meticulous and rich set of resources for today’s work of reimagining our shared post-neoliberal future. *The Contested World Economy* is an astounding scholarly achievement, one that definitively corrects the tendency of international political economy to ignore pre-1945 debates. In overcoming that collective amnesia, it provides an important resource for all attempting to chart a path forward in our new era of overt market activism towards decarbonization, security and resilience, social equity, and the geopolitical reshaping of global markets.

Framed by both a succinct and helpful introduction and conclusion, *The Contested World Economy* eschews a simple chronological telling of the debates and intellectual contributions around the field of international political economy (IPE), which is the study of the politics of international economic relations. Helleiner does appropriately impose a temporal constraint on his story, book-ending it on one side with the publication of Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776 and on the other with a revisiting of the 1944 Bretton Woods conference that drew up the post-war global economic order. The book is organized instead by the ideas themselves, but in ways that very much depart from the standard story taught in American IPE classes. Helleiner does this in two different ways: by casting a truly global net over all the thinkers world-wide who were generating insights about the workings of the international political economy, and by going far beyond the standard focus of post-war IPE of liberalism, realism and Marxism, as captured in Robert Gilpin’s seminal 1987 text, to investigate a much richer variety of approaches.

Notably, Helleiner classifies these diverse and far-ranging contributions to IPE in terms of the differences in their normative approaches, instead of focusing on variations in terms of their causal or explanatory variables. His getting to the heart of debates about what “should” be, instead of only more narrowly positivist hypotheses, makes this book exactly on target for debates about where we should go today after the neoliberal international order.

Part I delineates how the three key intellectual paradigms, economic liberalism, neomercantilist thought, and Marxist theories of IPE, were developed and moved into places far beyond the European roots most of us conventionally begin and end with. Helleiner lays out the initial European thinkers on these concepts, and then provide fascinating examples of how each set of ideas was taken up and reformulated and extended in a

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variety of profound ways. Part II offers an astonishing survey of the alternative intellectual traditions and debates that grappled with elements of the interaction between politics and markets on a global scale, such as autarky, environmentalism, feminism, the racialized economic views of Pan-Africanism, the religious and civilizational views of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Asianism, and the regionalist frameworks coming out of East Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Part II therefore offers a direct line to the key contemporary debates occurring in classrooms and policy arenas today.

The result is an extraordinary work of scholarship that ranges over many sources and delves into debates that are relatively inaccessible to English language readers, such as accounts of Pan-Islamic thinking written in Arabic. Equally notable and unusual, however, is Helleiner’s ability to weave a compelling and readable story together despite the diverse ground that is covered. This is quite an accomplishment—there are very few among us who could keep a strong narrative thread throughout the realms and realms of sometimes obscure readings he brings to light, while also seeing connections across seemingly very disparate thinkers.

Despite his focus on the normative differences across the intellectual debates, many of Helleiner’s empirical observations, as he traces the unexpected global diversity within the three standard approaches and the multiple other lines of theory about how the international political economy works, are genuinely new, and beg for future scholarly research from a more positivist or causal approach. One such dynamic he illustrates is how ideas about governing the economy can be both transnational and range far and wide, but are also subject to an almost inevitable localization, where the ideas are modified and transformed in light of the particular culture, nation, or region adopting and reconfiguring them.

This phenomenon of localization is perhaps most striking in chapter 3, on liberalism’s spread around the globe. Helleiner notes how the works of Adam Smith and J.S. Mill were quickly translated throughout the world in the nineteenth century, with an “informal transnational network of liberal thinkers” soon spreading across Europe into Asia, the Americas and Africa (37). In the American South, Helleiner notes, some slave owners embraced the free-trade doctrine of comparative advantage while odiously refashioning it to view enslaved peoples as outside of the percepts of liberalism because of their inferiority, while other US free traders “were strong supporters of the abolition of slavery” (38). In Latin America, Adam Smith’s ideas were adopted by revolutionary leaders fighting against colonial subjugation who used liberalism’s emphasis on freedom as justification for “throwing off oppressive colonial rule” (39). Rather than just being takers of the European strand of liberalism, some in Latin America generated their own, innovative approaches to global governance based on the primacy of the legal system in the country receiving foreign investment (41). In India, Helleiner unearths the writings of Rammohun Roy, a former British colonial official who became a successful financier and public intellectual. Once again, Helleiner manages to weave together the ways in which liberalism took hold but was also transformed and applied in new ways, as with Roy’s advocacy for trade as a progressive force for India, even within the continued imperial structure (43). Similar nuanced discussions of the liberal tradition in Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and East Asia round out the chapter.

These patterns that emerge across the book on the ways in which the domestic contexts interact with the systemic factors pushing the different ideologies throughout the world provide raw fodder for a multitude of future studies, and shed light on one of the most vexing questions for students of the politics of ideas. But the question of how to conceptualize what is at work in the politics of ideas remains a bit elusive in Helleiner’s account. His narrative focuses in closely on the ideas themselves, and the people who held them, rather than on the broader politics of and around those ideas. As the book explores the pre-1945 global history of international political economy, his decision to focus on the original three “isms” of liberalism, realism, and Marxism while leaving out the major contemporary approach of constructivism is understandable, but regretfully sets aside the big question of why certain ways of constructing the world, or of giving meaning to the way markets and states interact.
The question of why certain ideas win out over others is a vitally important one that tells us more broadly about the way that the global political economy is structured, but here it is left for others to explore. This is an omission that is completely understandable given the reach of the book and Helleiner’s goal to set the record straight about the astounding variety of approaches to understanding, shaping, and governing the global political economy. Hopefully, it will provoke other scholars to take up the question and drill down into episodes suggested by this book, such as the quashing of the nascent environmental approach to global governance that Helleiner details in chapter 9—what role did the fossil fuel industry play? Or how did structural racism shape the ideational path that was taken, as Helleiner himself zeroes in on in a recent article on Bretton Woods? At its most meta-level, the book leaves unanswered the deeply political question that sets up the entire project: why has contemporary IPE depicted its history so narrowly and overlooked the thinkers Helleiner so vividly describes? Why was the global conversation about these issues shut down (264)? This book, in its pathbreaking historical illumination of the varieties of global approaches to IPE, is an invitation to very much needed analyses that can link the politics more tightly to the intellectual path Helleiner details.

In the end, because The Contested World Economy focuses not only on the ideas that became dominant, but on those that initially held sway in important ways but ultimately fell by the wayside, it provides a vital corrective to the versions of the post-war era that start only with Bretton Woods. In so doing, it rectifies our collective amnesia by calling our attention to the diversity of earlier debates. It is therefore essential in setting the stage for a much more open-ended and inclusive conversation about the best path forward for our societies and the planet today.

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In reflections on the state of their field over the last fifteen years, many leading International Political Economy (IPE) scholars have expressed concern that a field that is devoted to understanding how the global economy really works has become narrower in both its focus and ambition. A 2009 survey of the field, as one example, found that IPE scholarship tended to focus only on developed countries in Western Europe.¹ Scholars rightly worried about the consequences of this narrowness. Noting the growing emphasis on positivism and empiricism in scholarship, Benjamin Cohen asked whether IPE journals—and by extension, the field—had become boring.² Kathleen McNamara echoed similar concerns, worrying about a growing “intellectual monoculture” in the field that shielded away from trying to understand complexities and transformations in the global economy.³ Eric Helleiner’s latest book is an exciting and pathbreaking contribution to these discussions and to the field of IPE. Beyond affirming that IPE is definitively not boring, Helleiner’s book suggests that part of the problem lies in how little we know about the field’s pre-1945 history and how that history has been depicted in IPE textbooks. Helleiner’s rich and sweeping intellectual history of that era masterfully shows the benefits of a wider approach to IPE’s deeper history that promises to enliven the field and spark more productive, expansive conversations towards making IPE more reflective of challenges within the global economy beyond just the West.

Helleiner’s book was motivated by two frustrations with the field. Conventional depictions of IPE’s pre-1945 history almost exclusively focused on thinkers from the United States and Europe with little, if anything, said about thinkers from elsewhere in the world. In pre-1945 histories of IPE, discussions about the international dimensions of political economy were also confined to debates between the three dominant perspectives of economic liberalism, neomercantilism, and Marxism. Helleiner’s goal is to widen the deep history of IPE by revealing the contributions of thinkers beyond the United States and Europe. He also aims to show that debates about the international dimensions of political economy were not just confined to those three perspectives. As he argues, important internal divisions existed within each of those perspectives, underscoring what were rich and creative debates among thinkers throughout the world.

Writing a wider intellectual history of IPE is an ambitious task and Helleiner candidly acknowledges some limitations and restrictions. The starting point for his global history begins with Adam Smith’s 1776 Wealth of Nations, which he justifies given the book’s prominent place in debates about political economy throughout the world.⁴ He also notes that his book does not offer a fully comprehensive history of pre-1945 thought. In aiming to write a succinct history, his focus is on “thinkers whose ideas became quite well known either in specific settings or more widely at the international level” (4). Helleiner also acknowledges that shortcomings in his language skills, his reduced access to translations, and his unfamiliarity with country-specific knowledge may limit the reach of his history. His work nonetheless shines as an incisive effort to deepen our understanding of the deeper roots of IPE.

Helleiner’s exploration of pre-1945 thought in IPE proceeds over three parts. The first focuses on the three perspectives that have received the most attention in IPE textbooks: economic liberalism, neomercantilism, neomercantilism, 

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and Marxism. In the second part, the narrative moves beyond those three orthodoxies to examine perspectives that receive little, if any, attention from IPE textbooks: autarkism, environmentalism, and feminism. He also tackles new terrain in IPE through a deep discussion of pan-African responses to a racialized world economy; pan-Asian and pan-Islamic religious and civilizational political economies; and a fascinating exploration of different versions of economic regionalism envisioned for East Asia, Europe, and the Americas. In the third part, which is aptly titled, “Ending at a Beginning,” Helleiner concludes with two chapters. The first offers a deep analysis of embedded liberalism, which is familiar to most IPE scholars because it informed the 1945 Bretton Woods conference. The final chapter concludes with a convincing case for why IPE scholars should embrace the deep intellectual roots of the pre-1945 period towards building more global and inclusive conversations among IPE scholars throughout the world.

Helleiner’s most compelling chapters, and those that make the boldest contributions to IPE come in parts II and III, which the remainder of this review will focus on. Throughout his book, Helleiner convincingly demonstrates that ideas matter and shows why IPE scholars should take them more seriously in their analyses. That point is relayed powerfully in richly detailed, nuanced chapters examining autarkic, environmentalist, and feminist perspectives on the economy. In a chapter that is focused on economic autarky—a topic which is often forgotten in IPE textbooks—Helleiner introduces us to thinkers in places as disparate as Germany, Japan, Turkey, and Haiti, among others. He shows us that while many proponents of autarky saw economic self-sufficiency as necessary to protect their states from foreign influence, and preserve their cultural and political autonomy, they also often had significant disagreements over issues like whether autarky would preserve international peace. Helleiner also demonstrates how ideas about autarky were exchanged and adapted by the policy’s advocates. As one example, he describes how Edmund Paul, a Haitian advocate of autarky, drew on the ideas of German thinker Johan Fichte’s closed commercial state in pushing for Haiti’s economic sovereignty after its political independence (132).

The chapters on environmentalism and feminist perspectives of the world economy also demonstrate that contemporary concerns in IPE about both the environment and feminism have far deeper roots than most scholars realize. In a fascinating discussion of environmentalism and classical economic liberalism, Helleiner introduces us to the nineteenth century German thinker Alexander von Humboldt, who was one of the pioneers of modern environmentalism. Von Humboldt’s travels in Latin America shaped his views on the importance of free trade and his concern that environmental degradation, especially that caused by European colonialism in the region, was profoundly destructive to development. Another advocate of free trade, the British thinker Stanley Jevons, may not have shared von Humboldt’s views on environmentalism, but he was concerned about the consequences of reliance on a non-renewable resource like coal for Britain’s future prosperity and power. This concern, Helleiner suggests, influenced Jevons’s contention that free-trade treaties should include exceptions to protect natural resources (145). Importantly, Helleiner also includes Indigenous perspectives on environmentalism. He shows us that the views of Black Elk, a Lakota thinker, on

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the ecological upheaval caused by European settler colonialism, became enormously influential in Indigenous circles.8

Helleiner’s chapter on feminist critiques of the global economy offers a refreshing and illuminating analysis of thinkers from Latin America to South Asia who tried to call attention to economic disparities between men and woman and of course, to the unequal status of women within the household. As in previous chapters, he shows the diffusion and exchange of ideas among thinkers about gender equality.9 The nineteenth-century British writer, Harriet Martineau, for example, was deeply inspired by the ideas of Indian liberal Rammohun Roy, who advocated for the expansion of women’s access to education, independent property rights for married women, and improved wages for women, and critiquing international trade policy, whose costs were borne primarily by women (168). We are also introduced to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, one of the leaders of India’s women’s movement. Chattopadhyaya argued that the anti-imperialist movement needed to be committed to gender equality, challenging “British views—including those in feminist circles—that colonialism was a progressive force for Indian women” (179). Helleiner also shows us how thinkers wrestled with some of the tenets of economic liberalism, highlighting the views of those who suggested its incompatibility with the feminist cause. Critics of free trade like neomercantilist Henry Carey underscored how such policies might harm women, especially in factories. In a trenchant critique of the social costs of free trade, he wrote of women bearing the cost when foreign competition shut down local manufacturing. With few other employment opportunities, “what, then, remains to them? In millions of cases, little else than prostitution” (182). Finally, this chapter shines for showing how women worked to ensure that the multilateral institutions that were constructed in the postwar international economic order reflected feminist goals. Two feminist thinkers from South America that he highlights—Paulina Luisi and Bertha Lutz—for example, saw the promotion of women’s rights as integral in the fight against fascism (180). Though the thinkers profiled throughout the chapter didn’t necessarily share the same commitments, they all were devoted to “challenging the patriarchal practices and structures in order to end women’s subordination within the world economy” (164).

IPE scholars have criticized the field for being overly Euro-centric. Hannes Baumann, for example, noted the absence of the Middle East from most IPE textbooks, and scholars of the region, including myself, in addressing this omission, have discussed how engaging with the dynamics in the region and the contributions of Middle East scholars would enhance the study of IPE.10 It’s not surprising then given my own biases as a scholar of Middle East political economy that I found Helleiner’s chapters on religious and civilizational political economies of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Asianism particularly compelling and important. This rich chapter builds on recent efforts by scholars to bring the Middle East and Asia into the study of IPE.11 The Pan-Islamic thinkers whom Helleiner profiles fused religious values and notions of civilization in their

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11 See, for example, a forthcoming special issue on IPE and the Middle East and on ‘blind spots’ in IPE: Baumann and Roberto Roccu, “International Political Economy and the State in the Middle East,” Globalizations. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2023.2223951.
perspectives on the economy, wholly distinctive from those profiled elsewhere in the book.12 In the chapter, we meet Iranian thinker Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, a pioneer of a new form of Pan-Islamic economic solidarity whose ideas about the need to strengthen the Islamic world’s collective economic power were shaped by his criticisms of European colonialism and exploitation in the region. Helleiner also shows us how thinkers like India’s Sayyid Abul A’la Mawdudi challenged the universalism of Western perspectives on political economy. Mawdudi developed what he saw as a distinctive form of Islamic Economics, which endorsed market-based economies and envisioned a role for the state distribution of wealth via inheritance laws and support for the poor (208). Mawdudi’s vision for an Islamic Economic system prioritized morality and, in sharp contrast to liberalism or communism, required the embrace of Islamic religious beliefs. Helleiner also highlights the visions and efforts of other thinkers in the region to promote economic projects to support the interests of the Islamic world. For example, concerns about the Islamic world’s economic weaknesses and lack of Muslim-owned banks led Crimean Tartar journalist Ismail Gasprinski to call for the creation of a “general Muslim Congress” and a boycott of European goods (205). There were of course other “Pan” movements in the pre-1945 era including that of Pan-Arabism, whose supporters advanced economic projects to challenge imperialism and promote Arab interests. Though Helleiner briefly touches on these movements, I hope that the ideas in this chapter encourage the field to engage more with scholars of and from the region who can bring their expertise and knowledge of the region’s languages to shed even more light on the contributions of thinkers from this region.

Helleiner has written an important and timely book and one that I wish I had been able to read as a student. One of the most refreshing aspects of this work is that Helleiner doesn’t eschew normative questions that mainstream IPE analyses often ignore to the detriment of the field’s development and reach. His final two chapters drive home the importance of this work and why IPE scholars should care about a more global intellectual history of the field. His concluding analysis of the Bretton Woods conference underscores the fact that advocates of embedded liberalism, which shaped the postwar international economic order, engaged little with the rich economic perspectives highlighted in this book. Most IPE analyses pay little attention to the voices of those who were excluded from and uninvited to the conference; Helleiner asks us to think about the legacy of that exclusion and its implication for how we think about power in the construction of the global economy. As he notes, “the ideas of historical thinkers influence not just the work of IPE scholars, but also debate” (265). How might IPE scholarship change if scholars were aware of the field’s deeper intellectual roots? I hope that Helleiner’s book will spark a long overdue introspection on how we teach and conceptualize research in IPE.

“The Rise of the World Market and Decline of the Earth System”

Let me compare Eric Helleiner’s generous, ambitious, and impressive effort to revise the intellectual history of international political economy (IPE) to recent debates over the Anthropocene. IPE emerged in the 1970s when the decay of the post-war order established at Bretton Woods became impossible to ignore. Susan Strange, Robert Gilpin, Robert Keohane, Steven Krasner, and others in this early, influential group of scholars connected the erstwhile separate fields of international economics and international relations to create IPE. Similarly, the discovery of the hole in the ozone layer and the possibility of a “nuclear winter” in the early 1980s convinced scientists that they knew too little about the planet’s elementary cycles, leading them to create the new field of Earth system science (ESS). ESS emerged through the International Geosphere Biosphere Programme (IGBP, 1987–2015), a vast interdisciplinary and international effort, which yielded a wealth of insights including the novel object of the “Earth system.” That concept’s corollary, the Anthropocene, was coined at the IGBP meeting in Cuernavaca in 2000 by Paul Crutzen. Crutzen, an atmospheric chemist closely involved in the ozone and nuclear winter controversies, wrote a short essay in the IGMP’s newsletter, where he both expounded the term but also cloaked its radical novelty with the patina of age by invoking a lineage of similar-minded nineteenth-century scientists, including geologist Antonio Stoppani. Yet, his appeal to precedent obscured the true insight offered by the Anthropocene—rather than being the mere sum of many degraded ecosystems, present environmental crisis has been characterized by the decline of the Earth system as a whole. Thus, pace Crutzen, the relatively recent discovery of the Earth system meant that it was impossible for earlier environmental thinkers like Stoppani to have anticipated the Anthropocene. I recapitulate this history to speculate what would be the analogue of the Earth system in IPE. I believe it is the world market.

The world market (what Karl Marx called the *Weltmarkt*) is a relatively recent phenomenon that differs from long-range trade routes that date back millennia. In *The Origin of Capitalism*, Marxist historian Ellen Meiksins Wood repeatedly stressed that the world market was not just the sum of far-flung merchant networks for luxury goods, but rather the emergence of something entirely new—the metastasis of “market imperatives” to

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3 As a leading IGBP alumnus described it, the Earth system is “the interacting physical, chemical and biological processes between the atmosphere, cryosphere, land, ocean and lithosphere.” Will Steffen et al., “The Emergence and Evolution of Earth System Science,” *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment* 1, no. 1 (2020): 54.

4 This point is made forcefully in Clive Hamilton and Jacques Grinevald, “Was the Anthropocene Anticipated?” *Anthropocene Review* 2, no. 1 (2015): 60.

new regions and economic sectors that eventually connected production at a global scale. Rather than skimming the fruits of arbitrage by controlling pre-capitalist trade of luxury goods, capitalists enriched themselves on the world market through more efficient production of everyday commodities. Wood’s framework hewed closely to arguments one finds throughout Marx’s oeuvre. As early as 1845, Marx and Friedrich Engels emphasised the novelty of the world market in The German Ideology:

By universal competition [mechanised industry] forced all individuals to strain their energy to the utmost [...] it produced world history for the first time, insofar as it made all civilized nations and every individual member of them dependent for the satisfaction of their wants on the whole world, thus destroying the former natural exclusiveness of separate nations.

Much in the same way that the Earth system is reducible to the total of many disparate ecosystems, the world market is not simply the aggregation of various regional markets. The crucial insights of Marx and scientists like Crutzen was that both systems create coherence and interconnection greater than the sum of their parts.

I reiterate these basic tenets of Marxism because they are not addressed in The Contested World Economy. Helleiner defines Marxism as a movement dedicated to “end[ing] class-based inequality and exploitation” (87), a characterization he repeats two pages later. I counter, however, that the true aim of Marxism is understanding the unique nature of capital—what Marx called its “law of motion.” Class struggle and exploitation are found in many societies, but capital is a relatively novel object that requires explanation. Only in capitalist societies does one find the “silent compulsion of economic relations,” a force that co-ordinates and disciplines human activity through the mechanisms of profit and proletarianization. Yet, Helleiner’s narrative treats Marx as if he were a “political economist” (149) no different from his contemporaries like Henry Carey or John Rae. Marx’s oeuvre, however, did not belong to political economy, but to philosophy because its purpose was deciphering what kind of society could produce such an academic discipline with practitioners like Adam Smith and Parson Malthus. To reconfigure one of Helleiner’s examples, Marx did not approach the question of free trade in a straight-forward fashion (i.e., caring particularly if the policy itself benefitted the working class), but examined how free trade extended the reach of capital and created openings for social upheaval. Marxist historians, such as Wood, have traced how capitalist dynamics became entrenched in English agriculture in the fifteenth century, before they slowly spread to other economic sectors in England and abroad—where they were often imposed at gunpoint by capitalist empires—until production became synchronized everywhere to the beat of the world market. Unique among economic systems, capitalism has a tendency to develop to a global system, but this process is historical, contested, and far from inevitable. Marx’s global perspective is clear in Capital, even if he never had the chance to write the volumes on international trade and the world market that he had planned. To cite but one example, he analyzed in parallel how competition with the newly mechanized textile industry in the early nineteenth century....

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6 She distinguished the “integrated global system” of the capitalist world market from the pre-existing “feudal trading network,” which was a “series of conveyance and arbitrage operations between one locale and another.” Ellen Meiksins Wood, The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View (London: Verso, 2002 [1999]), 168.


9 Marx, Capital, 889. For an insightful discussion on the nature of capital, see Moishe Postone, Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx’s Critical Theory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

10 The central text in this discussion is Lucia Pradella, Globalization and the Critique of Political Economy: New Insights from Marx’s Writings (Abington: Routledge, 2014).

century not only caused the agonizing “extinction of the English hand-loom weavers,” but it also destroyed fellow artisans in South Asia, where the “bones of cotton-weavers” lay “bleaching [in] the plains of India.”

Assuming that the world market is crucial object for Marxist analysis, how might it figure in a history of IPE? Just as the chemists, biologists, physicists in the IGBP strove to understand the Earth system’s functions by examining geological strata and ice cores over the last several hundred thousand years, historians of IPE could reconstruct how intellectuals reacted to how their societies integrated into the world market. Such moments can be obvious, such as when Commodore Matthew Perry’s black ships arrived in Uraga’s harbor in 1853 (an episode that graces the cover of *The Contested World Economy*), while others are more subtle. I believe that such an approach might provide greater clarity and coherence to Helleiner’s project, which for all its iconoclastic brilliance would benefit from stronger concepts to resist the centrifugal forces that inhere in a history of such a sprawling scope. *The Contested World Economy* includes dozens of thinkers from around the world, whose works are addressed in thematic chapters. To be sure, the sheer number of intellectual portraits painted by Helleiner is dazzling. I believe, however, that a chronology structured on the world market’s expansion, as well as the adoption of more of rigorous conceptions of capital itself, would provide greater order to the arrangement of Helleiner’s myriad portraits, and perhaps remove a few subjects from his intellectual gallery.

One of my main criticisms of *The Contested World Economy* is Helleiner’s attempt to locate “pre-Smithian roots of economic liberalism” (260). Like Marxism, liberalism is an ideology that could only emerge in a capitalist society as intellectuals grappled with the consequences of increasing market dependence. Helleiner repeats the questionable assertion by Adam Smith’s Japanese translator Taguchi Ukichi that liberal principles could be found in Confucianism (50), as well as historian William Rowe’s contention that the eighteenth-century Qing administrator Chen Hongmou was some sort of Chinese liberal *avant la lettre* (53). Given capitalism’s emergence in England in the late Middle Ages, it beggars belief to think that liberalism’s origins might lie beyond the sceptred isle.

To explain the problem another way, liberalism is a creed predicated on the separation of the economic and political spheres, of people being “free in the double sense” (to quote Marx), that is, free from traditional obligations such as the *corvée* but also bereft of everything apart from one’s labor-power. This separation of the economic and political makes possible the paradox of equality of all citizens in terms of constitutional rights alongside the dictatorship of the workplace. Separating these two spheres is possible only under capitalism because surplus is extracted during the work-process rather than through overt violence. The lack of such a separation of the economic and political in imperial China is manifest in the essay that Helleiner cites. “I think it is doubtful that there was any articulated concept in the Qing lexicon of “the market” as an abstract realm,” Rowe muses, “*shi* and *shichang* are almost always merely physical marketplaces.” Moreover, I believe that Helleiner mistakes market opportunities—which have existed in many societies, including eighteenth-century China—for market dependence. Chen, like Stoppani, is a false forebear.

Parallel to his goal of finding proto-liberals beyond Europe, Helleiner tries to discover Marxists who studied imperialism before well-known luminaries of the Second International, such as Vladimir Lenin and Rosa

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12 The second quotation about the “bleaching bones” is from India’s governor general at the time. Both quotations can be found here: Marx, *Capital*, 558.
15 This point is emphasised by Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism*, 49.
Luxemburg. His prime example is journalist and co-founder of the Japanese Social Democratic Party Kōtoku Shūsui, who wrote *Imperialism: Monster of the Twentieth Century* in 1901. The problem with this new genealogy is that it ignores other Marxists who studied imperialism well before Luxemburg's and Lenin's contributions in the 1910s. It is slightly strange that Helleiner cites Karl Kautsky's 1914 article on imperialism, but not his equally relevant articles on the Boer War from 1900. Indeed, there was a lively debate over imperialism within the Second International at the turn of the century, including works by Parvus, Eduard Bernstein, and Heinrich Cunow, well before the better-known works by Luxemburg and Lenin in the 1910s. Marx's own theorising on imperialism is little explored in *The Contested World Economy*, where it is portrayed as a minor, fickle interest rather than central to Marx's understanding of the world market and the revolutionary path to socialism. Helleiner mentions but does not delve into Marx's work on colonialism—especially the Irish question—where he moved from thinking that "it would be possible to overthrow the Irish regime by English working class ascendency" to a realization that "the English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland." In this fashion, Marx's focus on the revolutionary potential of colonized countries prefigured later contributions by Indian socialist MN Roy (which are adeptly discussed by Helleiner). My point here is to not denigrate the contributions of Kōtoku or Chen, but rather to question Helleiner's search for antecedents as a useful end in itself. I believe that whether a European or a Japanese intellectual was the first to articulate a Marxist theory of imperialism is irrelevant. What matters are the stakes and contexts in which such ideas emerge. This is why connecting intellectual history to the expansion of the world market might be useful to order the history of IPE.

*The Contested World Economy* is an ambitious and much needed endeavor, but I fear that Helleiner's approach has loosened the previous narrative armature, without tightening the bolts on a new one. To be clear, I concur with his laudable goal of diversifying IPE's canon and Helleiner has done yeoman's service in collating a wide array of thinkers who have never before been put into conversation with one another. Furthermore, the chapters on new themes including pan-Africanism, environmentalism, and feminism are welcome additions that stretch the purview of IPE, but their separation from the standard intellectual troika makes these debates appear as additions to a ramshackle mansion, rather than renovations rebuilding the load-bearing walls of such a structure. This problem is perhaps most apparent in chapter 14 on embedded liberalism, where this reader was surprised to find that the book's climax remains the Bretton Woods conference (239–258), an episode told with only modest adjustments to the standard story despite the previous 235 pages on world history. One would expect that diversifying the field's repertoire of thinkers and concepts would lead one to select a different moment as foundational for twentieth-century IPE, say Bandung in 1955, Stockholm in 1972, the UN General Assembly's declaration of a New International

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Economic Order in 1974, or perhaps Cuernavaca in 2000. In the end, *The Contested World Economy* offers us less a new narrative than the diversification of the old one. I am not sure if this is enough.

While I used the Anthropocene debate as an analogy for discussions on IPE’s intellectual history, it is remarkable how little the two narratives intersect in Helleiner’s book. I do not want to contradict myself on this point—Helleiner is correct not exaggerate the prescience of economist William Stanley Jevons or chemist Justus Liebig by portraying them as proto-Earth system theorists. Moreover, even a grizzled environmental historian like myself learnt much from the stimulating chapter on green thought. Yet, I am left with the feeling that an opportunity was missed to more closely connect the environmental and economic histories of IPE. If, however, the history of IPE is centered on the reaction of intellectuals to the expansion of the world market, then this narrative is not merely analogous to the history of the Anthropocene but *it is the same history*.

The origins of the Anthropocene lie in the ever greater redirection of what Marx called the “forces of nature” towards the accumulation of capital. This tendency was manifest since capital’s emergence in the early modern period, where capitalists enclosed the English countryside for sprawling sheep-walks, reared cattle for export in colonized Ireland, and turned the feudal states bordering the Baltic sea into a hinterland for wood and wheat. The shift from animal- and water-powered capitalism to its fossil-fueled incarnation in the early nineteenth accelerated the early environmental crisis, as ever more pre-capitalist societies and wild nature were subsumed by the “automatic subject” of capital. By the mid-twentieth century, this blind but relentless force had reroute the planet’s elementary cycles towards commodity production, degrading the Earth system into an unpredictable “no-analogue state.” Helleiner’s book has succeeded in creating a global panorama of IPE’s past, but offers few glimpses of the field’s future in the Anthropocene.

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First of all, let me thank each of the reviewers and Christy Thornton enormously for taking the time to read this book. It is such a pleasure to read the responses and to see how people react to the book’s content. I will refrain from commenting on many of the very positive points, except to say how gratifying it was to read them. My goal was to write a book that might be useful to the next generation of International Political Economy (IPE) students and scholars, and I am delighted to see that the four IPE scholars who served as reviewers think it will play this role. I particularly enjoyed reading Erin Snider’s comment that she wished she had been able to read a book such as this when she was a student. I feel the same way; indeed, that is why I wrote the book! I also appreciated Cornel Ban’s point that the book “does for the intellectual history of IPE what John Hobson recently did for the material history of the global economy as it is conventionally narrated.” After reading Hobson’s book, I had the same thought when finishing up my own book, but I had not found a way to express it so clearly.

I agree with both Hyoung-kyu Chey and Kathleen McNamara that I could have said much more about the political conditions that generate the ideas I discuss and made them influential in various contexts. Chey generously acknowledges that I addressed this issue a little more in my 2021 book *The Neomercantilists*, but it is certainly accurate to say that I did not attempt to do so in this book in any systematic way.2 The reason was simply space constraints (in the context of my goal to produce a relatively succinct account of the field’s pre-1945 history for IPE students and scholars). I hope that others will take up the task of addressing this issue in more depth. As McNamara puts it so well, analyses that address the “question of why certain ideas win out over others” will help to tell us “more broadly about the way that the global political economy is structured.” Relatedly, McNamara also makes the important point that “at its most meta-level, the book leaves unanswered the deeply political question that sets up the entire project: why has contemporary IPE depicted its history so narrowly and overlooked the thinkers Helleiner so vividly describes? Why was the global conversation about these issues shut down” (264)? As I note in the conclusion to the book (269-70), I hope future historians of IPE’s post-1970 development will provide answers to those important questions.

Chey is also right that the differences between economic liberalism and neomercantilism can be overstated, making some thinkers—such as the Korean Gaehwa thinkers—difficult to categorize with these labels.3 He goes further to argue that Confucian worldviews might enable the combining of economic liberalism and neomercantilism in ways that Western thought might view as “contradictory or inconsistent.” This is an interesting point that deserves more study. It is worth noting—as Chey does—that the practice of mixing ideas from both traditions was also followed by many Western thinkers, including prominent figures such as the neomercantilist Friedrich List (who was also committed to a long-term ideal of liberal free trade) and the economic liberal John Stuart Mill (who was also inspired by John Rae’s neomercantilist ideas).

Chey also raises an important point about non-Western thinkers who claimed that economic liberalism had endogenous intellectual roots in their regions. In the case of East Asia, he wonders whether pre-1945 thinkers making these claims “might have overstated or overstretched the economic liberal ideas said to be found in Confucianism so as to defend or justify the civilizations of their own countries.” I agree. This point also

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4. For a more detailed discussion of these two examples, see Helleiner, *The Neomercantilists*, 52-79, 298-301.
relates to Troy Vettese’s critique of what he calls “Helleiner’s attempt to locate ‘pre-Smithian roots of economic liberalism’ (260).” This misrepresented my argument in this passage by providing only a partial quotation. In this sentence, I summarized the contents of chapter 3 and the full passage reads as follows: “That chapter further described how thinkers in the Ottoman Empire, Japan, and China, claimed pre-Smithian roots of economic liberalism in their regions.” In other words, I am describing the views of these historical thinkers rather than my own (and I am suggesting that these views are particularly interesting and relevant for efforts to understand historically how European liberalism was received in many parts of the world). Chey more accurately notes that I largely steer clear of investigating the validity of these historical claims of liberalism’s endogenous birth outside the West. I do, however, quote some historians (not just William Rowe, whom Vettese mentions) who suggest that ideas with similarities to some aspects of economic liberalism were emerging in eighteenth century Chinese and Japanese contexts (53-54). Vettese questions the idea that economic liberalism could emerge in these contexts, arguing that “given capitalism’s emergence in England in the late Middle Ages, it beggars belief to think that liberalism’s origins might lie beyond the sceptred isle.” But detailed work on this question has been done by scholars who have a different perspective (including about England’s sole role as the originator of ideas associated with economic liberalism within Europe).

I would also like to highlight the interesting comments that reviewers make about the potential contemporary relevance of this history. I deliberately kept my discussion of this issue brief in the book in order to prevent the volume from being seen in the future as too heavily a product of the current moment. But I agree with many of the fascinating suggestions made by the reviewers about how historical ideas described in the book might be useful today. McNamara, for example, suggests that they might provide “a meticulous and rich set of resources for today’s work of reimagining our shared post-neoliberal future.” Chey notes the potential influence of East Asian historical thought for understanding contemporary perspectives on IPE in the region. Ban also creatively suggests a number of ways in which pre-1945 analyses of environmental issues may be very relevant to IPE analyses in the coming years. On this last point, Vettese differs, suggesting that “Helleiner’s book has succeeded in creating a global panorama of IPE’s past, but offers few glimpses of the field’s future in the Anthropocene.” I would have liked to read more about why Vettese sees little contemporary use for the ideas of pre-1945 environmentalists, particularly when he notes that “even a grizzled environmental historian like myself learnt much from the stimulating chapter on green thought.” (I should also clarify for readers that the chapter, in fact, analyzes “environmentalist” thought rather than the overlapping, but different category of “green” thought).

I was also encouraged to see the reviewers’ comments about the way that this deep history sheds new light on the 1944 Bretton Woods conference. Although I have researched various aspects of the conference for over three decades, this historical project made me look at it in a new way that I describe in the book. As Cornel Ban notes, the analysis builds on my 2014 book, Forgotten Foundations of Bretton Woods, that attempted to move beyond the Western-centric focus of so much of the work on this topic. This project also encouraged me to highlight the conference’s “silences” with respect to many perspectives and issues that were actively debated

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at the time. I agree very much with Snider’s observation that most analyses of Bretton Woods ignore this point because they “pay little attention to the voices of those who were excluded from and uninvited to the conference.” Chey also makes the important point that many of the perspectives that were “marginalized” at Bretton Woods are prominent in contemporary debates.

Vettese expresses “surprise” that “the book’s climax remains the Bretton Woods conference” instead of “Bandung in 1955, Stockholm in 1972, the UN General Assembly’s declaration of a New International Economic Order in 1974, or perhaps Cuernavaca in 2000.” I am puzzled by this critique since it seems to misunderstand the temporal focus of the book, which covers the roots of IPE before its modern emergence after 1970. Three of the four meetings mentioned by Vettese came after 1970 and thus belong to an intellectual history of modern IPE rather the focus of my book. The absence of discussion of the one remaining meeting—Bandung—is also simply a product of a temporal point I note that the start of the book. I focus on pre-1945 thinkers only because many of the most prominent pioneers of the modern field of IPE in the early 1970s invoked thinkers from the pre-1945 era as an inspiration. In other words, I finish the book at the 1944 Bretton Woods conference for a reason that is unconnected to any effort to claim the relative importance of that meeting vis-à-vis Bandung. In a footnote on page 2, I cite other work that has examined the less well-known roots of IPE in the 1945-early 1970s period and note that a full history of these later roots has yet to be written. I hope such a work will appear soon and assume that Bandung will play an important role in it.

I was also puzzled by Vettese’s comments on some aspects of my description of Marxist thought. For example, he quotes me as summarizing this perspective as one committed to “end[ing] class-based inequality and exploitation” (87), a description that he argues neglects Marxists’ focus on the unique nature of class relations in “capitalist societies.” But this selected quotation cites only one half of my one sentence summary of the Marxist perspective. The full sentence describes Marxists as focused on “challenging capitalism in order to end class-based inequality and exploitation within the world economy.” In other words, the Marxist focus on capitalism is front and center in my description in the passage quoted. After outlining this summary description, my two chapters on Marxism also discuss how Marxists around the world were centrally focussed on analysing the dynamics of capitalism.

Vettese’s criticism that I do not focus on the Marxist idea of a “world market” also seems unwarranted. On the second page of the first of my two chapters on Marxism, I highlight the following point: “From early on, Marx showed a keen interest in the international dimensions of capitalism, arguing that capitalist forms of production led a bourgeois class had generated an increasingly globalized economy” (88). I then quote from some of Marx and Engel’s famous passages in The Communist Manifesto about the emergence and importance of a capitalist world market. I also emphasize elsewhere how later Marxists emphasized this point, including the various Marxist theorists of imperialism.

Vettese’s comments about my description of Marx’s views on free trade also seem to be based upon a misreading of my text. He argues that “Marx did not approach the question of free trade in a straight-forward fashion (i.e., caring particularly if the policy itself benefitted the working class), but examined how free trade extended the reach of capital and created openings for social upheaval.” In fact, my description of Marx’s views on the subject emphasizes the latter rather than the former point. I quote the following from Marx: “the Protective system in these days is conservative, while the Free Trade system works destructively. It breaks up nationalities and carries antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie to the uttermost point. In a

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word, the Free Trade system hastens the Social Revolution. In this revolutionary sense alone, gentlemen, I am in favor of free trade” (90).

Vettese’s comments about my discussion of how Kōtoku Shūsui developed a Marxist theory of imperialism before that of Rosa Luxemburg and Vladimir Lenin are similarly perplexing. Vettese argues that I ignore other European Marxists at the turn of the century “who studied imperialism well before Luxemburg and Lenin’s contributions in the 1910s.” I do, however, discuss some of these earlier European Marxists, including Henry Hyndman’s views on the subject (96–97). I also did not claim that Kōtoku’s views were entirely original; in fact, I highlight how he drew in British critiques of imperialism at the turn of the century (107). My point is simply to note that IPE textbooks currently focus on Lenin and Luxemburg in a manner that overlooks other thinkers from outside Europe who developed interesting ideas on the subject before them.

In addition to clarifying these specific points, I would like to conclude with some broader comments that emerge from the reviews about the book’s purpose. I am very encouraged by the reviewers’ comments about how the book should help to widen the conversations about IPE’s history beyond just Western thinkers and the three perspectives highlighted in the field’s existing textbooks of economic liberalism, neomercantilism, and Marxism. This was my core goal. Like Ban, I am concerned about how the narrower approaches can encourage what he calls a “closing of the IPE mind.” I also share McNamara’s view that a wider history can call “our attention to the diversity of earlier debates” and help in “setting the stage for a much more open-ended and inclusive conversation about the best path forward for our societies and the planet today.” Chey also emphasizes this point, arguing that “this study of these diverse IPE perspectives reminds us that there are other ways of viewing and organizing the world economy than the three orthodoxies, and that those orthodoxies do not need to be seen as the major ones either.”

Vettese’s review is somewhat of an outlier here. He agrees with my “laudable goal of diversifying IPE’s canon” and writes that I have “done yeoman’s service in collating a wide array of thinkers who have never before been put into conversation with one another.” But he fears that my approach “loosened the previous narrative armature, without tightening the bolts on a new one.” Specifically, he would have preferred a book that was more focused on “connecting intellectual history to the expansion of the world market” in the way that this was conceived by Marx and his followers. This seems to miss a core historical point. I examine a period—from the late eighteenth century to the early 1940s—that was not always characterized by “the expansion of the world market.” Indeed, some of the most interesting thinkers analyzed in the book were reacting to the collapse of the world market during the 1930s.

Equally important, the suggestion runs contrary to the broader purpose of the book. A book with Vettese’s suggested focus would seem to prioritize one of the perspectives from the pre-1945 era over the others. Although Marxism was an influential perspective in this historical period, there were many other important perspectives that saw the world through a different lens. For example, rather than interpreting the world as driven by the expansion of a capitalist world market, advocates of other perspectives were focused on other dynamics, such as those associated with inter-state rivalry and competition, patriarchy, racialized hierarchies, and/or religious and civilizational identities. My goal in this book is to widen the intellectual history of the field to be more inclusive of many diverse perspectives rather than to try to promote one of them. Using Vettese’s metaphor, I am attempting to loosen some past intellectual bolts that have promoted certain narratives in the field, but I have no interest in tightening new bolts around an alternative master narrative.
On this point, I share the concerns of the other reviewers about what McNamara has described elsewhere as the risk of “intellectual monocultures” emerging in the field of IPE. Vettese argues that his suggestion would enable a historical “structure” to be built with “greater clarity and coherence” and “greater order” than what I have attempted. But I would rather see IPE students and scholars live in what he calls a “ramshackle mansion” that is open to the diversity of ways in which IPE can be interpreted. As part of building greater “order” and “coherence,” Vettese acknowledges that one might need to “remove a few subjects” from the “intellectual gallery.” I prefer an approach in which new historical “subjects” are added to the historical story rather than removed and excluded.

This difference in goals may partly reflect the way that the field of IPE is usually taught. From the start of their training, most IPE students and scholars are encouraged to recognize and embrace the idea that there is a plurality of competing perspectives about the politics of the world economy. Vettese is the only one of the five reviewers who comes from outside the formal field of IPE. With respect to the study of the deep and global roots of IPE, I think an open-ended approach will serve my field better than one that attempts to impose a singular vision of “coherence” and “order”, informed by just one perspective, on its inherently messy subject. Of course, I have been very aware from the start of this project that supporters of the various perspectives I describe might critique my book for not prioritizing their preferred perspective over others. But I am very gratified that the reviewers from the IPE field have reacted so positively to the book’s alternative goal of encouraging greater intellectual pluralism.10

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10 For this point more generally, see Anna Leander, “Why We Need Multiple Stories about the Global Political Economy,” Review of International Political Economy 16:2 (2009), 321-8.