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ECOLOGY AND FOREIGN POLICY: THEORETICAL LESSONS FROM THE LITERATURE

by

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Abstract

A comprehensive understanding of international environmental politics requires attention to foreign policy. In this essay we describe many of the most prominent—and some of the less prominent—theories and approaches to foreign policy and international relations, with emphasis on how they can help us to better understand foreign policy in the environmental issue area. We organize the theories into three categories: systemic theories, which emphasize the influence of the international system, including the distribution of power within it; societal theories, which focus our attention on domestic politics and culture; and state-centric theories, which find answers to questions about foreign policy within the structure of the state and the individuals who promulgate and implement foreign policies in the name of a given country. Within this presentation of various theories, we highlight the influence of power, interests and ideas.

Introduction

Foreign policy processes are important variables in international environmental cooperation. Yet this is a relatively neglected area in the environmental studies literature. In this essay we attempt to begin addressing this shortfall by looking systematically at theoretical aspects of foreign policy in the environmental context. To be sure, explaining and understanding cases of environmental foreign policy require consideration of a myriad of actors, institutions and forces. How can we get our minds around these complex cases? How can we organize and manage all the possible variables and explanations? To help us in this task we can turn to theories of foreign policy and international relations, those directly pertaining both to environmental politics and to other issue domains. For our purposes, theory is "a way of making the world or some part of it more intelligible or better understood," or we can define theory a bit more rigorously as "an intellectual construct that helps one to select facts and interpret them in such a way as to facilitate
explanation and prediction concerning regularities and recurrences or repetitions of observed phenomena" (Viotti and Kauppi 1999: 3). Thus theory helps us understand and explain international environmental policy by simplifying reality and focusing our attention on the actors and institutions, and indeed on the broader forces, which shape foreign policy and interstate behavior (Hollis and Smith 1991).

In this essay we describe many of the most prominent—and some of the less prominent—theories and approaches to foreign policy and international relations, with emphasis on how they can help us to better understand foreign policy in the environmental issue area. (In this survey we cannot, of course, cover everything.) We organize the theories into three categories: systemic theories, which emphasize the influence of the international system, including the distribution of power within it; societal theories, which focus our attention on domestic politics and culture; and state-centric theories, which find answers to questions about foreign policy within the structure of the state and the individuals who promulgate and implement foreign policies in the name of a given country. Within this presentation of various theories, we highlight the influence of power, interests and ideas.

The literature on international environmental politics has addressed such issues as cooperative arrangements to manage common problems, the effect of the global economy and population growth on the environment, the relationship of environment to security, and the process of international environmental treaty making. The vast literature on global environmental politics has for the most part dealt with questions that fall into the domain of international relations. Relatively less concern has been given to foreign policy and the environment. Yet state policies and actions determine the success of international regimes, trade-offs between economic and environmental values, how environmental threats to security are managed, the content of treaties and more. Therefore, to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of international environmental politics requires attention to foreign policy.

Research on environmental foreign policy can yield insights useful for the wider study of foreign policy. For instance, in the United States it is widely acknowledged that the president enjoys predominance in foreign policy (at least by comparison to domestic policy) because national security is at stake. Is the same true when
the issue is the environment (see Soden 1999)? If not, then what
does this say about conventional readings of executive-legislative
relations? To what extent do national interests drive policy choices
as opposed to bargaining among interest groups? Does the state have
an independent role in making environmental foreign policy, or does
it simply enact the outcomes of domestic struggles? These questions
have engaged scholars of security and economic policy, but similar
research in regard to environmental foreign policy remains scarce.

Global environmental trends are arguably the most important
determinants of humanity's future. If pessimistic prognostications are
true, the earth is rapidly approaching the limits to growth (Brown
2000: 5-8). Land scarcity, erosion, water shortages, salinization, the
collapse of major fisheries, biodiversity loss, deforestation—all of
these and more could limit the amount of food available for a rapidly
growing human population, hinder future economic growth, and
reduce quality of life for the vast majority of the world's people. The
foreign environmental policies that countries—large and small, rich
and poor—adopt to cope with these and other challenges could be
crucial in determining humanity's future on this planet. In the face of
such a daunting challenge, identifying and understanding the sources
of environmental foreign policy can contribute to removing barriers
to ecologically sound ways for humans to relate to the global
environment. Thus additional research in this area is important to the
project of bringing humans into harmony with the environment on
which we all depend (see Harris 2000a, 2001b, 2001c, forthcoming).

The Study of Foreign Policy
Speaking generally, how might students of foreign policy approach
the analysis of environmental foreign policy? Several questions
come to mind. Why do states adopt particular foreign environmental
policies? What effects do foreign economic, security, and social
policies have on the environment? What limits do environmental
parameters place on such policies as commitment to national and
global economic growth? What is the relationship between
environmental foreign policy and other state policies, such as trade
policy and domestic environmental policy (for example Muñoz
1997), or the military's impact on the environment (Emmanuel 1990)?
All such queries can be framed in terms of bilateral or multilateral
relations. Our review centers on the first question: Why does a given
state adopt a particular policy or orientation on international environmental concerns?

Considerable descriptive work remains to be done. Studies of economic and security policy benefit from a relatively rich information environment. Scholars know the broad outlines of a country's position on alliances, military spending, security threats, and the like. Similarly, they usually know whether a country is protectionist or free-trader, developed or developing, and so forth. By contrast, a country's position on a wide range of environmental problems may not be known to the scholarly community, much less to the general public. For instance, how many of us know with certainty the Peruvian position on global warming, or Sri Lanka's attitude toward trade in endangered species? Or even the U.S. position on deep-sea dumping of nuclear wastes? At least in the English-language literature, research that simply describes various countries' positions on the range of environmental concerns is scarce, even in the U.S. case. Although the larger aim of studies such as those at hand is to advance theoretical knowledge, the immediate need is for descriptive knowledge useful to suggesting theoretical propositions.

This is not to say that we should ignore theory in current research. Preferably, theory will inform and guide the advancement of empirical knowledge. Foreign policy analysts have available certain well-tested, familiar models to explain why states choose the policies they do. The field has not settled on a consensus hypothesis or theory, but we can identify those that occupy the most attention. With that in hand, we can then outline what the general study of foreign policy suggests for research into environmental foreign policy.

One familiar approach is to see foreign policy, like domestic policy, as the product of group bargaining and compromise. If interest group bargaining largely accounts for policy in one domain, then it probably does in the other as well. Hence, environmental foreign policy is presumed to be the outcome or resultant of bargains struck among different constituencies with a stake in environmental policy. To explain a given environmental foreign policy or the overall character of a state's policy direction requires identifying the groups that participate, their relative influence, and the strategies and tactics they employ.
Another school also erases the analytical line between domestic and foreign policy but adopts a different perspective on who matters. Class-based theory sees all state policy as the result of conflictual relations between the capitalists and the workers. Similarly, elite theory posits a cohesive privileged strata of society, although without the radical economic analysis of class theory. Usually, the elites dominate, although some issues are of no consequence to them and are left to popular politics. Occasionally, elites must give ground to highly mobilized social movements in order to maintain regime stability. But more often when elite interests are salient, and certainly when maintaining the system of rule on which they depend is at stake, elites make policy, anticipating that mass acquiescence will follow. Because of the economic (profit) implications of environmental policies, elites take a strong interest in this issue area and usually attempt to direct the state toward policies compatible with continued corporate freedom and economic growth.

Yet another standard approach to interpreting foreign policy is to see it as the product of institutional arrangements. Here, the line between foreign and domestic policy is clearer. U.S. foreign policy, for instance, can be understood as the outcome of bargaining and compromise between Congress and the president, in which the president is more dominant than in domestic policy. Studies of parliamentary systems are likely to emphasize a prime minister's relative freedom of action compared to presidential systems. Some studies see differences in policy tendencies between democratic and authoritarian states, arguing that democracies tend to be more peaceful than authoritarian systems. In all these ways and more, the institutions of the state—from regime type to legislative rules—are said to shape and determine policy outcomes.

Another broad stream of foreign policy analysis sees leadership as crucial. This often leads to studies of the foreign policy preferences of top executives, such as the U.S. president. It can also suggest studies of decision-making processes in the foreign policy inner circle. This can include analysis of the psychology of group decision making, to take one prominent research direction. Lastly, many foreign policy analysts assert that the best approach is to take the state as a rational, unitary actor responding to incentives given by the international system. For this line of thought, domestic variation matters little. States are often taken as like units similar to
firms in an oligopoly market. The question is to specify state interests in a given domain and then to show how well or how badly the state defended its national interest.

A Typology

These general tendencies in the study of foreign policy can be understood in more precise terms. A systematic review of the foreign policy literature is useful because the study of environmental foreign policy still contains many gaps. Hence part of our task is to identify theoretical perspectives on this topic that remain unexplored. Further, although literature that is explicitly about environmental foreign policy is relatively scarce, much of the scholarship on international relations contains implicit foreign policy arguments and findings. A typology of foreign policy toward the environment will help to tease out the contributions international relations studies can make to our understanding of environmental foreign policy. For instance, the theory of epistemic communities, which attempts to explain international regime processes, also sheds light on the role of science and scientists in making foreign policy.

Following Ikenberry, Lake, and Mastanduno (1988), we distinguish systemic, societal, and state-centric theories of foreign policy. Systemic theories assume that a large part of state foreign policy stems from the role, identity, or interests given to the state by systemic factors, as opposed to domestic sources of foreign policy conduct. One prominent strand of such theory takes the state as a rational, unitary actor responding to incentives given by the international system. Although systemic theory and the rational actor assumption are often taken as inseparable, other systemic theories have been advanced. For instance, it has been argued that systemic factors can help determine state self-definition or identity, from which arises the material interests the state pursues (Wendt 1999: 257-259). Societal theory has been briefly described above: interest group or class interactions produce political compromises or bargains that the state then implements. State-centric theory includes the institutional approach described already, and in addition such versions as the bureaucratic politics model and the organizational process approach. It also encompasses the "foreign policy executive" position advocated by David Lake (1988: 36-39). Lake's work suggests that the state does on occasion act according to its national interest, as systemic theory posits. But the national interest is not
self-executing; leadership is usually necessary, and the top executives of the nation are the best situated both to see the broad national interest and to act at the domestic level to ensure that policies working toward that end are adopted.

This scheme—systemic, societal, and state-centric theory—has been employed to sort theories of foreign economic policy. The same typology can apply more generally, to include environmental foreign policy. Adding another dimension can reveal other possible ways of interpreting foreign policy.

Hasenclever, Rittberger, and Mayer (1997: 1-7) offer another typology in a comprehensive review of regime theory. They distinguish power-based, interest-based, and cognitive approaches to the study of international regimes. Power-based theory, often associated with realism, asserts that regimes form largely due to hegemonic or oligopoly distributions of power. Hegemons (or small groups of leading powers) create regimes that serve their interests, and then impose them on others. Interest-based theory is usually associated with liberal institutionalism. It asserts (put simply) that regimes form when states demand them in order to serve state interests in various issue areas, including economic welfare and environmental protection, among other things. In short, regimes form and are maintained because certain states have some interest in them. Given the interests, hegemonic power is not needed, because rational actors will cooperate to achieve joint gains regardless of power distributions. Lastly, cognitivists emphasize the role of ideas in international politics. Ideas come into play in many ways. At minimum, new ideas might show states novel ways to pursue their interests, whether unilaterally or in collaboration. At maximum, ideas constitute both states and the state system; material interests have little meaning apart from the identities that the international system generates for states and that they in turn help to create.

Foreign policy theory can be understood in the same way. In regard to power-based theory, for instance, foreign policy outcomes might be explained by reference to which actors have the most influence in the policy making process. Perhaps in one case, the prime minister held the most authority; in another it might be top bureaucrats, or yet again leading economic elites. Interest-based theory might focus on which material interests in society different groups promote. Environmental policy might be understood as the outcome of bargaining and compromise toward a common solution
in regard to a given problem. No actor or group would be expected to be permanently dominant; rather, temporary coalitions would negotiate for policies that would be broadly acceptable to all affected parties. Lastly, foreign policy might be seen as responding to changing knowledge, perceptions and values in society. Environmental consciousness rose in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and thus foreign policies to protect the global commons ensued. Scientists postulated the existence of a hole in the ozone layer, and so national policymakers pursued international negotiations toward a treaty to reduce ozone-depleting substances.

Power, interests, and ideas operate at all three levels—systemic, societal, and state. Bringing the two schemes together yields a 3x3 matrix displaying nine distinct approaches to foreign policy (Figure 1). Examples of each are available in the general foreign policy literature, but not all are represented by studies of foreign environmental policy, indicating some gaps in the literature waiting to be filled. The following sections briefly describe the propositions and expectations each cell in the matrix implies. Studies of environmental foreign policy are sorted according to the scheme. For categories in which research on environmental foreign policy is lacking, examples from the wider foreign policy literature are noted to indicate possible directions for further study.
In practice, the line between one approach and another can blur. A given study might utilize several approaches to provide a comprehensive picture of a given foreign policy process and outcome. The nine approaches identified here need not be competing theories. Any two or more can be different aspects of a larger theory. The typology highlights areas of emphasis rather than contradictions. Yet the scheme also helps clarify lines of disagreement and alternative interpretations.

**Systemic Theories of Environmental Foreign Policy**

Again, systemic theories emphasize the importance of the international system in creating state identities, determining what a state's interests are, and shaping state behavior. These theories suggest that states arrive at their roles, identities, and national interests as a consequence of the regional or global configuration of
power (however defined, but usually including military power), or as a consequence of ideas. Systemic theory is distinct in that it does not attribute outcomes to factors such as domestic politics and institutions.

**Power and the International System**

Systemic theory, which can emphasize power, interests, or ideas, asserts that to understand foreign policy requires attention to the structural characteristics of the international political system. For instance, to posit that the state largely responds to the distribution of power is a proposition derived from systemic theory. By contrast, to argue that anarchy varies, implying in turn that actors perceive their interests in different ways depending on the distribution of ideas about the kind of system they inhabit, is also systemic, but here the focus is cognitive rather than power-based.

The intersection of system and power (the upper left-hand corner of the matrix in Figure 1) yields a Hobbesian world in which states have very little choice but to pursue survival through military strength. Hans J. Morgenthau’s work (although admittedly very complex and historically informed) might fit here. For Morgenthau, to understand a state’s policy meant to infer from state actions the power-political incentives statesmen saw and reacted to (Morgenthau 1985). More recently, Elman (1996) has argued that it is possible to develop a neorealist theory of foreign policy (a project disavowed by neorealism’s most influential protagonist, Kenneth Waltz [1996]). Again, states seek power to survive in a system none individually has created, but in which all must seek power or else fall by the wayside of history. Because of the structure of the system and the ever-present threat of violence, states must concern themselves with relative gains.

Theories of foreign policy that adopt this perspective make two distinct assertions: foreign policy is about acquiring power, and the state’s position in the international hierarchy strongly influences which foreign policies will be rational (and hence by assumption will be adopted). Regarding the second proposition, an example is the argument that hegemonic powers should create open economic systems because their dominance of the international political economy means openness is to their advantage. Importantly, the conceptual point to bear in mind is that these assertions are not about the factors leading to regime formation, international cooperation
and the like. Many studies have examined the role of hegemony in international environmental politics. The question here is to explain why a hegemon (or any other state, whatever its position in the international pecking order) chose the policies it did. International Political Economy (IPE) has offered the hypothesis just noted—hegemons will favor open trading systems—and give British and U.S. promotion and support of such systems as evidence.

To our knowledge, no one has offered a parallel argument regarding environmental foreign policy. Systemic, power-based theory would anticipate that environmental issues matter only to the extent that they bear on relative gains. Because policymakers must adopt a short-term view of matters, they are unlikely to be highly concerned with international environmental problems. Economic and security concerns will sweep away inconvenient environmental policies in times of political crisis. In short, the environment is simply insignificant in comparison to other foreign policy concerns and hence is of little interest to theories that focus on the intersection of power and system. Moreover, no logical sequence like that in IPE has been offered to show why a hegemon would prefer one international environmental order over another. Although some studies note the role of U.S. power in helping to form environmental regimes, no study explains this as a consequence of U.S. hegemony. Nor are regional hegemons discussed in these terms. This remains, then, an unexplored line of thought.

**Interests and the International System**

Systemic theories that focus on interests have shown more results for the study of environmental foreign policy. As noted, interest-based theory assumes that rational actors will cooperate to achieve joint gains. Generally, this means they seek absolute rather than relative gains. In many issue areas, the utility of military force is low, and so the overriding concern with security in power-based theory is often absent. Interest-based theory assumes that interests can be identified by the analyst *a priori* (for instance, all states' interests in economic growth enhanced by comparative advantage). Interests are not understood as the outcome of domestic politics; by assumption, states are rational, unitary actors. Therefore, interest-based theory tends to adopt game theory and economic models to interpret foreign policy. Comparative foreign policy requires only specifying various states' interests in a given issue area, not looking inside the state at
domestic institutions or political processes. For example, states seek economic growth and know, because of the theory of comparative advantage, that free trade results in optimal global output. But they are tempted to cheat on free trade agreements to make economic gains at the expense of the system. The question is how to solve this problem of cheating; state interests in the mutually beneficial outcomes of economic cooperation are assumed. A large part of the literature on international regimes adopts this perspective: "Foreign policies as well as international institutions are to be reconstructed as outcomes of calculations of advantage made by states" (Hasenclever, Rittberger, and Mayer 1997: 23).

The most prominent study of environmental foreign policy to adopt this view asserts that state interests in environmental questions include vulnerability to environmental damage and costs of abatement (Sprinz and Vaahtoranta 1994: 81). The study predicts that states with low vulnerability and low costs of abatement will by "bystanders," those with low abatement costs and high vulnerability will be "pushers," states with high costs and low vulnerability will be "draggers," and states high on both dimensions will be "intermediates." The model is tested against two cases: ozone-depleting chemicals, and acid rain. "Overall," the authors conclude, "our theoretical propositions explain much of the positions taken during the negotiations on the Montreal Protocol as well as the Helsinki Protocol" (p. 104). Barkdull (1998) argues in a similar vein in regard to marine pollution, although with more attention to the foreign policy executive's role in bringing policy into line with the national interest.

Another tack on the relationship between national interests, the environment, and foreign policy is to ask whether environmental pressures of various kinds lead to conflict (Homer-Dixon 1993). One recent study finds that population pressure can lead to war, especially for low-technology countries experiencing rapid population growth (Tir and Diehl 2001). Water conflicts have also received considerable attention, with one recent investigation showing that military preponderance, democratic regimes, and a single state having control over a significant part of the water resources are related to the likelihood of conflict (Huston 1999). These studies do not attempt to account for foreign policy toward the environment as such and thus do not fit the typology we have
developed. Still, as one of the more important recent lines of research, they deserve attention.

Implicitly, many authors adopt a state-as-actor orientation to interpreting environmental foreign policy. Even critics of existing policy tend to assert that "the United States" or "China" or "France" pursues a given policy without attempting to account for the state's policy choices. For instance, one comprehensive and critical examination of U.S. foreign policy simply describes the policies the country has advocated or resisted without saying why the United States has chosen the environmentally harmful policies it has (Hunter 2000). Such a view is systemic, although the author apparently rejects the notion that the state is acting rationally. With more attention to causes, Carroll (1992, 1986) and Caldwell (1990) account for environmental foreign policy in terms of perceived national interests. In the same vein, Myers (1987) and Mathews (1989) have called for recognizing an emerging national interest in environmental protection, and Springer (1988) argues that complying with international environmental law is in the U.S. national interest.

**Ideas and the International System**

The intersection of ideas and systemic theory has been explored from several angles. Waltz (1979), the most prominent advocate of neorealism, argues that the only truly structural variable in an international political system is the distribution of capabilities. Power therefore defines the structure of the system. Recently, Alexander Wendt has convincingly challenged this proposition (Wendt 1999). The "constructivist" view Wendt advances agrees with neorealism that the theory of international politics should be structural and systemic. The point in contention, then, is what belongs at the structural level.

Wendt claims that material capabilities and interests account for very little of the structure international politics. Instead, ideas are the main structural variable. Ideas constitute states and the state system, which is prior to state behavior within the system. Wendt's main policy focus is on international conflict and cooperation, but presumably his perspective could be readily extended to environmental politics. If states were to identify themselves as, say, planetary stewards rather than Hobbesian competitors for dominance, then the character of international anarchy would change.
accordingly. \textbf{State} self-definitions, definitions of the Other, and intersubjective understandings would reflect the structure of ecological ideas and foreign policies would share that perspective. Michele Betsill (2000), drawing on constructivism, asserts that internationally developed norms matter in the making of foreign policy. Specifically, norms regarding climate change are said to have affected U.S. foreign policy on that issue (cf. Harris 2000b).

Similarly, Ruggie shows that hegemony alone does not account for the character of the international economic system the hegemon prefers. Post-war American construction of a regime of "embedded liberalism" resulted because the United States was committed to intervention in the national economy along with a system of relatively open trade. In short, not only hegemony, but American hegemony mattered for constructing the post-war international economic order (Ruggie 1998: 62-84). Likewise, in international environmental policy, the rules and norms would likely reflect the specific policy orientation of major actors such as the United States take toward the environment. The current managerial approach to fostering "sustainable development" which leaves prevailing political and economic structures largely untouched responds to hegemonic (American) ideas about the relationship of domestic to international environmental policy.

Taking another approach, Martha Finnemore has demonstrated the utility of a sociological approach to international relations. Her research shows that ideas and values generated at the domestic level can lead to the creation of international organizations and international policies that are reflected in new institutions in other states. The international structure Finnemore investigates is one of "meaning and social value" rather than power. She notes, "States are socialized to want certain things by the international society in which they and the people in them live" (1996: 2). For instance, Finnemore observes that science ministries are found in most governments. Likewise, environmental ministries are now seen in almost all countries, regardless of level of development or innate concern for the environment. The negotiation of international environmental policy has apparently led governments to see having such a ministry as part of the definition of a modern state. In this reading, international and domestic policy processes exist in a dialectical relationship to one another.
Also focusing on the role of ideas, former Vice President Al Gore's *Earth in the Balance* (1992) asserts that the ecological crisis has arisen due to wrong thinking. The errant conceptual lenses we use to assess environmental and economic policy goals can be changed. Gore argues that global environmental protection can become a guiding ideal just as did civil rights, the anti-slavery movement, and even anti-communism. In those cases, apparently intractable social problems yielded rather rapidly to new ways of thinking. Gore calls for an ethic of stewardship to direct U.S. foreign policy and international environmental institutions.

Research on epistemic communities has been prominent in the study of environmental politics, with clear foreign policy implications. Peter Haas's seminal study of the Mediterranean Action Plan claims that states formed an international regime to protect the Mediterranean Sea in part because of the influence of a transnational epistemic community (Haas 1990). More or less implicitly, Haas's study is about the factors determining a state's foreign policy, in this case to participate in a particular environmental regime. The scientific expertise of the members of the epistemic community convinced policymakers that "saving the Mediterranean" required decisive action. Hence the littoral states adopted policies leading toward international conventions and an international organization charged with cleaning up and protecting the sea. In other words, ideas generated by a transnational community of experts shaped state perceptions of the national interest and appropriate foreign environmental policies, in turn leading to regime formation.

The general message of this line of thought is that ideas operating at the global level affect foreign policy choices. Cognition, then, is not to be understood as a "unit-level" variable properly ignored by structural international relations theory. The distribution of ideas is as systemic as the distribution of capabilities. (Indeed, the distribution of ideas largely determines what counts as a capability.) Systemic ideas have two main effects on foreign policy: in shaping state preferences, and in constituting state identity from which follows preferences and foreign policy. Although some work has been done which adopts this orientation, much remains to be explored.

Another systemic approach, one that does not fit readily into our typology, deserves mention: the world-system or globalist
approach (Viotti and Kaupi 1999: 351-356). Capitalism is seen as a global system, not a mere collection of national economies—a system that incorporates core, periphery, and semi-periphery states. This scheme designates states' roles in a global division of labor driven by the requisites of capital accumulation. The economic order determines the character of anarchy and the distribution of capabilities. Preserving the system itself is a major element of state action and policy. Domination of the many by the few, the periphery by the core, is central. Foreign policy is in large part a function of the state's position in this system of domination. Core states strive to maintain their position, while periphery states aim at escaping subordination.

Foreign policy toward the environment thus would presumably serve these ends. For instance, core states would advocate international arrangements that tend to leave periphery states as they are—underdeveloped, locked into providing raw materials and agricultural commodities in exchange for high-value manufactured goods. Some periphery states (those not entirely subordinated to core interests) would insist on international arrangements that take into account the core's long history of environmental heedlessness. They would insist on policies that further periphery economic development while placing the environmental burden as much as possible on the core. For core states, international financial institutions would serve to maintain periphery subordination by way of debt and imposition of the neoliberal economic model on all nations, regardless of national history or stage of development. Projects financed by international financial institutions would serve the needs of core country multinational corporations, usually without regard to effects on human-environment relations in the periphery. Periphery states, again, would resist these tendencies. In addition, indigenous popular movements would arise in the periphery, and in peripheral areas within core states, to resist corporate resource exploitation. Unfortunately, these popular movements often oppose their own states as well as the core states' development objectives (Gedicks 1993).

The world-system perspective does not fall readily into the power, interest, or cognitive category. This is because it is a comprehensive world-view more than a single theory. It is not entirely consistent internally; different analysts debate the proper formulation of world-system theory. The world-system perspective
cuts across the power-based, interest-based, cognitive typology. Put simply, the ideology of capitalism conforms to and forwards the interests of the capitalist class, who use many forms of power to maintain their system of dominance. Environmental politics, including environmental foreign policy, can be understood as manifesting the current stage of the ongoing class struggle, operating at all political levels. As for ameliorating the situation within current institutions, John Bellamy Foster observes, "There is an irreversible environmental crisis within global capitalist society" (2000: 12).

**Societal Theories of Environmental Foreign Policy**
Societal theory stresses the way in which preferences of domestic actors are translated into policies adopted and implemented by the various arms of government. As Ikenberry, Lake and Mastanduno frame it, "According to the society-centered approach, explanations for foreign...policy are found in the ongoing struggle for influence among domestic social forces or political groups" (1988: 7). Government is generally seen as a neutral arbiter or simply as an arena of conflict and compromise. It has little independent effect on policy outcomes. In general, the group orientation dominant in society-centered literature implies that the state is passive, a referee adjudicating group bargaining, and fragmented to the point of incoherence itself as a political actor. Class analysis and elite theory also assert that the overriding determinants of a state's foreign policy are to be found in society. But the state, rather than neutral, is an instrument of class domination as well as a site of class struggle. In either case, foreign policies are explained by reference to the outcomes of contending societal forces.

**Power in Society**
Elite theory and class analysis both postulate that understanding foreign policy requires locating the true sources of power. Behind the façade of democratic choice via competitive elections lies an elite consensus regarding which policies to pursue. Elites hold the levers of power in politics, from control over campaign contributions to acting as gatekeepers regarding the public agenda to manipulating public opinion through an oligopoly mass media. The foreign policy elite is recruited from a very small slice of America, for example, and the "Establishment" persists from one presidency to the next, regardless of the president's party. Organizations such as the Council
on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission allow the elites to collaborate and to reach broad consensus on policy directions. Elite interests change slowly, and so policy change is incremental. In some cases, elite and mass preferences are quite close, in others they diverge sharply. But elite control over the levers of power ensures that the structural conditions for capital accumulation and continued elite privilege will remain in place.

In regard to environmental foreign policy, elites would tend to fall into one of two camps. Some would be strong advocates of unfettered economic growth fueled by corporate freedom. Others would acknowledge the need for some degree of environmental protection. The latter would likely endorse a managerial approach that relies on international organizations and international law while maintaining the institutions of the international economy largely unchanged. "Sustainable development" would be defined in terms congenial to corporate interests and economic growth; environmental problems are matters of technology and organization. Environmental protection from the standpoint of the corporation means achieving efficiency in the use of inputs. Insofar as well-run companies are already seeking efficiency, the best way to protect the environment is to encourage corporations to do what they would do anyway for bottom-line reasons. Limits to growth, in this conception, do not exist (Chaterjee and Finger 1994: 27-29).

The making of environmental foreign policy can be interpreted in direct and indirect ways. Elites determine policy, both by holding the levers of policy making (the revolving door of Establishment foreign policy figures would be relevant here) and by influencing elected officials. Indirectly, elites shape a society's ideology and belief systems so as to be compatible with elite policy preferences. The leading ideas of every age are the ideas of the ruling class. Hence transformational alternatives to global capitalism are not likely to receive wide support. They will seem outside the realm of common sense to most citizens. For example, the "ideology of competitiveness" has been so strongly reiterated that it now "has been elevated to the status of a natural law" (Rinehart 1996: 87).

Countless studies of environmental policy attribute outcomes to the influence of elites, especially corporate leadership. A recent example asserts, "Large multinational firms in particular possess extensive economic and technological power that shapes outcomes in international environmental policy-making" (Falkner 2001: 157).
Another study argues that the emerging practice of granting patents on life forms represents a new form of corporate-led colonialism, akin to the Pope's granting ownership of the Americas to Spain and Portugal (Shiva 1997). Among numerous studies asserting that free trade is environmentally disastrous, one author claims, "It is important to realize the new free trade agreements were designed and promoted by associations of businesses for whom environmental regulations are no more than costs that interfere with profits and therefore must be minimized" (Goldsmith 1996: 90). Presumably, corporations achieved these free trade agreements in part by influencing the foreign policies of major actors. Although such observations are commonplace in the environmental politics literature, studies focused specifically on environmental foreign policy are not. Still, the general point that corporations and economic elites determine a state's environmental foreign policy emerges in many contexts.

**Interests in Society**

Citizens in pluralist societies are likely to assume that interest group conflict is the best place to focus attention when any policy is in question, foreign or domestic, environmental or otherwise. Similarly, interest group bargaining and compromise is a common theme in the study of environmental politics. In an open society, presumably groups mobilize various resources in a struggle to influence the decisions of the proximate policymakers. Most of the policymakers directly or indirectly depend on the groups for their positions. They need the votes, the money, and the publicity groups provide. In exchange for support, they adopt policy stances that gain the approval—and avoid the disapproval—of groups that provide them with needed resources. In environmental politics, environmental groups offer votes, favorable mention in their publications, financial support, and moral approbation for doing the environmentally right thing. Opponents, generally the corporations and businesses that see costs involved in complying with environmental regulations, muster somewhat different resources (including high-quality legal opinion, and more money) to induce policymakers to choose their way. Environmental foreign policy is thus a function of the disparate pressures emanating from these (and other) interest groups—and hence seldom fully reflects the interests of any one of them.
Regarding group analysis of environmental foreign policy, one line of study investigates the coalitions favoring and opposing free trade; an unlikely alliance of protectionist businesses and genuine environmentalists opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), for instance (Yandle 1993: 95). A similar protectionist-environmentalist coalition formed in opposition to a large copper smelting operation near the U.S.-Mexico border (Mumme 1984). U.S. environmental groups' position on NAFTA, according to one study, represented a minimalist approach that asked only that the agreement not cause greater environmental damage, a view that the Bush administration rejected nonetheless (Audley 1993). Group influence is usually seen as an impediment to environmental foreign policy (McAlpine and LeDonne 1993; Shaffer 1995), but Benedick (1989, 1991) argues to the contrary that interest groups—including industry—in the United States helped push U.S. ozone policy ahead of European preferences. Beyond this, Lerner (1986) avers that a strong foundation in voluntary civic groups is essential to implementing successful transnational ecosystem management. Texts on environmental politics adopt group theory to explain U.S. environmental policy, with obvious if generally unstated extension to foreign affairs (Smith 1992; Switzer 2001).

Ideas in Society
The role of widely held ideas in the making of foreign policy entails study of such phenomena as ideology, belief systems, stereotypes, myths, and public opinion. It is important to distinguish these broader orientations from the ideas held by policymakers themselves (to be discussed below). Certainly, we would be surprised if policymakers' ideas were not at least partially congruent with more diffuse belief systems. Still, the societal focus reminds us that the key question is how ideas affect such things as group bargaining in society, the outcomes of which the state then more or less ratifies. The main action remains in society, not in the minds of the proximate policymakers. Using an apt analogy, the policymakers might make the coaching decisions but the normative and institutional context sets the rules of the game (Jackson 1993: 111-112).

Investigating American ideology, defined as "an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and
suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality" (Hunt 1987: xi), offers one avenue to understanding the effect of societal ideas on foreign policy. Hunt's analysis identifies widely held attitudes in American society regarding the country's destiny, racial hierarchy, and the dangers of revolutionary ferment abroad as crucial factors shaping U.S. foreign policy on expansionism, imperialism, and contemporary international politics. In regard to environmental concerns, parallel analysis might focus on, for example, the contrasting attitudes represented by Gifford Pinchot and John Muir, the one advocating a conservationist, multiple-use approach, while the other favored wilderness preservation (cf. Pinchot 1998; Muir 1997). The vacillation between these perspectives in domestic environmental policy would presumably also show up in environmental foreign policy, although no such study exists to our knowledge.

Of course, a more obvious line of inquiry is to assess the effects of liberal, free-market ideology on environmental foreign policy. Peter Doran's (2000) position is that "governmentality" as formulated by Foucault limits U.S. climate change policy to a technocratic and managerial attitude toward environmental concerns. U.S. policy is committed to economic liberalization and consequently to the weakening of the state's ability to manage the environment. American environmental foreign policy is wedded to an ideology of development and economic growth that allows few alternatives. Similarly, Andreas Missbach finds that the United States is laggard on climate change because of its commitment to Fordism and the American Dream, which is a "waste of resources and energy" (2000: 148). In general, the ideology of capitalism depends on a commitment to premises that are at odds with environmental protection: endless economic growth, technological progress, and consumerism (see Crocker and Linden 1998). Although not about U.S. foreign policy as such, Benjamin Barber's critique of "McWorld" posits that the consumerist ideology supporting global economic integration is American through-and-through. The global economic institutions that represent the American impulse toward Ruggie's "embedded liberalism" and an open world economy are, he writes, inimical to protecting the environment (Barber 1996: 226-227).

The general point is that beliefs that are widely held in society shape the societal politics of the environment. Elites and masses,
contending groups, public opinion—whichever model of political choice one adopts—the terrain on which the political struggle occurs is formed by the way the players define, interpret, and value the objects of contention. Interests are not to be taken as given but problematized and investigated in their own right.

State-Centric Theories of Environmental Foreign Policy
State-centric theory takes issue with the propensity, particularly in American political analysis, to give society rather than the state causal primacy (Ikenberry, Lake and Mastanduno 1988: 9-14). In the study of foreign economic policy, one school sees the state as a persistent institutional structure. Institutional change occurs mainly during crises. Most of the time, the inertia built into institutions means that they will continue to influence policy outcomes even after the coalitions and ideas underpinning them have lost their dominant position. A second approach views the state as actor: "Its primary emphasis is on the goal-oriented behavior of politicians and civil servants as they respond to internal and external constraints in an effort to manipulate policy outcomes in accordance with their preferences" (Ikenberry, Lake and Mastanduno 1988: 10). Many scholars in the second camp make a further assumption that policymakers are concerned with the national interest rather than the particularistic concerns of a domestic constituency. Whatever the nature of their preferences, top policymakers can overcome domestic interests and institutional inertia by creating new institutional arrangements, taking advantage of their unique position at the intersection of national and domestic politics, and mobilizing inactive social groups in support of their program.

Our typology draws from this the notion that the state can act independently of societal interests. It also concurs in saying that foreign policy outcomes cannot be read off from the structure of the international system, however defined. States may well pursue the national interest, but nothing is automatic about this. Leaders must develop and implement policy that furthers the national interest, which means overcoming obstacles in society to doing so. Sometimes they succeed, sometimes they fail. On the institutional side, the task is to specify the circumstances that shake policy out of the routine and move it to a new path. The causes can lie in a shift in the distribution of political power within the state, changing interests of key official actors, or new ideas.
Power within the State
Power-based state-centric theory proposes that to explain policy outcomes one must identify which actor(s) in the state dominates the policy process. In the general foreign policy literature, this question has been addressed mainly as a matter of executive-legislative relations. For instance, in the United States, the growth of the presidency, especially after World War II, has disadvantaged Congress in the struggle over the content of foreign policy. Presumably, if Congress had more influence, such policy disasters as the Vietnam War might not have occurred. The Imperial Presidency renders Congress a weak body in foreign policy (Schlesinger 1998), a proposition considered to be roughly accurate still, at least in regard to security matters. Several studies of environmental foreign policy assess the relative strength of Congress and the Executive. Paarlberg (1997) argues that Congress thwarted the Clinton presidency’s efforts to lead on significant international environmental issues. Similarly, Bryner (2000: 126) attributes U.S. foot-dragging on climate change to presidential weakness relative to Congress. By contrast, Barkdull (1998, 2001) finds that the Nixon administration, by internationalizing the issue, used its position as foreign policy leader to develop and enact into international treaties its own version of marine pollution policy.

Another possible way to investigate power within the state would assess the strength of various bureaucratic actors. Foreign policy would be the outcome of power struggles within the state involving such executive branch agencies as the defense ministry, the treasury, the foreign ministry, and the like. Presumably, in different societies, different ministries or agencies would hold the most power resources. Perhaps the best example of this in the general foreign policy literature would be investigation of the military-industrial complex in the United States. Likewise, those with the resources would have the most say in the content of environmental foreign policy. Indeed, the ability of the military-industrial complex to shape environmental foreign policy might be an object of study. The military may influence foreign policy by adopting environmental causes, under the rubric of "environmental security," as a way to garner resources or generally justify its existence in the absence of traditional security threats. Too few studies of this nature have been done, although many have
commented on this phenomenon (see Deudney 1990; Deudney and Matthew 1999).

**Interests and the State**

Interest-based state-centric theory tends toward two distinct questions: What are the interests of the state, and What is the role of interests within the state? The first approach directs attention to state interests that exist apart from society, for instance in maximizing tax revenue, legitimacy, autonomy, or regime stability. The premise is that the state's interests cannot be reduced to interests in society, such as group interests. The researcher's task would be to identify state interests relevant to environmental policy, then to link those interests to specific environmental foreign policy. For instance, a state might want greater regulatory control over the energy sector for any of a number of reasons. (Perhaps the energy sector is influential enough in society to limit the state's freedom of action, which might help explain the shift in the U.S. government's climate change and energy policies under President George W. Bush—who whose administration is permeated with people from traditional energy industries.) Involvement in international negotiations on global warming might provide the leverage needed to gain some regulatory authority over the energy sector, leverage that might not be possible to achieve against domestic resistance otherwise. Thus, for example, the Clinton administration tried to elicit support from powerful interests, such as the insurance industry and corporations seeking to market energy-efficient technologies, to promote its climate change policy goals. Success in this regard would in turn bolster the power of the government over the fossil-fuel energy sector (Harris 2001b: 172-78).

The second approach has received considerable interest in the general literature. It says that the foreign policy agencies have certain interests that they pursue in the foreign policy process. Hence foreign policy outcomes are explained as the product of bureaucratic bargaining and compromise over such things as budgets, staffing, jurisdiction, mission, and domain. Allison and Zelikow's study of the Cuban Missile Crisis is the most famous example, inspiring many others. One of their models sees policies as "results of bargaining games" (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 255). Barnett asserts that the concept of environmental security has been used by agency actors to coopt environmental issues in order to perpetuate roles and the
agencies' traditional (Cold War) activities (Barnett 2001). Another study shows that poor bureaucratic organization has hindered the United States and Canada from implementing declared Great Lakes environmental policy (Schwartz 1992). A related postulate is that important government officials may be "policy entrepreneurs" who back a policy partly because of their own political ambitions, partly because they want to do the right thing (and, most of them probably hope, leave a legacy of doing so). For instance, Russell Train's part in ocean pollution negotiations during the Nixon presidency seems to reflect this idea (Barkdoll 1998), as may Al Gore's intimate involvement in shaping U.S. environmental foreign policy over the year's (Harris 2001b: 195-97).

Ideas and Policy Making

How do ideas affect environmental foreign policy? Several approaches are possible. Parallel with work on foreign economic policy, scholars have argued that world views, principled beliefs, and causal beliefs held by policymakers serve as road maps, contribute to achieving efficient outcomes in the absence of a unique equilibrium, and, when embedded in institutions, specify policy in the absence of innovation (Goldstein and Keohane 1993: 8-13). Unfortunately, the best book examining these forces (Goldstein and Keohane 1993) discusses economics, colonialism, terrorism, and human rights, but it lacks a chapter on environmental policy.

Another line of thought investigates the role of science in shaping environmental foreign policy. Environmental policy depends on scientific research and evidence perhaps more than any other issue area. According to one observer, the "national basis of decision making" leads to "a powerful national identification to science and technology," and to tying scientific research "to the perspectives of a single country" (Skolnikoff 1995: 259-260). Scientific uncertainty has been cited to help explain policy gridlock in the United States regarding global warming (Skolnikoff 1990), and subsequently the failure of U.S. leadership on the issue (Paarlberg 1999: 247-248). Policymakers generally turn to scientists for dispassionate analysis, but Spiller and Rieser (1986), in a study of ocean dumping policy, assert that scientists bring non-scientific values to their interpretations of evidence, generally in line with their policy preferences. Susskind (1994) observes that scientists played important roles in the debate over ozone depletion, and he questions
the usefulness of adversary science for developing effective environmental agreements (but these remarks are not part of a study of environmental foreign policy as such). Others have examined the role of scientific discourse in molding international environmental policy (Litfin 1993). Perhaps the most glaring absence in this literature is a comparative study that would show how science figures in the foreign environmental policies of various states, developed and developing, strong and weak, democratic and authoritarian, unitary and fragmented, and so forth.

Foreign policy studies give considerable attention to the psychology of leadership and small decision-making groups. Hypotheses on perception and misperception, groupthink, parochialism in the agencies, and the like are employed to account for a wide variety of foreign policy outcomes (Jervis 1976; Janus 1972; Hart, Stern and Sundelius 1997). Whether Woodrow Wilson's projection of childhood conflicts onto the international screen, or herd mentality in John Kennedy's inner circle during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the way leaders think and perceive is seen as crucial to understanding a state's foreign policy choices. Very little, if any, research on how such factors affect environmental foreign policy exists (see Harris 2001b: 190-199).

One fruitful approach that crosses the line between societal and state-centric theory is to investigate the role of societal groups in shaping policymakers' values and even scientific understanding of environmental and resource issues. Harris (2001: 31) notes that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have used conferences and other activities to increase public awareness of environmental problems, and NGOs in the United States have been shown to play an important role in Congressional consideration of multilateral development bank policies (Boas 2001). Although somewhat blurring the line between foreign policy studies as such and international relations, the role of NGOs in shaping the cognitive orientations of environmental policy making is explored in Princen and Finger (1994), Wapner (1996, 1995) and elsewhere. As noted above, the foreign policy argument of the epistemic community literature carries similar implications. Policymakers facing a degree of uncertainty listen to and respond to the ideas made prominent in society by scientists and experts, NGOs, and other groups outside the state. To be sure, the proximate policymakers are elected officials and those in the agencies, but the source of foreign policy
remains fundamentally in the ideas circulating in society. As Henry Kissinger (1979: 54, cited in Hunt 1987: 1) observed, "The convictions that leaders have formed before reaching high office are the intellectual capital they will consume as long as they continue in office" (including, presumably, Kissinger's own complete disdain for international environmental issues!).

The role of ideas in shaping the environmental foreign policy choices of government officials remains a largely unexplored area. A few studies, with most attention to the role of science, are all that we have. Certainly, general international relations works often remark on the role of ideas, but these remarks are suggestive only. Few studies focus specifically on the question of policymakers' ideas and values, their worldviews, or even the flow of information within the agencies, to explain environmental foreign policy outcomes. We know of no studies dedicated to the question from the individual psychology of decision makers.

Conclusion
In this essay we have tried to start thinking systematically about theory in the context of environment and foreign policy. We begin by thinking about the role of systemic and structural variables at the interstate level, societal forces and institutions, and actors at the state level. We supplement these categories with emphases on power, interests, and ideas and human psychology. Different scholars have helped us highlight each of these aspects of foreign policy making, and some have done so specifically in the context of environmental issues (see Figure 1). We have tried to show how their work has increased our understanding, and we have highlighted some areas where more research is required.

What has our survey shown in regard to further research? Power-based systemic theory has yet to offer an explanation parallel to that in IPE for why a hegemon would prefer a given set of environmental policies and institutions over another. The power of elites in society to shape environmental foreign policy is often noted but not examined systematically or with an eye to theoretical debates. Examination of executive-legislative relations has yielded some studies, although differences of interpretation remain. Among interest-based approaches, the national interest model offers one of the most prominent studies, but much more empirical work remains to be done. The impact of interest groups has received perhaps the
most attention, not surprising in that most Americans take this model of U.S. politics for granted. By contrast, the "bread and butter" of foreign policy studies—bureaucratic politics—is bereft of studies focusing on environmental policy. The role of ideas is an important part of the study of international environmental politics, and that research spills over into foreign policy studies. But cognitivist studies of environmental foreign policy as such are scarce. The state's autonomous role has received some study, but, as in all these approaches, more empirical work and theoretical development is needed. Comparative work is all but absent for each approach. This is not to criticize existing scholarship. To the contrary, the studies we do have point the way for further research. Many studies available to us now have lasting value for the development of the theory of environmental foreign policy. In general, the study of environmental foreign policy has only just begun, which is an opportunity for scholars.

While theory can bring parsimony to the study of environmental foreign policy, no single theoretical approach can adequately encompass the many variables that contribute to the formulation and implementation of foreign policy in any issue area. Each approach highlights different aspects of the process, and therefore each has its utility in increasing our understanding of the issues studied. While simplicity may suffer, it will sometimes be useful and important to combine approaches, depending on the issue and the particular state or states being studied.

Interestingly, one conclusion that can be drawn from this survey is that we perhaps ought to look back to the 1960s and 1970s for help in understanding contemporary and future problems of environmental change. Many scholars of international environmental relations followed the (American) trend of the 1980s by looking for simplicity in systemic theory, in the process rejecting much of the detailed literature and theory derived from foreign policy analysis and comparative politics. Increasingly, scholars are returning to the rich, detailed forms of analyses of those earlier decades. In so doing, they may increase our understanding of the human, social and institutional forces shaping foreign policy, thereby increasing our ability to aid policymakers and stakeholders in understanding precisely which forces shape environmental foreign policy and the necessary collaborative efforts to protect the world's natural environment.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 (16/97) CPPS</td>
<td>Filial Piety and Caregiving Burden in Shanghai, People’s Republic of China</td>
<td>Professor William T. Liu, Professor Elena S. H. Yu, Professor Shang-Gong Sun and Professor Yin Kean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 (17/97) CPPS</td>
<td>How to Help the Rehabilitated Drug Abusers Not to Relapse to Drugs Again? A Successful Case - Hong Kong</td>
<td>Dr. Wai-kin Che</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62 (18/97) CPPS</td>
<td>The Value of Time and the Interaction of the Quantity &amp; the Quality of Children</td>
<td>Dr. Chengze Simon Fan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63 (19/97) CPPS</td>
<td>Generational Dependency and Elderly Care: A Psychological Interpretation of Cultural Norms and Exchange</td>
<td>Dr. Ying-yi Hong and Professor William T. Liu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Living Arrangements and Elderly Care: The Case of Hong Kong</td>
<td>Professor Rance P. L. Lee, Dr. Jik-Joen Lee, Professor Elena S. H. Yu, Professor Shang-Gong Sun and Professor William T. Liu</td>
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<td>The Social Origin of Alzheimer’s Disease: A Path Analysis</td>
<td>Professor William T. Liu and Professor Shang-Gong Sun</td>
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<td>66 (22/97) CAPS</td>
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<td>Professor Lok-sang Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67 (23/97) CAPS</td>
<td>A Long Term Monetary Strategy for Hong Kong and China</td>
<td>Professor Lok-sang Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68 (24/97) CPPS</td>
<td>Are Union Jobs Worse? Are Government Jobs Better?</td>
<td>Professor John S. Heywood, Professor W. S. Siebert and Dr. Xiangdong Wei</td>
</tr>
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<td>Restructuring the Party/state Relations: China’s Political Structural Reform in the 1980s</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Estimating British Workers’ Demand for Safety</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Managerial Stress in Hong Kong and Taiwan: A Comparative Study</td>
<td>Ms. Oi-ling Siu, Dr. Luo Lu and Professor Cary L. Cooper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Teaching Social Science in the East Asian Context</td>
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<tr>
<td>73 (1/98) CPPS</td>
<td>Interpreting the Basic Law with Chinese Characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Author</td>
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<tr>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74 (2/98) CPPS</td>
<td>Worker Participation and Firm Performance: Evidence from Germany and Britain</td>
<td>Professor John T. Addison, Professor W. Stanley Siebert, Professor Joachim Wagner and Dr. Xiangdong Wei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>The Nature of Optimal Public Policy</td>
<td>Professor Lok-sang Ho</td>
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<td>Symbolic Boundaries and Middle Class Formation in Hong Kong</td>
<td>Ms. Annie H. N. Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77 (5/98) CPPS</td>
<td>Urbanization in Sha Tin and Tuen Mun - Problems and Coping Strategies</td>
<td>Mr. Hong-kin Kwok and Mr. Shing-tak Chan</td>
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<td>78 (6/98) CAPS</td>
<td>Coping with Contagion: Europe and the Asian Economic Crisis</td>
<td>Dr. Brian Bridges</td>
</tr>
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<td>New World Order and a New U.S. Policy Toward China</td>
<td>Professor James C. Hsiung</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 (8/98) CAPS</td>
<td>Poverty Policy in Hong Kong: Western Models and Cultural Divergence</td>
<td>Dr. William Lee and Professor John Edwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81 (9/98) CAPS</td>
<td>The Paradox of Hong Kong as a Non-Sovereign International Actor</td>
<td>Professor James C. Hsiung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82 (10/98) CAPS</td>
<td>Political Impacts of Catholic Education in Decolonization: Hong Kong and Macau</td>
<td>Dr. Beatrice Leung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83 (11/98) CAPS</td>
<td>The Rise and Fall of the HK Economy</td>
<td>Professor Lok-sang Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84 (12/98) CAPS</td>
<td>中國貿易保護代價的測算：方法、結論和意義</td>
<td>張曙光教授</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 (13/98) CAPS</td>
<td>中國居民收入差距的擴大及其原因</td>
<td>趙人偉教授、李質教授</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86 (14/98) CAPS</td>
<td>The Labor Income Tax Equivalent of Price Scissors in Pre-Reform China</td>
<td>Dr. Hiroyuki Imai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87 (15/98) CPPS</td>
<td>Complementarity, Investment Incentives, and Evolution of Joint Ventures</td>
<td>Dr. Ping Lin and Dr. Kamal Saggi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88 (16/98) CPPS</td>
<td>A Theory of Health and Health Policy</td>
<td>Professor Lok-sang Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89 (1/99) CPPS</td>
<td>Towards a New International Monetary Order: The World Currency Unit and the Global Indexed Bond</td>
<td>Professor Lok-sang Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 (2/99) CPPS</td>
<td>Age Differences in Work Adjustment: A Study of Male and Female Managerial Stress, Coping Strategies and Locus of Control in Hong Kong</td>
<td>Dr. Oi-ling Siu, Professor Paul E. Spector, Professor Cary L. Cooper, Dr. Kate Sparks and Dr. Ian Donald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>A Comparative Study of Managerial Stress in Greater China: The Direct</td>
<td>Dr. Oi-ling Siu, Professor Paul E. Spector, Professor Cary L. Cooper,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Indirect Effects of Coping Strategies and Work Locus of Control</td>
<td>Dr. Luo Lu and Dr. Shanfa Yu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Implementing Efficient Allocations in a Model of Financial Intermediation</td>
<td>Professor Edward J. Green and Dr. Ping Lin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>R &amp; D Incentives in Vertically Related Industries</td>
<td>Dr. Samiran Banerjee and Dr. Ping Lin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Testing for a Nonlinear Relationship among Fundamentals and Exchange Rates in the ERM</td>
<td>Dr. Yue Ma and Dr. Angelos Kanas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Health Care Delivery and Financing: in Search of an Ideal Model - Reflections on the Harvard Report</td>
<td>Professor Lok-sang Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>A Structural Equation Model of Environmental Attitude and Behaviour: The Hong Kong Experience</td>
<td>Dr. Oi-ling Siu and Dr. Kui-yin Cheung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Hong Kong’s Inflation under the U.S. Dollar Peg: The Balassa-Samuelson Effect or the Dutch Disease?</td>
<td>Dr. Hiroyuki Imai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Structural Transformation and Economic Growth in Hong Kong: Another Look at Young’s “A Tale of Two Cities”</td>
<td>Dr. Hiroyuki Imai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
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<td>Dr. Wong Yiu-chung and Dr. Chan Che-po</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Globalization and Sino-American Economic Relations</td>
<td>Professor C. Fred Bergsten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Government Expenditures and Equilibrium Real Exchange Rates</td>
<td>Professor Ronald J. Balvers and Dr. Jeffrey H. Bergstrand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>A Case Study of Economic Ecology: The Hong Kong Economy’s Plunge into a Deep Recession in 1998</td>
<td>Professor Lok-sang Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>The Political Economy of Hong Kong SAR’s Fiscal Policy</td>
<td>Professor Lok-sang Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Dr. Oi-ling Siu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
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