

*International Relations Theory
and the Asia-Pacific*

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G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, Editors



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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments vii

List of Contributors ix

Introduction 1

International Relations Theory and the Search for Regional Stability

G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno

PART I

Security, Identity, and Stability 23

1. China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance,
and the Security Dilemma in East Asia

Thomas J. Christensen 25

2. An Emerging China's Emerging Grand Strategy:
A Neo-Bismarckian Turn?

Avery Goldstein 57

3. Socialization in International Institutions:
The ASEAN Way and International Relations Theory

Alastair Iain Johnston 107

4. Hierarchy and Stability in Asian International Relations
David Kang 163
5. Ambiguous Japan: Japanese National Identity at Century's End
Masaru Tamamoto 191
6. Identity and the Balance of Power in Asia
Henry R. Nau 213
7. Asia-Pacific Security Institutions in Comparative Perspective
John S. Duffield 243

PART II

- Politics, Economics, and Stability 271
8. States, Markets, and Great Power Relations
in the Pacific: Some Realist Expectations
Jonathan Kirshner 273
 9. Sources of American-Japanese Economic Conflict
Robert Gilpin 299
 10. Economic Interdependence and the Future
of U.S.-Chinese Relations
Dale Copeland 323
 11. Institutionalized Inertia: Japanese Foreign Policy
in the Post-Cold War World
William W. Grimes 353
 12. Power and Purpose in Pacific East Asia:
A Constructivist Interpretation
Thomas U. Berger 387
- Conclusion: Images of Order in the Asia-Pacific and the
Role of the United States
G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno 421

Appendix 441

Index 445

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Introduction

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY AND THE SEARCH FOR REGIONAL STABILITY

G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno

Since the end of the cold war, the problems and prospects of the Asia-Pacific region have drawn increased attention from students of international politics and foreign policy. Interactions among the major powers of the region—the United States, China, and Japan—have taken on a particular significance. Scholars seeking to explore these renewed relationships in a dynamic and uncertain international context face a double challenge.

One challenge is to bridge the gap between the rich comparative and foreign policy scholarship on China, Japan, and the United States, on the one hand, and the wider world of international relations theory on the other. The two worlds of area specialty and international relations theory often do not meet. As a result, policy debates about the stability of Asia-Pacific relations tend to be under-theorized, while theoretical arguments about the region are often undertaken without the benefit of historical or comparative perspective. The contributors to this volume begin with the premise that the theoretical insights of international relations need to be brought more closely into contact with the rich history and complex reality of the Asia-Pacific region. Since there should be a payoff for both worlds, the chapters below are motivated collectively by this goal of helping to bridge the gap and bring theory to bear on the international politics and economics of the region.

In doing so, a second interesting challenge emerges. International relations scholars, particularly those trained in the United States, employ theories that

emerged in the context of the Western historical experience. American international relations theories are deeply rooted in Western philosophical traditions and debates, with an intellectual lineage traced back to Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, Locke, Marx, and others classic thinkers. It is not immediately apparent—nor should it be taken for granted—that these theories or intellectual constructs are relevant to understanding Chinese, Japanese, or Korean calculations and behavior. This volume necessarily raises the question of the usefulness and fit of European-centered theories for the Asia-Pacific region. In this sense as well, we believe that the encounter between the Asia-Pacific region and international relations scholarship can only illuminate and enrich both realms.

At a substantive level, the central concern of the volume involves the prospects for stability in the Asia-Pacific. The region itself provokes this concern. The Asia-Pacific is a mosaic of divergent cultures and political regime types, historical estrangements, shifting power balances, and rapid economic change. It is not surprising that some scholars find the international relations of the Asia-Pacific as ripe for rivalry. It is plausible to imagine security dilemmas, prestige contests, territorial disputes, nationalist resentments, and economic conflicts swelling up and enveloping the region.

The key regional actors are China, Japan, and the United States. China is a rising power that is simultaneously transforming its domestic politics and economics, extending its regional influence, and demanding the respect and recognition of other major powers. Japan is an economic great power that thus far has neglected to develop the commensurate military power and diplomatic initiative typically expected of a traditional nation-state. The United States is the dominant power and a formidable presence in the region, although some question its long-term commitment in the absence of the Soviet threat or an equivalent global challenge.

The working premise of this volume is that stability in the broader Asia-Pacific region is in large part a function of the behavior of, and relationships among, these three major powers. For this reason, the volume concentrates on interactions among China, Japan, and the United States. Each chapter analyzes the foreign policy behavior of one or more of these states and/or relations among them in an effort to make claims about the prospects for regional stability. Some of the chapters focus on security relationships, some on economic relations, and some on the interaction of the two. Taken as a whole, the chapters do not promote any particular theoretical perspective. They draw instead on the full diversity of theoretical approaches in contemporary international relations scholarship to illuminate interactions among these three critical players.

If “stability” can be defined broadly as the absence of serious military, economic, or political conflict among nation-states, then existing theories of international relations indeed offer far-reaching and divergent claims about the sources of stability in world politics. The realist research program offers at least two candi-

dates: balance of power theories and hegemony theories. The first two sections of this chapter survey these theories as they are drawn upon in the chapters that follow. The authors in this volume do not agree fully on whether a stable balance of power or hegemonic order is possible in the Asia-Pacific, or on whether shifting power distributions and competing hegemony will render the region unstable. The authors do agree that the distribution of power—hegemonic or balanced—is not in itself sufficient to generate either stability or instability. Perceptions, institutions, and relations of interdependence also matter, as they give more precise shape to the understanding of national interests and security threats.

Other chapters in this volume examine elements of order and stability that might best belong to liberal and constructivist theoretical traditions. Several of the authors argue that history and memory are crucial factors in shaping how China, Japan, and the United States view and react to each other. The Asia-Pacific region contrasts with that of Europe; in the latter region, states seem to have overcome nationalist hatreds to arrive at political reconciliation and even a grand vision of regional integration. Nothing remotely so ambitious exists in the Asia-Pacific, where suspicions and resentments rooted in history continue to dominate the forces of political reconciliation. To take one example, it is striking how different Japan's self-perception is from the perceptions of Japan held by many Chinese and Koreans. The objective circumstances of regional power are not able to explain the divergence in perceptions, and for some authors the divergence in perceptions is the critical variable.

Liberal theories of international relations emphasize the role of international institutions and economic interdependence in promoting cooperation and political stability. The authors also explore these factors in the emerging Asia-Pacific region. Their analyses deepen our understanding of how institutions and interdependence matter. Several of the authors argue that institutions—particularly domestic institutions—actually aggravate regional relationships by fixing into place differences in state-society relations and structures of political economy. These same institutions can also create rigidities that make it difficult for countries to adapt to changing international and region economic circumstances—and this too can be a source of conflict.

In sum, the contributors to this volume draw on a wide array of international relations theories to suggest that the sources of stability and instability in the Asia-Pacific are found in security relations, economic relations, and at the intersection of the two. The region continues to hold the potential for traditional security conflicts that result from dynamics such as major power rivalry, competing territorial claims among sovereign states, and the operation of the security dilemma. However, as many of the chapters suggest and as the concluding chapter argues explicitly, the role of the United States is a crucial variable that will continue to determine whether security conflicts are managed effectively and whether stability endures.

The potential for regional instability and conflict is also embedded in the “low politics” of domestic and international economic relationships. Greater economic interdependence in the Asia-Pacific has brought the promise of both prosperity and disharmony. Economic liberalization has become a regional engine of growth, but at the same time has disrupted the social and political character of “embedded developmentalism” within the states of the region. The confrontation between the Asian developmental state on the one hand, and the forces of globalization on the other, have political consequences that remain uncertain domestically and internationally. The Asian financial crisis of 1997–98 highlighted that regional stability requires the effective management if not outright resolution of this dilemma.

It is important to appreciate the intersection of these economic and security challenges. In a booming regional economy, there are incentives for state and societal actors to downplay international security and domestic political conflicts in order to concentrate on the positive sum benefits of deeper integration. But in times of slower growth and economic uncertainty, security problems become more exposed and loom larger. Security conflicts, in turn, have the potential to disrupt the economic interdependence upon which prosperity depends. For states in the region, then, economic and security relations interact to create vicious or virtuous cycles. The challenge for statecraft is to achieve the latter and avoid the former.

The remainder of this introduction explores five theoretical approaches to the question of stability in the Asia-Pacific: balance of power, styles of hegemony, history and memory, domestic and international institutions, institutions and stability, and economic interdependence. We emphasize the contributions our authors make in utilizing these theoretical perspectives to explain contemporary relations among Japan, China and the United States and to illuminate the uncertain future of the Asia-Pacific

THE BALANCE OF POWER AND ASIAN STABILITY

Will Europe’s past be Asia’s future? Aaron Friedberg posed this question in an article in 1993/94 and essentially answered in the affirmative.¹ He argued that Asia lacked many of the characteristics, present in Europe, that could lead to stability after the cold war, including widespread commitments to democracy, socio-economic equity, post-nationalist political cultures, and robust regional institutions. Asia, as opposed to Europe, seemed far more likely to emerge as the “cockpit of great-power conflict.”²

This thesis is not uncontroversial, and has its supporters and detractors.³ It is an important starting point for the analysis of this volume for two reasons. First, it raises the policy issue of critical importance, i.e., that of the sources of future stability and instability in the region. Second, it points to the critical theoretical

issue of whether the traditional tools of international relations theory, and in particular a standard realist depiction of the international system, have relevance in understanding this region after the cold war. Friedberg, in effect, suggests that late-twentieth-century Asia may be understood in much the same way as late-nineteenth-century Europe, with traditional great powers conducting economic and strategic rivalries in a multipolar setting.

The chapters in this volume engage Friedberg's thesis explicitly and implicitly. They highlight factors that lend credibility to the concerns he expresses. But they also reveal pathways to greater stability in Asia-Pacific security relations that a standard neorealist analysis might overlook.

Tom Christensen's chapter (the first) suggests that we should take seriously the prospects for great-power security conflict, particularly between China and Japan. He argues that in Asia the basic realist logic of the security dilemma is compounded by ethnic hatreds, historical enmity, and long memories. Chinese elites are fearful and suspicious of Japan and take reassurance neither from Japanese statements nor from Japanese behavior. These attitudes place the United States in a difficult position, because attempts to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance alarm China—but so, too, would any weakening of that alliance, since it would suggest to China the prospects of a more independent Japan. For Christensen, the regional security challenge is serious, but not insurmountable. He suggests that confidence-building measures and security regimes might ameliorate the security dilemma over the long term, and also that U.S. diplomacy might be used more effectively to moderate the tensions in this delicate set of relationships.

Avery Goldstein's analysis (ch. 2) of late-twentieth-century great-power politics in the Asia-Pacific recalls explicitly late-nineteenth-century great-power politics in Europe. He sees China developing a grand strategy similar to that practiced by Bismarck—an effort to engage and reassure other major powers in order to provide space for Chinese development as a great power without alarming or provoking more powerful rivals, individually or collectively. Chinese elites, in Goldstein's account, are striving less for Chinese hegemony and more to temper U.S. preponderance and bring about a peaceful transition from a U.S.-dominated order to one that is more genuinely multipolar.

David Kang (ch. 4) proposes yet another perspective, and one that challenges the whole idea that European models and theories of interstate interaction are relevant in the Asian context. Kang suggests that the long history of Asian international relations has been less war-prone than that of Europe, and one key reason is that Asian interactions have operated according to a different organizational logic. He observes that European interstate dynamics have been characterized by formal equality (i.e., sovereignty) but informal inequality. Asian relationships, in contrast, have traditionally been based on formal inequalities but informal equalities. The organization of a regional system around

the recognition by other states of Chinese hegemony played an important stabilizing role historically, and Kang explores the potential for stability in the contemporary Asia-Pacific region as China once again rises to be a major factor in the geopolitical equation.

Other authors also see encouraging signs for stability in Asia-Pacific security relations. For Alistair Iain Johnston (ch. 3), the potential to “socialize” Chinese officials into the norms and practices of the existing international order is far greater than neorealist analysis would suggest. Johnston uses Chinese participation in the Asian Regional Forum (ARF) to demonstrate that international institutions can in fact shape the behavior of Chinese officials in ways that are conducive to international stability. Dale Copeland (ch. 10) makes a similar point by focusing on international economic relations. He argues that by providing China with expectations of positive future trading relationships, the United States and other major powers can, in effect, reassure China by signaling that the international environment is more benign than malign. Finally, Henry Nau (ch. 6) combines realist and constructivist insights to argue that the United States, Japan, and certain other states in the region live in a democratic security community that mitigates, if not totally eliminates, military rivalries among them. And, although these countries face significant internal and external differences in relations with China, their superior military power helps to assure that conflicts with China are handled in political and diplomatic terms rather than as direct military confrontations.

There are other stabilizing forces in the security arena as well. Friedberg’s argument assumes a rapid transition to multipolarity, and that “the United States will be less inclined to project its power into every corner of the globe.”⁴ However, the international structure has not shifted decisively to multipolarity, and as a unipolar power the United States has reaffirmed its commitment to “deep engagement” in Asia and to the effort to manage crises in the interest of regional stability.⁵ Domestic politics may eventually force the United States to reconsider its forward political and military presence in the Asia-Pacific. But, as of the end of 2001, it seemed clear that U.S. officials continued to view the region as a vital area for U.S. security, to define U.S. regional interests in terms of an engaged defense of the economic and security status quo, and to conceive U.S. regional strategy as one of sustained engagement.⁶ The potential for the United States to play an enduring role as a stabilizer of the Asia-Pacific region is explored in the concluding chapter.

STYLES OF HEGEMONY AND STABILITY

Polarity is one way to think about the stability of the Asia-Pacific; hegemony is another. The region is marked by a variety of sharp power asymmetries, and whatever future political order emerges in the region will be one that is at least

partly defined by the divergent political capabilities of the states within the region. But if the region is to be organized by a hegemonic power, the most important question may be: whose hegemony? Whether the Asia-Pacific is ultimately dominated by a Chinese, Japanese, or American hegemonic order is of significant consequence.

Theories of hegemony tell us a great deal about the underlying logic and motivations of hegemonic leadership. A hegemonic state, with a preponderance of power and a long-term view of its interest, has both the capacities and incentives to create and manage a stable political order.⁷ But, hegemonic theories also acknowledge that the distinctive internal characteristics of the hegemon itself—its political institutions, culture, and historical experiences—will inevitably shape the ways in which the hegemon builds political order. John Ruggie's often cited counterfactual observation that a postwar order organized under German hegemony would have looked very different from the order actually organized under U.S. hegemony is apt.⁸

U.S. hegemony is already manifest in the region—and it reflects a distinctive national style. Overall, American hegemony can be characterized as reluctant, open, and highly institutionalized.⁹ The reluctance is seen in the absence of a strong impulse to directly dominate or manage weaker and secondary states within the American order. The United States wanted to influence political developments in Europe and Asia after 1945, but it preferred to see the postwar order operate without ongoing imperial control. In the early postwar years, the United States resisted making binding political and military commitments, and although the cold war drew the United States into security alliances in Asia and Europe, the resulting political order was in many respects an “empire by invitation.”¹⁰ The remarkable global reach of postwar U.S. hegemony has been at least in part driven by the efforts of European and Asian governments to harness American power, render that power more predictable, and use it to overcome their own regional insecurities.

Likewise, American hegemony has been relatively open. The United States is a large and decentralized democracy, which provides transparency and “voice opportunities” to other states in the order. This creates possibilities for political access, incentives for reciprocity, and the potential means for partner states to influence the way hegemonic power is exercised. There are many moments when Asian and European allies have complained about the heavy-handedness of U.S. foreign policy, but the open character of the American political system reduces the possibilities of hegemonic excess over the long term. The United States has also sought to build its hegemonic order around a dense set of international and intergovernmental institutions. These institutions reduce the implications of sharp power asymmetries, regularize cooperation and reciprocity, and render the overall hegemonic order more legitimate and stable.¹¹

Despite the robustness of American power, the ability of the United States to extend the frontiers of its liberal hegemonic order further into Asia is problematic. If China emerges as a hegemonic contender in the region, it will resist integration into the U.S.-centered order. Conflict between the two hegemonic competitors will become likely. Moreover, Henry Nau makes the argument in his chapter (ch. 6) that a stable and legitimate political order must be organized in a way that is congruent with the domestic principles of political order. If this is so, it reinforces the view that the region will not soon be fully organized around U.S. hegemony. The polity principles of China are sufficiently different from the United States to anticipate Chinese integration and the consolidation of an extended American system into Asia. It could be argued that the successful integration of Japan into America's postwar order is evidence that the complete commonality of domestic regime principles is not necessary. Japan rose to become an economic giant wielding a different developmental model yet it remained firmly integrated into the American system, and contrary to the expectations of many, it did not become a hegemonic challenger. Perhaps China will follow a similar path. But unique cold war circumstances and the American security relationship with Japan—not relevant in the case of China—make it unlikely China will follow Japan's lead and become a compliant associate member of the American hegemonic order.

But what if in the future China itself rises to become a regional hegemon, assuming that the United States steps back from its regional commitments and adopts more of an “offshore balancer” role? What would a Chinese hegemonic order in Asia look like? The authors in this volume suggest different possibilities. Kang's essay (ch. 4) provides the most explicit image. Drawing on the evidence of earlier Chinese imperial eras, Kang argues that the tradition of Chinese regional domination across the centuries was quite stable and peaceful. This order—unlike European notions of interstate order—was organized around deference and status hierarchy. The various Asian states acknowledged China's superior position within the region—as a matter of status and ranking—and in return the other states were given respect and autonomy within their own sphere. If one could project this image into the future of the Asia-Pacific, Chinese hegemony would be largely benign, at least to the extent that the other states in the region understood and accepted the hierarchical organization of the order.

Goldstein (ch. 2) depicts China as striving not necessarily for hegemony but clearly to be among the great powers. If China subsequently were to emerge as *the* dominant regional power, then the neo-Bismarckian strategy that he outlines suggests that Chinese hegemonic leadership would be driven by conventional notions of power politics. Chinese hegemony would be organized not around a distinctively Asian imperial tradition, but around a more classic European strategy of building “hub and spoke” relations with other important re-

gional actors.¹² The stability of a China-centered order would be based on China's ability to induce or coerce cooperation from neighboring states, rather than on some notion of political or status deference.

One hallmark of American hegemony is its organization around international institutions. American order building between in 1944–51 saw the unprecedented creation of multilateral and bilateral institutions to manage post-war security, political, and economic relations. One might infer from its current behavior that a Chinese hegemony would not emphasize this institutional impulse. Iain Johnston (ch. 3) does argue that some Chinese officials are eager to get involved in regional and global institutions, and this involvement is having an impact on their orientations and attitudes. But there is little indication in China's existing rhetoric or behavior to suggest it would pursue the creation of institutions with the same enthusiasm manifest in U.S. diplomacy. This absence of an institutional agenda may simply reflect, of course, that Chinese hegemonic ambitions are at an early stage. Alternatively, it could be evidence of the view that Western democracies are more inclined to create and operate within multilateral institutions than are Asian non-democracies. State socialist regimes may perceive multilateral institutional entanglement as a threat to their domestic standing—in effect, a future Chinese hegemon may realize what Johnston observes, i.e., that international institutions can have a subtle and corrosive effect on autocratic authority and cohesion.

Although Christensen does not make such a claim, the evidence he presents might be used to support the view that Chinese hegemony would be more coercive than benign. Given Chinese perceptions of the international environment, a hegemonic China might feel itself threatened and insecure, much like revisionist historians depict the Soviet Union in the early cold war era.¹³ Chinese hegemony under those circumstances would be aimed at building and utilizing military power to deter or pacify seemingly dangerous neighbors and dictate the terms of Asia-Pacific relations. This, of course, is precisely the concern of many Koreans and Japanese, and the prospect of a coercive Chinese hegemony makes their countries more eager to see U.S. leadership sustained in the region.

This alternative depiction of an Asia-Pacific dominated by China serves to remind us that hegemonic power is not in and of itself sufficient to create or define the character of a hegemonic order. The ideology, internal institutions, and national political character of the hegemonic state will be critical in determining how political order emerges and is maintained.

This observation is even more relevant in thinking about Japanese hegemony. The chapter by Masaru Tamamoto (ch. 5) makes a strong argument that Japanese hegemony is not even possible—even if the objective material capabilities and conditions existed. According to Tamamoto, Japan has fundamentally redefined its political identity and ambitions so as to make any type of

hegemony unthinkable. Japan has moved so decisively beyond the territorial and military-dominated great-power orientation that defined Japan's foreign policy until its defeat in World War II that it will remain satisfied playing a junior role in America's regional and global system. Indeed, from a contemporary Japanese perspective, Japan has devised a brilliant solution to its regional dilemmas: the United States solves Japan's security problems—keeping estranged Korea and China at bay, and leaving Japan to perfect and protect its internal political culture and society. Tamamoto argues that Japan really doesn't have a foreign policy, or if it does, it is channeled through Washington, D.C. Japanese hegemony is essentially unthinkable because Japan's external orientation is deeply embedded in its transformed postwar political identity.

The chapters by Thomas Berger (ch. 12) and Robert Gilpin (ch. 9) suggest not necessarily a Japanese drive for hegemony, but at least a greater willingness to attempt to shape regional economic order. During the 1980s and into the 1990s, the spread of the Japanese developmental model to other countries in the region was the cutting edge to the Japanese effort to build a congenial regional order. Unable to assert itself in the security sphere, Japan sought to build economic alliances and production relationships in and around Southeast Asia. This style of regional domination pushes political and security concerns to the background and concentrates on establishing interlocking trade and investment relationships—tied together with the replication of the Japanese MITI model of government-business relations. Berger argues that the spread of the Japanese model was rendered all the more pervasive because it entailed the spread of an economic ideology—a way of thinking about the state, markets, and economic development.

Any effort by Japanese officials to organize a regional political economy seemed to have stalled by the end of the 1990s. But the question remains of whether the Japanese style of regional domination, organized around the export of the Japanese model, has a distinctive style of interaction. Is it a robust and stable approach to building regional political order or is it likely to be conflictual and unstable? Berger's analysis suggests that the adoption of Japanese style developmental capitalism brings with it cross-cutting effects. On the one hand, the spread of the Japanese model in Asia serves to diminish geo-territorial rivalry by creating incentives for states to give priority to economic objectives. On the other hand, the spread and success of developmental capitalism has the potential to fuel new conflicts based on uneven development and the inequitable distribution of economic success.

The Asian financial crisis of 1997–99 certainly put the future of a Japanese-centered regional economy to the test. The Japanese government sought to provide some support to its distressed regional economic partners by proposing an expanded regional financing institution—making the Asian Development Bank a leading source of regional financial support. But Washington resisted this pro-

posal. At the same time, Japan's own inability to expand its economy and provide a market for distressed exports in the region undercut its regional leadership standing, while the crisis in general called into question the desirability and viability of the state-led Japanese model. Gilpin's chapter suggests, however, that it would be premature to proclaim the death of either the Japanese model or of Japanese economic prowess. He foresees the re-emergence of U.S.-Japan economic conflict based on the continued incompatibility of their national styles of capitalism. His analysis raises the broader issue of whether a dynamic regional economy organized around the competition between American and Japanese styles of capitalism would be likely to contribute to or detract from regional political and security stability.

The articles in this volume underscore the domestic underpinnings to hegemonic leadership. The styles of hegemonic leadership are clearly derived from distinctive cultural identities and political institutions. Moreover, the capacities of the United States, China, and Japan to play a hegemonic role in the region also depend on their ability to absorb imports and accommodate the interests and demands of other states within the regional hegemonic order. Charles Kindleberger argued in his classic book on the great depression that "the British were unable and the American unwilling" to play a leadership role at the moment of economic crisis in 1929. In Asia today, the conclusion we might draw is similar: China is unable and Japan is unwilling to play this role. This leaves the United States with the opportunity to sustain and expand its incomplete hegemonic project in the region, at least in the near future.

HISTORY, MEMORY, AND STABILITY

Most of the bloody wars in history have been fought in Europe, fueled by deep hatred, explosive nationalism, and power rivalries. It is striking, therefore, that over the last half century, European states have found ways to bury old animosities and work together to create a unified political order. Old adversaries have managed to move beyond their conflicts. The European postwar experience suggests that recovery, prosperity, and reconciliation can progress sequentially in a regional setting. The Asian experience, in contrast, suggests that political reconciliation is a far more elusive goal.

One of the focal points of lingering suspicion and animosity is Japan. The fear of resurgent Japanese militarism and aggression continues to resonate in Korean and Chinese elites and publics. The *Yomiuri Shimbun* presented polling data several years ago that reflected this ongoing suspicion of Japanese power. Asked if they thought Japan might become a great military power again or that it already is one, Japanese public opinion was overwhelming: 74 percent said they did not think Japan would ever again become a great military power, while 18 percent said that it may become one. In contrast, among Koreans, 56

percent strongly believed that Japan may become and 26 percent thought it already was a military power. PRC respondents were roughly divided on whether Japan would again become a military power.¹⁴ The difference between Japanese self-perception and the views of others is remarkable. At the same time, of course, and as Christensen's analysis suggests, Japan views the intentions and capabilities of its neighbors—most importantly, China—with greater suspicion and anxiety than the Chinese themselves consider justified.

How did Europe conquer its intra-regional hatreds and reconstruct political order on the continent, and is there a lesson in this experience for Asia? Some observers discuss this question in terms of symbols and apologies. Certainly the Koreans and Chinese are dissatisfied with the way the Japanese have dealt with their wartime aggression and atrocities. Various scholars have seen important differences in the ways Germany and Japan have dealt with war guilt and post-war political engagement in their respective regions.¹⁵ Others have pointed to the different ways, and degrees to which, the wartime regimes were overthrown and reconstructed. The Emperor remained in Japan but the symbols of militarism in Germany were thoroughly removed. Finally, some contend that the security crises of the cold war manifest themselves differently in Asia and Europe. German reintegration was more necessary and institutional “solutions” to this integration (which are discussed in the next section) were available in Europe, such as the Coal and Steel Community and NATO. Japan had no obvious partner—as Germany had with France—to bind itself to and force reconciliation.¹⁶

To what extent and how quickly will Asian states move beyond their predicament? Tamamoto argues (ch. 5) that it is possible to move on. Indeed, from a Japanese perspective, one may plausibly argue that the problem has already been solved. Japan has changed its entire foreign policy to overcome these problems, while Japanese elites have found their own unique solutions. The peace constitution and the elaboration of a vision of Japan as a “civilian” great power is part of this solution. The willing subordination by Japan of its military to the U.S.-Japan alliance is also part of the adjustments that Japan has made to lower the level of regional animosity. Japan has agreeably put itself in the “penalty box” of world politics, and is content to remain there. But Tamamoto argues that Japan's self-containment within constitutional restraints and alliance institutions is not simply strategic. It is also a manifestation of real transformation of Japanese society.

Berger also raises issues of the social construction of Japan's political identity in the region, arguing that the export of its political economic structures is also an aspect of postwar reconstruction and repositioning of Japan in the region. Tamamoto and Berger are both of the view that social structures and political identities can change. Johnston is also sanguine in regard to the possibility of long-term shifts in elite thinking that runs to the heart of a country's foreign pol-

icy orientation. Christensen seems less optimistic on this score—and his evidence regarding the propensity of Chinese elites to view Japan with suspicion and hatred is a sobering counterpoint to more encouraging assessments that the Asian past can safely be put to rest.

INSTITUTIONS AND STABILITY

There is a widely shared view that institutions foster political stability. Liberal institutionalists argue that international institutions or regimes facilitate cooperation by reducing obstacles—such as uncertainty and transaction costs—that stand in the way of mutually beneficial agreements between states.¹⁷ Liberal theorists of democratic peace argue that democratic state structures foster norms of conflict resolution and provide institutional mechanisms that inhibit violence in relations with other democratic states.¹⁸ Theories of political development also argue that the expansion and deepening of political institutions within a country is fundamental to political development and vital in creating stable political order.¹⁹ In all these ways, more institutionalized political orders are generally seen as more developed and stable.

The chapters in this volume suggest that the politics and economics of the Asia-Pacific complicate this general view of institutions and stability. Some authors confirm the conventional wisdom by arguing that the *lack* of institutions is a key problem. The region is not ripe for international institutionalization, and that makes stability more problematic. Other authors suggest that it is the *clash* of institutions that is the problem—divergent institutional structures of state and society exacerbate economic competition in the region and diminish the possibilities for a cooperative multilateral regional political order. And still other authors argue that it is the *stickiness* of domestic institutions that undermines stability—domestic institutions stubbornly resist change and fuel regional conflict.

One of the most striking aspects of the Asia-Pacific region is the absence of well-developed, multilateral institutions. It is not that regional institutions don't promote stability, but that the region doesn't seem to promote international institutions. John Duffield (ch. 7) attempts to explain the puzzle of why European states have spent the better part of fifty years intensively creating an increasingly dense and multifaceted array of regional economic and security institutions, while Asia remains largely bereft of such institutions. He offers and combines several explanations for this contrast, including China's role in Asia during the cold war; the absence of equal sized Asian great powers intent on mutually constraining each other; the U.S. inclination in Asia toward exercising hegemony through bilateral alliances; and the legacies of estrangement and stubborn antagonisms among Japan, Korea, and China.

Berger traces the absence of strong regional multilateral institutions to the spread of the Japanese developmental state model. "Unlike the nations of the Eu-

ropean Union . . . the Asian Developmental States are deeply reluctant to pool sovereignty, and as a result regional multilateral institutions such as PECC and APEC have been remarkably weak and under institutionalized, dependent on consensus decision making, and limited to offering nonbinding resolutions and promoting informal communication between the region's leaders."²⁰ The statist orientation of Asian economic development tends to resist the upward transfer of authority that is implied in more extensive regional institutionalization.

It could also be argued that what is missing in Asia is a regional identity, which Europe clearly has had for centuries, despite its many wars. Asia is more geographically scattered: it is really a series of unequal island nations, geographically close enough to antagonize each other but not close enough to generate institutional solutions to the problem of order. Europe is a single piece of land with a single civilizational heritage. Asia is an assortment of islands and abutments that resist the imaginings of a single civilization or political community. If European-style regional institutions require European-style geography and identity, the Asia-Pacific region will always fall short. If regional multilateral institutions can be anchored in a more heterogeneous environment, the future of institutions in Asia is more promising.

Johnston provides evidence of the difficulty of building regional wide security institutions. Chinese participation in the ARF is consequential, Johnston argues. Chinese leaders learn more about the security intentions and capabilities of other states in the region, and over time these officials are socialized into a common discourse and shared expectations. Institutions do matter, even thin ones with little direct authority or binding commitments. But the ARF is not NATO. There is very little prospect of moving toward a more truly operational regional security pact. The AEF may hold the potential for a useful dialogue, but is hard to imagine that the French would have reconciled themselves to German rearmament simply with the instituting of a Franco-German dialogue. It was the enmeshment of German military authority and capability within a wider European and Atlantic organization that provided the necessary reassurances. Binding security institutions were responsible for the reduction of the security dilemma among the traditional European rivals.²¹

The bilateral security alliances between the United States and Japan and Korea may be playing a similar, if more limited, role in the Asia-Pacific. The United States-Japan security treaty eliminates the need for Japan to develop a more capable and autonomous military force, and this in turn reduces the likelihood of a security dilemma-driven arms race between Japan and China. The bilateral alliances also make the American presence in the region more predictable and durable, which has a stabilizing impact on the wider set of regional relations.

Overall, regional dialogues and bilateral alliances do not constitute the type of institutionalization of power that grants West European relations political sta-

bility. The implication is that the Asia-Pacific will either not enjoy the same stability that Europe has created, or it will devise it by noninstitutional means.

When our attention turns from international institutions to domestic institutions, the implications for stability are no less troubling. If institutions are understood broadly to comprise the extant patterns of state-society relations, then what is most distinctive in the Asia-Pacific is the clash of institutions. This is true in two respects. First, as Henry Nau argues (ch. 6), the stability of a political order is connected to the prevailing principles of domestic political order. The legitimacy of an international order hinges on its congruence with the ideas that inform the organization of political authority within the countries that make up the order. If this is true, the prospects for stability within the Asia-Pacific region are not bright. Democratic institutions may facilitate cooperation and stability among a group of democratic states. But the Asia-Pacific region is not distinguished by the presence of a group of established liberal democracies. The heterogeneity of political types is most striking: China, Japan, and the United States seem destined to follow different pathways of political development. Nau suggests that China and Japan are both in political transformation. Their emergence as mature constitutional democracies is not yet in sight, although Japan clearly has moved significantly in this direction. But if stability requires homogeneity of regime types, and even more the presence of aged liberal democracies, stability will remain elusive.

But second, even if there were homogeneity of political regimes in the Asia-Pacific, the economic institutions remain very heterogeneous. Even if all the countries in the region were democracies, there is reason to argue that a stable peace might still be impossible because the political economies of these countries retain significant differences. Gilpin's chapter (ch. 9) centers on how the divergent institutions of capitalism can produce conflict and instability. According to Gilpin, the structures of government and business in the United States and Japan exhibit radically different logics and organizational patterns. In contrast to the United States, the Japanese have retained the neo-feudal institutions of state-led, organized capitalism. Highly organized and exclusive business conglomerates tied to government ministries and large banks run the country, manage markets, and resist change. Like an onion, the layers of social and political organization that support and reinforce this system run deep and ultimately go to the core of the Japanese system. Gilpin sides with revisionist scholars in arguing that the differences between Japanese and American capitalism are as fundamental as they are deeply embedded.²² A clash between these different styles of capitalism is likely if not inevitable. For Gilpin, institutions matter, but they do not promote stability. Rather, they fix into place antagonistic systems of capitalism that tear at the fabric of regional order.

Domestic institutions also complicate regional stability through their tendency to resist change. In this view, it is not the divergence of institutions that

aggravates regional relations, but their inflexibility. Both William Grimes (ch. 11) and Berger offer a version of this argument. Grimes argues that the domestic political order in Japan does not allow it to easily adjust to external economic change. The alliance of the LDP, bureaucracy, and organized business creates a set of mutually reinforcing interests that resist change. Reform agents have a difficult time finding a foothold in the Japanese political landscape. Japan's protracted economic slump and banking crisis have brought into the open the structural institutional character of the country's political gridlock. Countries that can't adjust tend to export their economic problems to others, creating economic conflict in the process. The failure of Japan to move quickly to put its economic and banking house in order and play a leadership role in stabilizing the other countries in the region is a chronic source of regional instability.

Berger makes this point in a more general way, arguing that all the countries in the region that have adopted the Japanese model are also struggling today. To some extent, Berger claims, the spread of the Japanese model has shifted attention away from political and security controversies in the region toward an emphasis on economic development. But it has also created new conflicts—both by creating divisions between Asian and Western capitalist orientations, and by spreading rigidities across the region. The developmental state has not been adopted uniformly across the region—variations are many and important. But the similar features outweigh the differences, and if a stable regional order requires far-reaching adjustment by Japan and the other Asian tigers, and ultimately a transformation to a new political economic model, the stickiness of state-society relations will remain a formidable obstacle.

ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE AND STABILITY

Although the Asia-Pacific lacks well-developed, multilateral institutions, economic interdependence within the region has been robust and growing. Trade and financial links between the United States and Japan expanded rapidly throughout the postwar era and especially during the 1970s and 1980s. By the end of the latter decade, as the value of the Japanese yen soared, Japanese direct and portfolio investment poured into southeast Asia and stimulated increased regional trade. China's emphasis on economic modernization and its willingness to allow particular provinces to experiment with capitalist development opened China to the world economy in general and to the Asia-Pacific region in particular. Regional trade, investment, and financial flows have contributed to the overall dynamism of the region, and to the formation of regional economic zones such as the East Asian Economic Caucus and APEC and to the development of subregional zones such as the Hong Kong-South China-Taiwan triangle.²³ Jeffrey Frankel's careful analysis of regional economic blocs finds support

for the widely held view that economic relations among APEC states are an outstanding example of market integration.²⁴

International relations theorists have long debated the relationship between economic interdependence and the prospects for conflict among states. Liberal theorists argue that interdependence decreases the incentives for conflict and war, in part because states become reluctant to disrupt or jeopardize the welfare benefits of open economic exchange, and in part because domestic interest groups with a stake in interdependence constrain the ability of the state to act autonomously. These arguments can be traced to Kant and nineteenth-century British liberals, and have been given recent expression by American IR scholars.²⁵ Realists counter that interdependence can just as easily inspire conflict by heightening the inequalities, insecurities, and vulnerabilities among states. This argument can be traced back to Rousseau, who argued that interdependence breeds “not accommodation and harmony, but suspicion and incompatibility.”²⁶ Latter day realists have echoed and extended this basic sentiment.²⁷

Several of the chapters engage this debate in an effort to contribute both to theory and to our understanding of the prospects for regional stability. Dale Copeland (ch. 10) steers between the stylized liberal and realist positions to suggest that it is not interdependence itself, but the expectations of future interdependence, that heighten the incentives for conflict or harmony. He revisits the conflict between Japan and the United States during the 1930s to show that Japan’s diminished expectations for international economic benefit led it to view the option of war as more attractive. This logic is carried to the contemporary U.S.-China relationship, and Copeland suggests that China’s propensity for international adventurism will be influenced by the extent to which it is reassured that positive economic relations with the United States will persist. Put differently, the peace-generating effects of interdependence are rather fragile. They depend not so much on the existence of interdependence, but on the necessarily subjective assessment by states of whether it will continue or diminish. Moreover, Copeland’s assessment of the prospects for stability can be taken as optimistic only to the extent that one believes the U.S. executive can maintain, in the face of domestic and congressional pressures, a positive economic strategy with consistency over the long term.

As noted above, Gilpin’s analysis of the contemporary U.S.-Japan relationship suggests a pessimistic assessment. Gilpin shows that these two powers are highly interdependent, but that their fundamentally incompatible domestic structures led to sustained conflict during the 1980s that threatened to spill over from the economic to the security arena. The conflict was muted during the 1990s, he suggests, by the combination of U.S. economic recovery and Japanese economic stagnation. But for Gilpin the structural incompatibility of “national styles of capitalism” is key. An economic downturn in the United States or a robust Japanese economic recovery can reignite the economic conflict of the

1980s, but without the buffering effect of the common external threat posed by the Soviet Union.

Jonathan Kirshner (ch. 8) suggests that monetary cooperation will be necessary in the interdependent Asia-Pacific, but will be especially difficult. The complexity of financial and currency markets make adherence to international monetary agreements difficult to monitor. Even if states are able to reach monetary agreements, those agreements are fragile because they require states to adopt domestically unpopular measures such as deflationary policies. Kirshner suggests that the natural conflicts generated by monetary interdependence can be mitigated by strong security ties. The United States and Japan can overcome the conflict generated in the monetary area if they treat China as a common security threat. But to do that, of course, suggests that monetary politics between the United States and China or Japan and China will remain a source of conflict. Additionally, trade policies may be a source of Chinese-Japanese tension, as each seeks to pursue its objectives in the region by cultivating the economic dependence of smaller states.

The chapters below suggest that interdependence also has the potential to foster instability at the domestic level, as states struggle both to extract benefits and to insulate themselves from the vagaries of global market forces. The conflict between state and market is especially intense in the Asia-Pacific because key countries in the region have embraced a development model that situates the state as a gatekeeper between the international economy and domestic society. As Berger shows, the “developmental” state not only facilitated the pursuit of export-led growth but also established a regulatory environment domestically that afforded protection to and encouraged long-term commitments among national firms and their workers. Economic interdependence and liberalization, especially in the financial sector, has undercut the ability of the state to maintain the social contract at home.

Several chapters explore various aspects of this dilemma with a sensitivity to the implications for international relations theory. Grimes demonstrates that Japan is ill-prepared to meet the challenges of the current international environment. During the cold war, its foreign policy was deferential to that of the United States and its export-led growth strategy placed a premium on bureaucratic management rather than political initiative. After the cold war and in the wake of liberalization, both dimensions of Japanese policy have been called into question. Japan faces economic stagnation at home and an uncertain foreign policy environment in its region, and its political system seems immobilized and incapable of providing leadership and initiative. For Grimes, Japan’s response provides a test of “second image reversed” theories, which hold that international pressures will force structural changes in domestic politics.

Both Kirshner and Berger argue that contemporary market forces threaten state autonomy and have the potential to undermine state capacity. As Berger

notes, the Asian financial crisis “throws into question the dominant model of state-society relations in the region.” For Kirshner, the crisis poses a challenge to realist theories, which should expect states to re-assert control of the domestic economy and the ability of market forces to influence it. For Berger, the challenge for constructivism is to explain the origins and spread of the developmental model, and to isolate the changes in interest and identity that might lead to its demise.

Domestic responses to the expansion of interdependence have the potential to reinforce instability at the regional level. For example, the Asian financial crisis could pit the United States against other regional actors, either because U.S. officials are seen as imposing austerity on strapped Asian populations, or because Asian governments reassert strong controls over economic transactions in defiance of U.S. conceptions of international economic liberalism. Second, Berger points out that the developmental state led to an emphasis on economic performance rather than traditional geopolitical influence in state strategies. The withering or collapse of the developmental state reopens the question of whether Asian countries, Japan in particular, will aspire to normal power status.

CONCLUSION

The maintenance of economic and strategic stability in the Asia-Pacific region will require careful management. In the short term, that opportunity will continue to fall largely to the United States. Over the longer term, it remains to be seen whether U.S. or an alternate hegemony, a traditional balance of power system, a more institutionalized regional economic and security system, or some other mechanism will emerge as the principal guarantor of stability.

The chapters that follow also suggest that the more intense engagement of IR theorists and Asian area specialists will bring benefits to both. The focus on relations among Japan, China, and the United States, for example, generates for Christensen a more complicated appreciation of the security dilemma, and for Kang a conception of order not typically found in mainstream international relations theory. The benefits flow from theory to Asian practice as well: Johnston’s reliance on socialization theory yields new insights about Chinese behavior, Kirshner’s use of a realist framework anticipates novel patterns of regional economic cooperation and conflict, and Nau’s combination of realism and constructivism suggests an alternative conception of the prospects for stability among the major Asian powers. Arguments in these and other chapters indicate that “Western” theoretical frameworks have much to say about international relations in Asia—but also that variables such as power distribution, hegemony, international regimes, interdependence, and political identity must be sufficiently context sensitive in order to capture the complexity of those relations.

The chapters that follow are organized according to whether their primary concern is regional strategic or economic stability. The chapters by Christensen, Goldstein, Johnston, Kang, Tamamoto, Nau, and Duffield analyze the prospects for stability in security relations. Kirshner, Gilpin, Copeland, Grimes, and Berger are primarily interested in regional economic stability and in the links between economic and security stability. The concluding chapter by Ikenberry and Mastanduno knits these concerns together and analyzes the special regional role of the United States.

ENDNOTES

1. Aaron Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia." *International Security* 18, no. 3 (Winter 1993/94): 5–33.
2. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry," p. 7.
3. Richard K. Betts, "Wealth, Power, and Instability: East Asia and the United States after the Cold War," *International Security* 18 (Winter 1993/94); Gerald Segal, "East Asia and the Constraint of China," *International Security* 20, no. 4 (Spring 1996): 107–35; and Robert S. Ross, "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-First Century," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 81–119.
4. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry," p. 6.
5. See U.S. *Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*, Office of International Security Affairs, U.S. Department of Defense, February 1995, and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Case for Deep Engagement," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 4 (July–August 1995): 90–102. This view is echoed in the last Defense Department strategic report on East Asia of the 1990s, *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1998). For a recent reflection on the Nye Report, see Joseph S. Nye, "The 'Nye Report': Six Years Later," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 1, no. 1: 95–103.
6. The thinking of the George W. Bush administration is signaled in the findings of the so-called Armitage Report, which reaffirms the importance of America's forward deployed security commitment to the region. See "The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership," *INSS Special Report*, October 11, 2000. See also Dennis C. Blair and John T. Hanley, Jr., "From Wheels to Webs: Reconstructing Asia-Pacific Security Arrangements," *The Washington Quarterly* 24: 7–17.
7. Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
8. John Gerard Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order," in Stephen Krasner, ed., *International Regimes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).
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11. For a contrasting view of American hegemony that emphasizes its exploitive and domineering character, see Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000).
12. A recent description of Bismark's grand strategy is Josef Joffe, "Bismarck or Britain? Toward an American Grand Strategy after Bipolarity," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (Spring 1995): 94–117.
13. For example, Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945–1996* (Eighth edition, New York: McGraw Hill, 1997).
14. *Yomiuri Shimbun*, May 23, 1995.
15. Ian Buruma, *Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (New York: Meridian, 1995).
16. A version of this argument is Joseph E. Grieco, "Realism and Regionalism: American Power and German and Japanese Institutional Strategies During and After the Cold War," in Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies after the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 319–353.
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21. Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "Realism, Structural Liberalism, and the Sources of Western Political Order," in Kapstein and Mastanduno, eds., *Unipolar Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 113–137.
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