International Political Theory and the Real World

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The Oxford Handbook of International Political Theory
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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter introduces and defends the themes around which the Handbook has been constructed: the importance of an engagement between International Political Theory (IPT) and "real-world" politics, and the need to establish links between IPT and the empirical findings of International Relations scholars. The "new realist" critique of "moralism" is examined along with the more general critique of ideal theory, and both are found to hit a very narrow target. The conventional distinction between "critical theory" and "problem-solving theory" is also challenged, and each is defended as an equally important, albeit different, stage in the life of a theory. The second half of this chapter sets out the principles upon which the Handbook is organized, and provides a guide to each section and chapter.

Keywords: Real Politics, political realism, normative theory, International Political Theory, International Relations Theory, critical theory vs problem-solving theory

IN this introduction we set out the underlying rationale of the Handbook, introduce and contextualize the two core questions we posed to our contributors, and explain why we believe them to be important and timely. We reflect on the meaning and scope of International Political Theory (IPT), the nature of normative theorizing, and the challenges raised by our emphasis on "real politics." Finally, the chapter provides an overview of the volume, setting out the way in which we have broken down the subject matter of IPT.

IPT focuses on the point where two fields of study meet—International Relations and Political Theory. It takes from the former a central concern with the "international" broadly defined; from the latter it takes a broadly normative identity. IPT studies the "ought" questions that have been ignored or sidelined by the modern study of International Relations, and the "international" dimension that Political Theory has in the past neglected. A central proposition of IPT is that the "domestic" and the "international" cannot be treated as self-contained spheres, although this does not preclude states and the states system from being regarded by some practitioners of IPT as central points of reference.

International Political Theory has a history which is as extensive as that of both Political Theory and International Relations, and certainly predates the so-called “Westphalian” System (Brown, Nardin, and Rengger 2002). Still, the last three decades have been an active period for scholarship in this field. It has seen the revival of “Just War” thinking, the emergence of post-Rawlsian global justice theory, new thinking about democracy and accountability beyond the nation-state, the further development of English School theorizing, and a new interest in issues of intervention, non-intervention, and sovereignty. Perhaps most important of all has been the collapse of the notion of a self-contained discipline of International Relations as a result of the challenges of (p. 4) constructivism, critical theory, feminist and gender theory, green political theory, and post-structuralism in all its forms. Not all of these changes have directly supported the field of IPT—post-structuralist thinking, for example, is often hostile to normative theorizing—but all have contributed to an intellectual atmosphere that has been conducive to a sustained assault on normative questions; and such an assault has taken place, with a burgeoning of literature in the field, the establishment of new journals, and the ubiquitous presence of IPT in university programmes in both International Relations and Political Theory.

In short, IPT has been mainstreamed, and whereas as recently as the 1990s a Handbook of International Political Theory might have been expected to proselytize for the field, we are now in a position to take stock of what is a healthy enterprise, looking at where we are today, where the discipline is heading, and, equally important, where the development that has taken place has neglected certain issues. This agenda mandates an engagement with “real politics,” and this engagement provides the overarching theme for the Handbook. Our aim is to provide an authoritative account of the field, guided by focusing on two basic questions concerning its purposes and methods of inquiry. First, how does IPT connect with real-world politics? In particular, how does it engage with real-world problems, and position itself in relation to the practices of real-world politics? And second, following on from this, what is the relationship between IPT and empirical research in international relations?

These two questions are closely related, but nonetheless distinct. The first question invites renewed reflection on the vocation and basic purpose of IPT. We do not doubt that it is important to preserve our understanding of past theories, and to track shifts in our theoretical understandings over time; but if the central purpose of IPT is to engage with normative questions, then these tasks cannot be allowed to dominate the field—and, in any event, there are good reasons to doubt whether past theories are adequate to the task of grappling with complex contemporary problems. If IPT is concerned not only with reflecting on, and refining, existing ideas, norms, and practices in real-world politics but also with challenging and transforming them according to desired ideals and goals, then it is important and necessary to understand how IPT is positioned vis-à-vis the real world. In our first question therefore, we invite consideration of the history, potential, and limits of IPT in influencing international debates in general, and international public policy in particular. This entails an examination of the relationship between ontology and ethics, and a clarification and justification of the role of ideal vs non-ideal theory, and practical vs applied theory. This question also provides an opportunity for International Political Theo-

rists to revisit and confront the many different faces of power, and to reflect on the relationship between morality, legitimacy, and international law.

Our second question asks whether, to what extent, and how IPT should be informed by empirical research. In the general field of political theory, a growing frustration with what has been seen to be an overly abstract and idealist form of moral theorizing, too introspective and narcissistic, has arisen; a similar charge could be levelled at much IPT, hence our desire in this volume to focus on establishing a proper relationship between (p. 5) theoretical endeavour and empirical investigation. It should be noted that we are not suggesting that normative IPT theory must be led by empirical research (and the questions asked by empirical researchers)—rather, we invite those engaged in normative IPT to explain and justify to what extent, and how, their theorizing is informed by empirical research in International Relations and other fields.

Our aim in this Handbook, therefore, is not simply to provide an authoritative survey of the field as it stands, although that was, of course, part of the mandate we gave to our authors. Rather, like the Oxford Handbook of International Relations, we aim to provide an intervention in the field by investigating the potential for a closer engagement with real politics, and to that end we have asked our contributors to reflect on our guiding questions in approaching their topics. But, of course, we have not demanded that they all address both questions systematically, since not all topics in the volume can be made to connect directly with real politics, or to touch upon them in the same way or to the same degree. Nor have we set out to narrow or even bridge the divide between the real and the ideal, or the normative and the empirical, since this is not always desirable or indeed possible in some cases, as we explain below. Rather, our aim is to encourage greater reflexivity about the various points at which IPT has, or should have, contact with real politics and/or empirical research, to explore how that contact has been negotiated and whether it could be better negotiated, to draw out in greater relief the distinctive virtues of IPT, and to showcase the diversity of IPT approaches.

Modes of Normative Inquiry

Before engaging further with the themes of our Handbook, it may be helpful to explore the range of different approaches that fall under the rubric of IPT. While the field of IPT is typically dissected along the lines of different traditions of political thought or different topics, we stress that it can also, and perhaps more fruitfully, be approached in terms of the different *modes* of normative inquiry, modes which can cut across traditions and topics. Here we single out four analytically distinct but, as we will demonstrate, often very closely related modes: interpretation; critique; evaluation and prescription; and meta-normative reflection.

Interpretation is a mode of normative inquiry that seeks to reveal and illuminate normative meaning. Interpretation is not unique to IPT, and it is undertaken in different ways by different traditions of IPT. Its most specialized expression is the interpretation of historical, canonical, and contemporary texts on international politics and international law. In-

terpretation entails exegesis, but it may also include comparison with other texts to reveal and illuminate different normative and legal understandings in the past and the present, and it may extend to locating texts in their historical or contemporary contexts—and here the term "text" should be understood as widely as possible, and not restricted to written materials. Interpretation may, and frequently will, blend into *Critique* but is, nonetheless, analytically distinct from that mode of inquiry.

(p. 6) *Critique* also seeks to reveal meaning, but in ways that expose and criticize rather than simply illuminate and enrich understanding. This mode of inquiry can operate at many different levels and, again, it is not unique to IPT. Nonetheless, critique is widely recognized as forming part of the core business of IPT when it takes the form of exposing self-serving, unjust, harmful, or wrongful ideas and practices in world politics, and in particular political ideologies, traditions, texts, and discourses. For some IPT traditions, critique is a necessary preliminary to *Prescription*, but it may also be the case that critical interpretation is seen as *the* central task of the critical theorist, with prescription very much a secondary activity, albeit one that is at least implicit in any developed critique. Critique may be conducted from a vantage point that is external or internal to the subject of critique; while external critique often takes a more radical form than internal critique, this is not always the case.

Evaluation and prescription provides answers to normative questions such as what is good or bad, how we should be and act in the world, and how we should order and regulate relations between sovereign or corporate entities, communities, or individuals. While critique is a form of evaluation that entails judging, here we understand evaluation to include a more explicit set of normative standards by which to judge not only what is bad, wrong, or unjust but also what is good, right, or fair, etc. Not all evaluation of this kind necessarily entails prescription, understood as recommendations for action or policy change. However, prescription presupposes a prior evaluation, which is why we have paired them here. Like critique, evaluation and prescription are widely considered to be defining concerns of IPT, irrespective of whether they take the form of defending rules of right conduct, or elaborating principles of institutional design, procedural justice, legal or policy reform, or approaches to making practical judgements. In many IPT traditions, "morality" and "ethics," and "moral" and "ethical," are used interchangeably, but in some traditions they have distinct meanings. For some, moral principles are duties of proper conduct whereas ethical decisions are situated, practical judgements about how to act, all things considered. Against both these approaches, political theorists working in the realist tradition eschew a particular focus on the "ethical" or the "moral" and focus on what is unique about "the political." As will be apparent in our discussion of "real politics" below, this realist tradition is not necessarily opposed to the tasks of evaluation or prescription, though it is opposed to a moralism that assumes away questions of order, conflict, and applicability in particular contexts.

Meta-normative reflection covers inquiry into the foundations of morality and ethics, and how we know when something is right, valid, good, or bad, and the sources of normative legitimacy. This includes critical reflection on methods of normative inquiry, including

how norms are justified (for example, by reference to the virtues or to thought experiments to draw out, appeal to, or test different moral intuitions), the processes of practical judgement, and different types of moral, ethical, and legal reasoning. It also includes comparison and debates on the strengths and weaknesses of different traditions of normative inquiry in world politics and international law, whether between traditionalists and revisionists, cosmopolitans and communitarians, or deontologists, consequentialists, and/or virtue ethicists, to name only a few.

(p. 7) Given our focus on "real politics," it may be helpful if we compare this way of conceptualizing the four different modes of inquiry with the much-cited distinction between "critical theory" and "problem-solving theory" set out in Robert Cox's influential paper "People, States and World Order: Beyond IR Theory" (Cox 1981). Cox begins with his famous pronouncement that "theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose," although he qualifies this by saying that "sophisticated theory is never just the expression of a perspective" (p. 128). From this starting point he identifies two distinct kinds of theory: on the one hand, theory can attempt to be "a guide to solve the problems posed within the terms of the particular perspective which was the point of departure." This is *problem-solving theory*, which "takes the world as it finds it with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework for action" (p. 128). On the other hand, there is *critical theory*, which does not take institutions and power relations for granted, but calls them into question, examining their origins and the interests they serve. The framework for action, taken for granted by problem-solving theory, is here appraised and subjected to critique. The *ceteris paribus* assumptions and fixed limits which characterize problem-solving theory are here set aside—critical theory is concerned with historical change and a world in which all things are not considered equal or held in suspension for the purposes of analysis.

The distinction between problem-solving and critical theory has been central to the development of critical theory and indeed of IPT, but it is, arguably, much misunderstood. Partly Cox himself is responsible for this misunderstanding; although he states clearly that both modes of theorizing have their uses, he leaves the impression that problem-solving theory is a distinctly second-rate activity. The suggestion is that problem-solving theory is in some sense subsumed by critical theory; once the importance of critical theory is understood, the biases of problem-solving can be described as conservative and revealed as ideology (Cox 1981: 129). But this is unsatisfactory, because it implies that whereas problem-solving is ideological and based on a particular perspective, critical theory is not—which clearly goes against the proposition that "all theory is for someone and for some purpose." More accurately, both problem-solving and critical theory reflect a perspective—indeed may represent different responses to the same perspective, different moments in the life of a theory.

The legitimacy of problem-solving theory is particularly important in the context of this Handbook, in which the engagement of IPT with real politics is a central theme and the proposition that there is something uncritical about attempting to solve problems must be resisted. In some respects, a distinction drawn by Stephen K. White in his *Political Theory*

and Postmodernism is more to the point (White 1991). Contrasting the driving force—moral, political, and aesthetic—behind the work of the leading Frankfurt School critical theorist of our day, Jürgen Habermas, with that which animates post-structuralists and post-modernists such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-François Lyotard, he distinguishes between "[a] sense of 'responsibility to act' and a sense of 'responsibility to otherness.' Corresponding to this distinction is one relating to language: its 'action-coordinating' function and its 'world-disclosing' function" (White 1991: x). Taking these terms out of their original context, world-disclosing theory (p. 8) is clearly an important part of contemporary IPT, central to both Interpretation and Critique; but action-coordinating, problem-oriented theory, leading to Prescription, is every bit as important, and provides the focus for much of the material we present here. Of course, this type of theory necessarily entails judgements about what aspects of the world should be bracketed, and what aspects should be called into question in order to decide how best to respond to particular problems. Critical theorists should be able to justify what and what not to bracket, and also to reveal and understand the implications of these judgements.

Each of the modes of inquiry set out above can stand alone, but they are often combined. Prescription—particularly when it involves the defence of action-guiding norms—is typically preceded by evaluation and critique, which prepares the ground for reform by exposing problems, injustices, or harmful practices that prescription seeks to rectify. Indeed, some critical traditions of IPT seek to combine all or most of these modes while also crossing into the realm of positive/explanatory theory. The important point we want to make here is often missed by those who are too quick to condemn IPT for its failure to engage with the real world—namely, that not all these modes of inquiry necessarily depend on, or need to have any direct engagement with, real politics or empirical inquiry. For example, such an engagement is not necessary for the interpretation of historical or contemporary texts, or for certain kinds of meta-ethical reflection. But when it comes to identifying real-world problems and criticizing real-world practices, then empirical research on such problems and practices does become relevant. Likewise, when it comes to the development of action-guiding prescriptions that seek to change existing practices, then empirical research and feasibility constraints must be taken on board, although exactly how they are taken on board remains to be seen.

Political Realism and IPT

Our concern with real politics requires us to explore the relationship between the real and the ideal, and the often fraught relationship between realists and idealists.

One useful entry point into this relationship is offered by the sustained critique of "normative political theory" mounted by the so-called "new realists" in political theory (e.g. Williams 2005; Geuss 2008; Runciman 2012; Rossie and Sleat 2014; Sleat 2016). By "normative political theory" these critics have in mind what they see as an excessively abstract style of liberal moral and political philosophy in the Anglo-American tradition, much of which focuses on justice and follows in the footsteps of Rawls, although the argu-

ment is sometimes directed also at Habermasian critical theory. For the new realists, this body of political theory (and its international and global extension) fails to grasp the distinctiveness of "the political," the conditions of possibility for the success of normative prescriptions, the centrality of power in its many dimensions, and the ineradicable nature of disagreement and conflict. This critique includes, but goes well beyond, a critique of the political feasibility of such theories. Indeed, it is primarily a (p. 9) methodological critique that takes issue with putting morality and ethics first in *political* theory. This is done when political theorists begin with what are seen to be "pre-political" moral norms (such as justice or autonomy) or the ultimate desired ethical end-states (happiness), assign them a foundational role in ordering political life, and then offer prescriptions that seek to realize or apply these norms. For the new realists, this is starting in the wrong place. The central feature of the new political realism is an assertion of the autonomy of the political; *contra* much modern analytical political theory, politics is *not* a branch of applied ethics, and political theory should focus on real political actors and institutions. That is, any *political* theory worth its name must start with the *real* world of *politics*, where disagreement (including moral disagreement) is rife, the need for stability and order is paramount, and coercion is therefore necessary. In a key statement of the new realism, "Realism and Moralism in Political Theory," Bernard Williams (2005) critiques two accounts of the relationship between politics and ethics. First, he identifies the *enactment model* whereby principles, concepts, ideals, and values are formulated in theory, and politics is given the task of enacting what has been formulated, using persuasion or exercising power; utilitarian thought often takes this form. Then he outlines the *structural model*, in which theory lays down the conditions under which power can be justly exercised; unlike the enactment model, this account of morality doesn't directly tell us what politics must achieve, but rather sets constraints on what politics can rightly do—the classic illustration here is Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1970). In both these models the moral is prior to the political—Williams terms this "political moralism" and contrasts it with "political realism," which reverses priorities. The first, unavoidable political question is that of securing order, and the "basic legitimation demand" is that order be secured in a way that is acceptable to all. The new realists draw no sharp distinction between the domestic and the international spheres of politics, since in both worlds morality and ethics can provide only a weak source of political motivation, and therefore play at best only a minor role. Instead of engaging in abstract theorizing, political theorists should focus on the struggle for the legitimation of political power, and should recognize their own roles as agents in this struggle (Rossi and Sleat 2014: 693). This necessarily requires a turn to the political sources of normativity, including the procedures by which political authority is acquired and collective decisions made, and the contexts, contingencies, and constraints that shape real-world decisions.

The new realist critique is not to be conflated with non-ideal normative political theory, but it shares with non-ideal theory a sensitivity to feasibility constraints, which means that what is desired or prescribed must be something that can be brought about by capable agents with the necessary motivation (Gilabert and Lawford-Smith 2012). Likewise, for realists, the most important question is not who is causally or morally responsible for

a harm or problem but rather who has the power and will to fix it. This is not to suggest that realists do not have ethical concerns, do not wish to see pressing global problems resolved, or do not wish to make normative interventions. It simply means that if capable and motivated social agents are missing, then the problem will remain unaddressed. To the extent that normative political theorists fail to address these (p. 10) questions, they are engaging in no more than wishful thinking that represents an escape from, rather than engagement with, politics.

To what extent does the new realism share attributes with the realism familiar to students of IR theory? The simple answer is: more than many new realists are prepared to admit. Figures such as Hans J. Morgenthau, George Kennan, and Reinhold Niebuhr are quite close in spirit to figures such as Geuss and Williams. Part of the problem here is to be found in the ambiguities associated with the term "realism" in the discourse of International Relations; Morgenthau et al. were concerned to find the right place for morality, but structural realists such as Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer are much more inclined to reject normative concerns altogether. Duncan Bell in Chapter 48 goes into these issues in greater depth.

Clearly the new realists raise important questions, and given our interest in real politics these questions cannot be swept under the carpet, nor would we wish to do so. Indeed, from one perspective, the chapters in this Handbook represent a collective response to the new realist perspective, a demonstration of how it is possible for IPT to engage with real-world problems without losing its sense of self, or its focus on normativity and prescription. As the Handbook unfolds it will, we hope, become clear that the more compelling aspects of the new realist critique address a very narrow target, in particular theories of global justice, and leave much of the rest of the discourse unscathed. As to the general critique of "ideal theory," it will become apparent that, *contra* the new realists, this is a term which has a number of different meanings, only one of which involves a rejection of feasibility constraints (on which see Laura Valentini's Chapter 50). Likewise, others have shown that the new realist critique of moralism does not always hit its mark (e.g. Estlund 2017).

Normative vs Positive/Empirical Inquiry

In much contemporary literature on IR theory, normative claims are characterized as value-based, prescriptive claims about what ought to be done, whereas empirical or positive claims are understood to be objective—descriptions of social facts or social reality. Positive theory and normative theory are understood to be distinct activities: positive theory tells us what can be done, normative theory tells us what should be done. The mainstream discourse of International Relations stresses that these theories involve categorically distinct claims. Normative prescriptions can be justified as appropriate, it is argued, but they cannot be logically "proved" or empirically verified, just as the "social facts" ascertained by empirical inquiry cannot be disputed because they are normatively unsatisfying. These categorical differences are alleged to underpin the development of normative

and empirical inquiry as two very distinctive and highly specialized branches of inquiry, with very little interest in or contact with each other.

(p. 11) Yet normative and empirical inquiry have not always been separated in this way, and many branches of contemporary IR theory—in particular the "constructivist" movement—refuse to accept that there is a categorical difference between the normative and the positive. Certainly, the separation of normative and empirical inquiry has a long history reaching its apotheosis with the neo-positivist revolution in political science, which saw behaviouralist approaches dominate in the second half of the twentieth century, particularly in the US; but the post-positivist revolution in the social sciences has since challenged this dominance, and neo-positivism, while still important and perhaps the majority position in contemporary political science, is no longer unchallenged. However, and interestingly, the challenge to the positive–normative binary has largely focused on positive rather than on normative theory. In other words, while the pretensions to value-neutrality of positive theory have been extensively critiqued, the empirical insensitivity of normative inquiry has remained relatively unscathed until very recently. It is now widely recognized that ethical issues permeate social scientific research, from the selection of research questions, the conduct of research, the making of assumptions, the development of categories of knowledge to the interpretation and dissemination of research findings. Indeed, one of the tasks set for itself by the Oxford Handbook that stimulated the existence of this series was to highlight how "every international relations theory is simultaneously about what the world *is* like and about what it *ought* to be like" either explicitly or implicitly (Reus-Smit and Snidal 2008: 6). The assumption of normative or value neutrality in social scientific inquiry is no longer sustainable.

The second question guiding this Handbook explores whether and how far the charge can run the other way. Is indifference towards "social facts" or empirical research by IPT scholars sustainable? Under what circumstances, if any, can it be excused? The answer, as we have already partly foreshadowed, depends on the mode of normative inquiry. For those engaged in the interpretation of texts or meta-ethical reflection, this charge may not even be relevant, or may not apply in the same way. However, those engaged in normative critique and the evaluation and reform of real-world practices should, at the very least, be obliged to get their social facts right if their normative judgements are to have any traction. In principle, all normative theories make assumptions about the nature of the social domain and the nature of individuals as agents within that domain, which suggests an engagement with the empirical is not an option but a necessity (Price 2008; Price et al. 2012). Likewise, while an "ought" cannot readily be derived from an "is," "ought" nonetheless implies "can," so those offering real-world prescriptions in the form of action-guiding norms should be sure that their interventions can operate and have effect in the world as intended. This should be a simple matter of due diligence, but it is often avoided or evaded.

Indeed, critics have lamented what they see as a "dismal disconnection" between political theory and empirical research (Stears 2005: 326). Rawls's *Theory of Justice* reignited normative political inquiry in the English-speaking world and beyond from the 1970s, but it

also sent the inquiry down a certain path. Indeed, the Rawlsian industry became excessively preoccupied with ideal, abstract theorizing about justice along with meta-normative reflection and was largely indifferent to issues of feasibility, empirical inquiry, (p. 12) and practical reform at the very time at which the welfare state was being dismantled (Stears 2005: 326). The aforementioned new realist critique was largely generated in response to this preoccupation.

Most of those who have addressed the bifurcation between normative and empirical research lament the strict separation but also rightly resist the idea that it can or should be collapsed altogether (e.g. Stears 2005; Bauböck 2008; Price et al. 2012). Academic specialization makes sense, and specializing in any or all of the normative modes of inquiry we have outlined enables greater mastery in certain areas and thereby produces a richer and deeper body of scholarship. But this still begs the question: in what ways can greater attention to empirical research serve to enrich normative inquiry, or is it only necessary to prevent embarrassment? Insofar as action-guiding prescriptions or meta-normative reflection rest on assumptions about human motivation and behaviour that are contradicted by theory-guided, empirical research, then they can be impugned. For just one example, feminist IPT scholars who wish to realize universal human rights for all women by offering action-guiding norms to end female oppression in its many different guises are well advised to pay heed to empirical research on the consequences of their prescriptions in different social and cultural settings. Indeed, feminist policy interventions of this kind, such as in campaigns to end female genital cutting, have sometimes backfired in harmful ways due to lack of local knowledge (Snyder and Vinjamuri 2012: 441).

In summary, these are complex issues, and it is time now for us as editors to turn them over to our contributors. As will be apparent, the forty-nine chapters that follow this introduction approach IPT from a number of directions; some of the topics addressed, for example on the history of the discourse, do not invite a close engagement with real politics or empirical research; others, for example on international public policy and governance, have no value without such an engagement. Although we have posed the same questions to each of our contributors, we have not attempted to enforce any kind of uniformity in the way in which they answer them. The multiple faces of modern International Political Theory is one of the most attractive features of the discourse, and although the way in which we have organized the Handbook imposes a certain kind of order, we have not looked to stifle this pluralism.

The Organization of the Handbook

The rest of this Handbook consists of forty-nine chapters, arranged in nine parts; following this introduction, Parts II–VII are headed by an “anchor” or lead chapter which provides an overview of the particular dimension of IPT covered therein or addresses overarching themes or issues.

Part II, “History, Traditions, and Perspectives,” is designed to situate the discourse of IPT both in terms of its past and in relation to cognate contemporary discourses. In Chapter 2 David Boucher anchors the section with a discussion of the history of (p. 13) international thought and an analysis of the process of reading texts in IPT. He distinguishes helpfully between the Emblematic, Practical, and Historical past, defending the central importance of practice in our reading of the classics. This is followed by Chapter 3, in which Peter Sutch explores the recent history of the discourse and the usefulness or otherwise of the binary, cosmopolitanism and communitarianism; he argues that both terms remain relevant insofar as they are linked to an engagement with sociological and constructivist approaches to IR. In Chapter 4 Chris Brown traces the relationship between IPT and the wider discourse of International Relations, arguing that IPT preserves aspects of the discourse which the mainstream turn towards neo-positivst modes of theorizing has discarded. Gerry Simpson in Chapter 5 explores the relationship between IPT and international law, identifying the split between conceptions of law as the codification of the practice of states and law as a project for international reform, examining the contemporary problems of intervention and the prosecution of international crimes, and noting the turn of international lawyers back to the political and to the history of international thought. Chapters 6 and 7 focus on perspectives that are less linked to tradition and history. In Chapter 6 Seyla Benhabib and Anna Jurkevics examine the evolution of critical theory from its cosmopolitan Frankfurt School roots to its current eclecticism, incorporating deconstruction, feminist approaches, and post-colonialism, and a renewed focus on sovereignty. Laura Sjoberg in Chapter 7 explores the contribution of feminism to international political theory, using the issue of male prostitution and the military as an entry point to the discourse.

A major focus of contemporary IPT is international justice, covered extensively here in Part III of the Handbook. Simon Caney leads this part by identifying five ways in which empirical evidence is crucial for normative theorizing about international distributive justice. These include but go beyond the usual issue of feasibility to include conceptualizing the subject matter of international justice, formulating the questions that IPT should answer, assessing the desirability of principles of global distributive justice, and assessing their implications. Darrel Moellendorf illustrates many of these arguments in Chapter 9 by providing an account of egalitarian international justice that is dependent on an empirical understanding of real-world practice. In Chapter 10, Toni Erskine examines the complex question of moral responsibility for international justice through the prism of agency, structure, and the neglected dimension of luck. She shows how a deeper reflection on the relationship between agency, chance, contingency, and causal complexity can unsettle established understandings. Hilary Charlesworth explores the relationship between international law and international justice in Chapter 11. She highlights the tensions between the traditional Westphalian conceptions of justice grounded in respect for national sovereignty and the United Nations Charter conceptions of international justice that include a range of universal norms, including respect for human rights. In Chapter 12 Susanne Buckley-Zistel interrogates the burgeoning field of transitional justice as a response to legacies of violence. She tracks the historical development of transitional justice and teas-

es out its different elements and normative foundations. Will Kymlicka in Chapter 13 examines the “minority question” in international justice debates by examining how minorities came onto the radar of international relations as (p. 14) a problem to be contained and then evolved into bearers of internationally protected minority rights but not to the point of defending place-based rights for minorities. In Chapter 14, Edward Page tracks the conceptual development of sustainable development and its relationship to environmental justice, and draws out the normative questions that any theory of sustainable development must address.

An aspect of IPT which is both very traditional and very modern is covered in Part IV, “International Political Theory of Violence and Conflict.” In Chapter 15 Anthony F. Lang, Jr anchors the discussion, arguing that violence constrains and enables politics and is constrained and enabled by politics. He focuses on violence and authority, arguing that the latter notion receives too little attention in contemporary thought. This leads into two chapters on the Just War. In Chapter 16 Cian O’Driscoll explores the Just War tradition and its contemporary relevance, raising questions about the very definition of war, and its applicability to acts of force short of war and anticipatory defence. Janina Dill in Chapter 17 explores contemporary, individual rights-oriented approaches, sometimes know as “revisionist” just war theory. According to this approach it may be impossible to wage war in a morally appropriate way, which raises important questions about the relationship between real and ideal theory. Still in contact with “just war” thinking, in Chapter 18 Michael L. Gross investigates the moral dilemmas of asymmetric conflict, arguing that the conventional unwillingness to accept that non-state actors could be legitimate combatants is no longer sustainable. Christopher Coker in Chapter 19 assesses the impact of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs a.k.a. Drones) and autonomous weapons systems, and their capacity to overturn all previous approaches to the ethics of warfare; Thucydides describes war as “the human thing,” but the rise of killer robots challenges this in a fundamental way. In Chapter 20, Brandon Valeriano and Ryan C. Maness offer an assessment of cyber security, arguing that the common emphasis on technology is mistaken; the appropriate framework for discussing cyber security has yet to emerge, but clearly ethical concerns will be central when it does. Mary Elizabeth King, in Chapter 21, explores nonviolent action in its various forms, stressing, somewhat counterintuitively, the relationship between the core idea and realist political practice.

Part V examines “Humanitarianism and Human Rights.” In Chapter 22 Michael N. Barnett anchors the discussion with an exploration of the different mindsets that are associated with these two closely associated concepts and their distinctive relationships to politics, noting that the discourse of humanitarianism is largely historical, while human rights are usually discussed in conceptual terms. Stephen Hopgood in Chapter 23 looks at the real-world politics of human rights, and anticipates a truncated role for human rights in the future unless they can be divorced from their current Western, liberal foundations. In Chapter 24, Jennifer M. Welsh examines the role played by humanitarian actors in times of conflict, with a particular focus on the UN, which she suggests is developing new understandings of impartiality, which sometimes gel and sometimes clash with the acvtivities of the new “rights-based” humanitarian NGOs. This leads into James Pattison’s dis-

cussion of the “Responsibility to Protect” in Chapter 25, which emphasizes the gaps between theory and practice that have emerged as this attempt to resolve the dilemmas of humanitarian intervention has evolved over the last decade. The (p. 15) sometimes vexed relationship between gender, multiculturalism, and rights is explored in Chapter 26 by Denise Walsh, who challenges the common assumption that a concern for gender equality will always clash with the respect for difference that multiculturalism mandates. In Chapter 27 Patrick Hayden examines the recent focus on health as a basic human right, arguing that the foundations for this claim are best found in recognition theory rather than in conventional liberal thinking on human rights. Finally in Part V, Anthony J. Langlois in Chapter 28 focuses on the increasingly salient but highly controversial area of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights, stressing the importance of moving beyond the mere assertion that “gay rights are human rights” to an examination of how these rights operate in real-world politics, including ways in which they can be misused.

Part VI addresses issues of “Democracy, Accountability, and Global Governance,” which are central to the approach to IPT adopted in this Handbook. Carol C. Gould sets the scene in Chapter 29 by exploring the context and the motivation for addressing democratic deficits in global governance. She defends a “common activities” approach, complemented by the “all-affected” principle, as providing a more dynamic and forwarding-looking basis for addressing global democratic deficits. In Chapter 30 Terry Macdonald develops a distinctive approach for reconciling global democratic values with the empirical facts of contemporary global governance. Instead of “piggy-backing” off democratic theories developed at the national level, she develops an approach based on the empowerment of collective agency. In Chapter 31, Eva Erman shifts attention to the empirical and moral constraints on global democracy, understood as the conditions under which democracy should be construed (i.e. formulated and justified) and promoted in the real world of global politics. Milja Kurki continues this line of inquiry in Chapter 32 by examining the contested ethics of democracy promotion. She argues that democracy promotion nowadays tends to treat both democracy and its promotion as largely a “technical” challenge, which obscures liberal ethical commitments and fails to acknowledge the plurality of democratic ethics. In Chapter 33 Jens Steffek examines how ideas of deliberative democracy have been extended to governance beyond the state. He argues that both micro and macro conceptions of deliberation have considerable potential to enhance the epistemic quality of global governance, but that they suffer from an elite bias and need to confront the challenge of developing thicker input and accountability linkages with the lifeworlds of citizens. Kate Macdonald addresses these linkages in Chapter 34 in her examination of accountability norms and practices in global economic governance. She argues that normative analyses of transnational accountability must begin with real-world accountability problems, and she singles out four: unaccountable power, decentred political authority, adapting to multiple scales, and negotiating social and cultural difference. In Chapter 35 Frank Biermann tackles the daunting challenge of global governance in the Anthropocene, a new and self-endangering epoch in planetary history where humans have acquired geological (and not just environmental) agency in reshaping Earth systems processes.

Part VII takes a more practical turn, focusing on “Ethics and International Public Policy.” Chapter 36 by Christian Barry anchors this section by exploring how IPT should (p. 16) relate to public policy. Using Rawls’s duty of assistance as an illustration, he examines the degree to which normative principles should be abstract or concrete, and specific or indeterminate, and he shows that abstractness is a virtue when experts disagree. Tim Dunne, in Chapter 37, examines the meaning of ethical foreign policy in a multipolar world. He argues that ethics and foreign policy have always been awkward partners, despite efforts by some realists to sever ethics and efforts by (mostly) liberals to bring ethics more to the fore at various times, and he offers a sober prognosis of a retreating liberalism in an increasingly multipolar world. Nicole Hassoun addresses the question of fair trade in theory and practice in Chapter 38. Arguing against both complete theoretical accounts of fair trade as well as practice-based approaches, she defends a conditional approach that enables modest progress. Luara Ferracioli in Chapter 39 explores the public policy dimension of international migration and human rights, asking what would be the moral duties of liberal states in relation to different categories of migrant if they were willing to apply liberal cosmopolitan principles of justice, and what institutional changes would help to motivate states to do so. In Chapter 40 Steve Vanderheiden addresses the vexed question of climate equity in the real world in light of the 2015 Paris Agreement. Against the view that commitments to equity in the climate regime have only obstructed progress and that equity should be traded off for an effective treaty, he argues that the inclusion of substantive and procedural equity considerations have focused attention upon subjects and issues that might otherwise have been ignored. The question of the ethical rationale for international aid is taken up by Paul Collier in Chapter 41. He defends minimal obligations that are reducible to two “duties of rescue,” one immediate (in response to catastrophes) and one prospective (development assistance), that seek to ameliorate mass despair for those with no credible hope for a better life, and argues that development assistance based on “mutual aid” rather than charity is ethically permissible if it can be shown to be the most effective means of fulfilling the duty of rescue. Fiona Robinson in Chapter 42 defends a feminist practical ethics of care as an appropriate global ethic, using the challenges of humanitarianism as an illustration. This approach is shown to be context-specific, relational, and located in the experiences and practices of care-giving and receiving rather than a priori principles of the right or the good.

Parts VIII and IX are somewhat different from the earlier parts of the Handbook, and do not have “anchor” chapters. Part VIII, “New Directions in International Political Theory,” picks out five areas where new perspectives are emerging, or in some cases re-emerging. In Chapter 43 Friedrich Kratochwil offers a conceptual sketch of new, and old, thinking on the issue of judgement; he argues that the formal logic of writers such as Kant may be less use than the insights provided by common-law interpretation, Humean common sense, and Aristotelian *phronesis*. Continuing this classical theme, in Chapter 44, Steve Torrente and Harry D. Gould consider the impact of virtue ethics on IPT, exploring the renewed interest in Aristotle and, in particular, the capabilities approach associated with Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. Renée Jeffery in Chapter 45 examines and contributes to the new literature on the role of emotions in international political theory; Sen

also features in her account of the rise of a "sentimental (p. 17) cosmopolitanism," although she places greater emphasis than he on the combination of reason and emotion in the making of impartial judgements. In Chapter 46 Anna Geis explores the international dimension of recent work on recognition, highlighting the danger that the self-recognition of the West as a benign force in world politics may not satisfy the need for recognition of non-Western, non-liberal actors. Finally, in Chapter 47, Steven Slaughter examines the increasing importance of republican thought for IPT, exploring the different versions of republicanism current in the literature. Non-domination is central to most versions, but can be pursued in different ways with those versions of republicanism influenced by critical theory offering a different model to that of globalized sovereignty.

Part IX, "For and Against Real Politics and International Political Theory," is an exercise in self-criticism in which the core themes of the Handbook are challenged from three different directions. In Chapter 48 Duncan Bell explodes a number of common myths about realism—that it is amoral, necessarily state-centric, and conservative—and shows that realists can be conservative, liberal, or radical, even utopian in certain senses. What unites realists is their rejection of "moralism" and their attentiveness to the hard and soft political constraints on efforts to realize normative arguments for a just international order. Continuing the themes of power and conflict, albeit from a different angle, Andrew Davenport offers a Marxist critique of IPT in Chapter 49. He argues that IPT, both in its conceptualization of the international space and in its ideas of how to address and resolve problems such as inequality and violence, rests on an essentially liberal experience of the world and therefore on a critique of distributive justice that fails to comprehend the depth and extent of the power of capital. In Chapter 50 Laura Valentini rounds out the debate by providing a defence of "ideal theory," understood either as idealizations or as normative theories that are insensitive to feasibility constraints. She concludes that most criticisms miss their mark, either because they mistake the role that idealizations play, or mistake purely evaluative theories as offering prescriptions rather than standards of evaluation.

In addition to providing an authoritative survey of the issues, debates, and traditions that preoccupy contemporary IPT scholarship, this Handbook seeks to prod IPT scholars to engage with the new realist turn in political theory as well as the turn to non-ideal theory in normative theory, and to reflect more generally on the multi-faceted relationship between normative theory, empirical research, and the so-called real world. IPT scholars have tended to avoid any critical engagement with IR realist theory, mistakenly assuming the entire tradition to be, at best, purely explanatory rather than normative or, at worst, amoral. Meanwhile, the new realist assault on idealistic or "moralistic" liberal political philosophy has not been especially preoccupied by what is distinctive about the international or the global compared to the domestic political sphere. Our view of the timeliness of this engagement is shared, it seems, by others. Since the chapters for this Handbook were commissioned, two special journal issues have appeared that engage with these or similar questions (see Floyd 2016 and Sabl and Sagar 2017 for introductions to each issue). We hope the engagement in this Handbook will encourage greater (p. 18) reflexivity regarding what is unique about IPT so that it may be better appreciated, and about the

interrelationships and dependencies between IPT, other modes of inquiry, and the real world of international politics.

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