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Rational Idealism: The Political Economy of Internationalism in the United States and Great Britain, 1870-1945

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RATIONAL IDEALISM

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INTERNATIONALISM IN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN, 1870–1945

KEVIN NARIZNY

BETWEEN 1870 and 1945, American and British leaders made a number of costly, “high politics” commitments to international law and multilateral cooperation. Of course, this period was not a golden age of peace and love; most of the time, foreign policymakers acted in their states’ parochial, short-term interests. The occasions in which they did initiate legalistic and multilateralist policies, however, were sufficiently common and had such a profound impact on the development of the international system that their actions cannot be dismissed as either aberrant or inconsequential. They revived the Concert of Europe as a progressive instrument of conflict resolution and humanitarian intervention, created the League of Nations and United Nations, settled long-running bilateral disputes through arbitration, and signed treaties requiring them to submit to conciliation and arbitration in future conflicts. They were not pacifists or isolationists, but rather believed that intervention and war should be subject to strict legal limits and sanctioned by multilateral organizations whenever possible. This approach to foreign policy has been known since the early twentieth century as internationalism.¹

There are several common variants to the definition of internationalism. Among students of American foreign policy, for example, the term is often used simply to describe behavior that involves the United States in “foreign entanglements” outside the Western Hemisphere. In this essay, I adopt its classic comparative meaning, in which it represents the antithesis of *realpolitik*. Specifically, it denotes

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1. Warren F. Kuehl, “Concepts of Internationalism in History,” *Peace and Change* 11, no. 2 (1986): 1–10; Kjell Goldmann, *The Logic of Internationalism: Coercion and Accommodation* (London: Routledge, 1994), 2–5.

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the set of principles and prescriptions designed to construct an international system governed by legal norms and peaceful cooperation. The most critical policy elements of the internationalist paradigm are multilateral decision making, through which laws are created and enforced, and binding arbitration, through which laws are interpreted. These two mechanisms constrain state behavior in different ways, but they serve the same ultimate purpose: to resolve interstate disputes through the application of general rules, not ad hoc contests of power.²

The use of international law and multilateral organizations is not without costs. It hinders states' ability to make threats, act unilaterally, and arrange for side-payments—that is, all of the standard bargaining strategies that they employ to secure their vital “national interests.” In the low-politics realm of trade, technological regulation, and environmental protection, the benefits of institutionalized cooperation may outweigh these disadvantages. In high-politics security issues, however, where the stakes are much higher, one would expect short-term concerns about vulnerability, over-commitment, and autonomy to dominate decision making.³ It should not be surprising, therefore, that not all internationalist initiatives in the 1870–1945 period were equally substantive. Many invoked internationalist ideals but did not require any kind of sacrifice or impose meaningful obligations; some included loopholes that allowed their signatories to avoid being bound to an adverse outcome; and others made exemptions for any issue that involved a state's self-defined “national honor.” Furthermore, many internationalist treaties were merely one-shot agreements for the arbitration of minor boundary disputes in distant imperial territories.

On the other hand, there were many instances in which state leaders did make binding, costly commitments to submit to international law over high-politics issues of military conflict and national sovereignty. In the United States, three out of fourteen presidents proposed such agreements; in Great Britain, seven out of twelve prime ministers did. (See the appendix for detailed coding criteria.) It is this specific category of internationalism that is hardest to explain, and it is what I address in this paper. I do not attempt to account for systemic outcomes, to specify all of the conditions necessary for internationalism to appear, or to explain why many internationalist treaties were not ratified. Instead, I seek only to explain why some leaders in the United States and Great Britain pursued strong internationalist policies while others did not.

I argue that the primary determinant of variance in support for internationalism was the economic interests of the ruling party's electoral coalition. Politicians who

2. This conception of internationalism closely follows the definition of multilateralism used in John Gerard Ruggie, ed., *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

3. John J. Mearsheimer, “The False Promise of International Institutions,” *International Security* 19, no. 3 (winter 1994–95): 4–59.

represented societal groups with extensive commercial ties to other great powers advocated the use of international law and multilateral cooperation, whereas those who were selected by constituencies that did not rely on income from great-power markets were reluctant to make any such commitments. In both the United States and Great Britain, different sectoral interests separated into competing political coalitions in a way that generated a highly partisan divide over internationalism. Democratic, Liberal, and Labour leaders favored this strategy; Republicans and Conservatives opposed it.

I develop this argument in several stages. In the first section below, I explore other theoretical perspectives on internationalism. I do not attempt to refute them, but rather to show why they do not suffice to explain the specific empirical puzzle at hand. Next, I develop deductive hypotheses on the connection between domestic economic interests and foreign policy preferences. I then test the theory on the United States and Great Britain in 1870–1945. Finally, I present a brief discussion of the implications of my results.

THEORIES OF INTERNATIONALISM

A NUMBER OF THEORETICAL perspectives offer plausible first-cut explanations for the origins of internationalism. One of the most obvious candidates is democratic peace theory, since every major internationalist project undertaken between 1870 and 1945 was proposed by a democratic state. In stable democracies, political disagreements are resolved either by elections or in courts, not through threats or violence. As a result, democratic nations may develop a cultural preference for the use of public opinion and legal mechanisms to resolve international disputes. The United States, with its strong civic institutions and universal ideals, should have been particularly likely to embrace this vision of world order.⁴

Commercial peace theory, which is often associated with democratic peace theory, offers a more rationalist explanation for internationalism. The more that two countries export to and invest in each other's markets, the greater a stake they will have in maintaining peaceful, law-governed diplomatic relations.⁵ War between

4. John Gerard Ruggie, "Third Try at World Order? America and Multilateralism after the Cold War," *Political Science Quarterly* 109, no. 4 (autumn 1994): 553–70; Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 357–99; William J. Dixon, "Democracy and Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 1 (March 1994): 14–32.

5. Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power to National Advantage* (London: Heinemann, 1910); Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977); Richard N. Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

interdependent great powers can have a devastating effect on their economies. Investments will be confiscated, manufacturers' supply chains will be disrupted, and exports will plummet until new buyers can be found. Although internationalism is not the only feasible strategy to guard against these dangers, it may be the most appealing alternative for a state that values commercial stability over other policy objectives.

The institutionalist literature provides yet another perspective on internationalism. Unlike the commercial and democratic peace theories, it does not make strong assumptions about the content of states' goals. Instead, it focuses on the relative costs and benefits of cooperating (or using coercion) through different forms of institutional arrangements. According to institutionalists, states will enter into legalistic or multilateralist treaties when they are able to guard against opportunism, create effective rule-enforcement mechanisms, exclude free riders, and overcome other collective action problems.⁶

Finally, the realist account of internationalism, hegemonic stability theory, focuses on the problem of the division of gains from cooperation.⁷ It asserts that the most powerful state in the international system will use legal principles to try to persuade other countries to recognize the legitimacy of its dominant position. International law favors the status quo distribution of wealth and power, so it discourages states from challenging the hegemon's established advantages. A newly anointed hegemon will create institutions to reshape and govern the international system in accordance with its strategic interests, while a declining hegemon will promote adherence to international law to avoid tests of its military strength.

The problem with all four of these perspectives is that they offer no clue as to why some leaders enthusiastically supported internationalism while others disdained it. Shifts in American and British policy on internationalism did not correspond to any trends in democratization; indeed, the greatest increase in the franchise in either country, when women gained the right to vote in the United States in 1920, was followed by an election that overwhelmingly repudiated the League of Nations. Neither is there any pattern in economic interdependence that correlates with internationalism. The United States offered general arbitration treaties to Britain in 1897, 1911, and 1928; in those years, the share of the U.S. national income derived from exports to Britain stood at 3.5 percent, 2.0 percent,

6. Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, "Hard and Soft Law in International Governance," *International Organization* 54, no. 3 (summer 2000): 421–56; David A. Lake, *Entangling Relations: American Foreign Policy in Its Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

7. Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

and 1.0 percent, respectively.⁸ Given these fluctuations in trade levels, interdependence cannot explain either why these bilateral initiatives were proposed when they were or why they were not proposed in other years.

Institutionalism fares somewhat better, but it ultimately faces similar problems. For example, David A. Lake argues convincingly that the domestic debate over the League of Nations in the United States reflected uncertainty over the costs of governing the European system and preventing opportunism.⁹ His “relational contracting” theory, however, does not explain why societal cleavages over the League appeared along largely partisan lines, nor does it specify why the debate should have centered on a uniquely internationalist vision of world order. If objective factors indicated that it was not in the United States’ “national interest” to enter into “entangling relations” with Europe, why should the president and his party have invested so much diplomatic and political capital on such a high-risk proposition as the League?

Hegemonic stability theory seems to account for American internationalism at the end of the two world wars, but little else. For example, it cannot explain why the United States should not have been equally internationalist in 1921, when Warren Harding abandoned the League of Nations, as it was in 1920 under Woodrow Wilson. Furthermore, the basic logic of hegemonic stability theory is suspect. It may be that the international structure most conducive to internationalism is multipolarity, not hegemony. A truly hegemonic power has little incentive to constrain its “high politics” affairs with international law unless it is exceptionally far-sighted in anticipating its decline.¹⁰ Conversely, in a bipolar system, the superpowers may find that zero-sum competition between them precludes their finding common ground on international law. Only in a multipolar system might the great powers ever conclude that it is both possible and in their interests to agree to legal limitations on their behavior.

I do not attempt either to prove or refute this hypothesis; to do so would require an entirely different research design. I have selected the 1870–1945 period not because it was multipolar, but because internationalist initiatives were relatively common then. The correlation between the two phenomena is highly suggestive, but it still does not explain variation in internationalism within the period. All of the unitary-state theories discussed above have this same problem. At best, they can only assert that certain conditions, such as democracy, interdependence,

8. United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960); Milton Friedman and Anna J. Schwartz, *Monetary Trends in the United States and the United Kingdom: Their Relation to Income, Prices, and Interest Rates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 122–25.

9. Lake, *Entangling Relations*, chap. 4.

10. Randall L. Schweller, “The Problem of International Order Revisited: A Review Essay,” *International Security* 26, no. 1 (summer 2001): 161–86.

hegemony, or multipolarity, are prerequisites for internationalism—that is, necessary, but not sufficient causes. To understand why some leaders were more internationalist than their domestic contemporaries, it is necessary to look inside the black box of the state.

At this level of analysis, ideational and cultural theory seems particularly promising. Internationalism draws from the classic liberal intellectual tradition, placing a great deal of faith in the human capacity for progress, rationality, and moral improvement. Thus, one might expect that supporters of liberal causes in the domestic sphere would have been predisposed to advocate internationalist policies in foreign affairs. For Britain, this explanation is quite plausible, because, as I will demonstrate, the Liberal and Labor Parties were much more internationalist than the Conservative Party. For the United States, however, it is far less compelling. The most internationalist presidents, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, did push for progressive reform domestically, but so did Theodore Roosevelt, who was one of the League of Nations' most vociferous critics. Furthermore, support for internationalist policies was strongest in the South, which was the least liberal part of the country. Southern culture in the 1870–1945 period stood for institutionalized inequality, not democratization; social conservatism, not reform; and racial superiority, not moral perfectibility.¹¹ In short, ideational and cultural theory does not provide a satisfying comparative explanation for domestic differences over international law and multilateral cooperation.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INTERNATIONALISM

INSTEAD, I ARGUE that the incidence of internationalism in both the United States and Great Britain was determined by domestic political coalitions' economic interests. To understand why, it is necessary to revisit commercial peace theory. In its unitary-state form, as presented above, it clearly cannot explain the puzzle of partisanship. Once the state is disaggregated according to the political affiliations of sectoral interest groups, however, it becomes evident that certain parties might have had different foreign policy goals than others. Some coalitions might have

11. Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 126–27; Leon Friedman, “The Democratic Party, 1860–1884,” *History of U.S. Political Parties, 1860–1910: The Gilded Age of Politics*, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., vol. 2 (New York: Chelsea House, 1973), 892–98; Paolo E. Coletta, “The Democratic Party, 1884–1910,” *History of U.S. Political Parties: 1860–1910: The Gilded Age of Politics*, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., vol. 2 (New York: Chelsea House, 1973), 988–89. Anne-Marie Burley argues that American internationalism in the 1930s was an external projection of the Democrats' New Deal reforms, but she does not attempt to explain partisan splits in earlier years. See “Regulating the World: Multilateralism, International Law, and the Projection of the New Deal Regulatory State,” in *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*, ed. John Gerard Ruggie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 125–56.

been well served by internationalism; some might have found it to be a waste of resources and diplomatic capital; while others might have concluded that, when successful, it would actually injure their economic interests.

There is a rich tradition of scholarship on the domestic political economy of American and British foreign policy. In the early twentieth century, J. A. Hobson argued that the imperial expansion of Great Britain was driven by the demands of its investing elite, while Charles Beard attributed splits over international affairs in the United States to socioeconomic groups' divergent interests.¹² In recent years, important advances in this paradigm have included Thomas Ferguson's study of the international objectives of the New Deal coalition, Peter Gourevitch's inquiry into the formation of tariff policy in economic "hard times," Richard Bense's and Peter Trubowitz's analyses of the sectional basis of congressional voting on foreign policy, Benjamin Fordham's work on the origins of U.S. grand strategy in the cold war, and James Nolt's essay on the demise of imperialism.¹³ Building on this extensive existing literature, I propose to show how the political economy perspective helps explain "high politics" commitments to international law and multilateral institutions.

The economic sectors that should expect to benefit the most from internationalism are those that invest in or export to the markets of great powers. The reason is simple: friction between the great powers is almost always injurious to their interests. In the event of war, trade will collapse, investments will be confiscated, and businesses will be unable to repatriate their profits. Commerce between belligerents and neutral states may also be hurt by trade blockades and changes in wartime consumption patterns. (Neutral states may benefit from selling arms and raw materials to belligerents, but the transition from civilian to military production will nevertheless be disruptive, and it will not be possible for all exporters.) Thus, individuals employed in sectors that depend heavily on income from great

12. J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (London: Nisbet, 1902); Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization: America in Midpassage*, vol. 3 (New York: Macmillan, 1939), 442–58, esp. 446–47.

13. Thomas Ferguson, "From Normalcy to New Deal: Industrial Structure, Party Competition, and American Public Policy in the Great Depression," *International Organization* 38, no. 1 (winter 1984): 41–94; Peter Gourevitch, *Politics in Hard Times: Comparative Responses to International Economic Crises* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); Richard Franklin Bense, *Sectionalism and American Political Development, 1880–1980* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 62–73, 88–101, 105–28; Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest*; Benjamin O. Fordham, *Building the Cold War Consensus: The Political Economy of U.S. National Security Policy, 1949–51* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998); James H. Nolt, "Business Conflict and the Demise of Imperialism," in *Contested Social Orders and International Politics*, ed. David Skidmore (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1997), 92–127. See also Kevin Narizny, "Both Guns and Butter, or Neither: Class Interests in the Political Economy of Rearmament," *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 2 (May 2003): 203–20; Kevin Narizny, "The Political Economy of Alignment: Great Britain's Commitments to Europe, 1905–39," *International Security* 27, no. 4 (spring 2003): 184–219.

powers should be most likely to support policies designed specifically to solve the problem of interstate conflict.

Beyond war prevention, an internationalist strategy also attempts to lay the foundation for greater cooperation over “low politics” economic issues. Great powers cannot, by definition, be coerced without incurring enormous costs, so any rational attempt to foster trade and investment between them must be based on persuasion. Internationalism is particularly well suited for this task because all of its policy prescriptions, including the strengthening of international law, the creation of regimes, and the use of multilateral diplomacy, are intended to facilitate noncoercive bargaining. An internationalist strategy will not lead immediately to a world of free trade, but it does try to clear the path to peace and closer cooperation.

Individuals employed in sectors that export to or invest in weaker, peripheral states should have a very different set of priorities. They will be better served by an anti-legalist foreign policy, one in which their government reserves the right to make threats and undertake armed interventions abroad. There are three reasons why this strategy should be more advantageous to them than internationalism. First, smaller states in less developed parts of the world tend to be less internally stable than great powers. They are more susceptible to coups, civil wars, and ethnic unrest, all of which disrupt commercial activity. Consequently, businesses that export to and invest in peripheral countries will be more likely than those that transact primarily in great-power markets to need the unilateral, “illegal” use of military force to protect their interests. Second, war with weak states is much less costly than war with great powers. Businesses that focus on the periphery will see coercive intervention as a viable option when diplomatic persuasion fails to meet their needs, whereas those that concentrate on the markets of great powers will not. Finally, internationalism limits states’ flexibility in the defense of their interests in the periphery. It dictates that they respond in a principled manner to all violations of international law rather than align with countries whose goodwill is needed to maintain the security of their overseas trade and investment. Periphery-oriented sectors should be willing to see their government cooperate with other great powers for limited, well-defined purposes, but not for universal legal principles.

Sectors that sell exclusively to customers in the home market also should have little interest in internationalism. Demand for their goods and services will not immediately be cut off by a great-power war, even if their own country is drawn into the conflict. This is not to imply that domestic commerce is never affected by war; the point is that it is significantly less vulnerable to wrenching disruptions than foreign trade and investment. Individuals who do not depend on income from external markets should not be indifferent to international politics, and they should certainly be willing to defend their own borders, but they should nevertheless be reluctant to make costly commitments to the advancement of

international law. After all, internationalism is not cheap; it requires that states take risks with their own security for the sake of the collective good.

If pro-internationalist and anti-internationalist groups separate into opposing coalitions, their representatives will have strong incentives to develop a foreign policy tailored to their parochial interests. This does not mean that all politicians are so coldly, cynically calculating as to allow domestic political considerations to dictate their position on international law and multilateral diplomacy. In most cases, they will act according to their sincere personal beliefs about how best to pursue the “national interest.” Politicians who are guided by sincere personal beliefs, however, are rarely selected to lead their party unless their preferred policies and principles directly benefit their supporters’ economic interests. For example, Ronald Reagan may have been truly convinced that the repeal of environmental and labor regulations would make everyone in the United States better off, but he probably never would have been nominated for president by the Republican Party if he had adopted a position on the issue with which his primary economic coalition members, businesses, had seriously disagreed. In short, democratic processes usually ensure that politicians act as if they were mechanistic interest aggregators.

With this qualification, political economy theory presents a quite plausible explanation for partisan variance in support for internationalism. To test it against the evidence in the United States and Great Britain, I investigate three related questions: 1) what sort of economic interests did the core constituency of each major party have; 2) did party leaders respond to their constituencies’ interests in the manner hypothesized above; and 3) did each constituency actually exhibit a preference for the sort of foreign policy that the theory predicts it would have supported? My results are summarized below.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF AMERICAN INTERNATIONALISM

THE POLITICAL SYSTEM of the United States was divided between two major parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, throughout the 1870–1945 period. The Democrats’ strongest, most consistent support came from the South. In every presidential election, this region voted as a nearly solid bloc for the Democratic candidate.¹⁴ In 1916, for example, when Woodrow Wilson carried the electoral college by the slim margin of 277 to 254, the South provided the greatest contribution to his victory (see figure 1). The party’s need to win states in the West and Northeast should not be understated; the South was not populous

14. United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*; Coletta, “The Democratic Party, 1884–1910,” 988–89.

1920s through the mid-1930s, the portion of the crop that was exported was 50–60 percent, and Europe's share of those exports was 60–80 percent. Tobacco followed a similar pattern: approximately one-third of the crop was exported, and, in most years, 60–80 percent of unmanufactured tobacco exports were sent to only six European countries (the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands).¹⁶

In short, the Democratic Party drew most of its support from a socioeconomic group that earned much of its income from European markets—and, more specifically, from great powers such as Britain, Germany, and France. As a result, Democratic leaders had a strong political interest in pursuing internationalism, a strategy designed to prevent conflict and promote cooperation between the great powers. Or, to put it less cynically, Democratic voters had incentives to nominate presidential candidates who sincerely believed in the objective value of such a strategy.

While Democrats represented the agrarian South, Republicans were the party of the industrial Northeast. This region consistently voted Republican in presidential elections and formed a solid bloc whenever the Republican candidate won.¹⁷ Republicans also did well in the Great Plains states, but the interests of the farmers who lived there usually had little impact on the national party.¹⁸ It was thoroughly dominated by urban businessmen, whose economic and organizational power brought a Republican candidate to the White House in twelve of the sixteen contests between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the Great Depression.¹⁹ As long as the party maintained its hegemony over the wealthy and populous Northeast, it could win the presidency with only a few more scattered states. William McKinley's sectional victory in 1896, which he won by an impressive margin of 271–176 votes in the electoral college, illustrates starkly the political power of the Northeast (see figure 2).

The economy of the Northeast was quite different from that of the South. The South was agrarian, producing raw materials for export to Europe, whereas

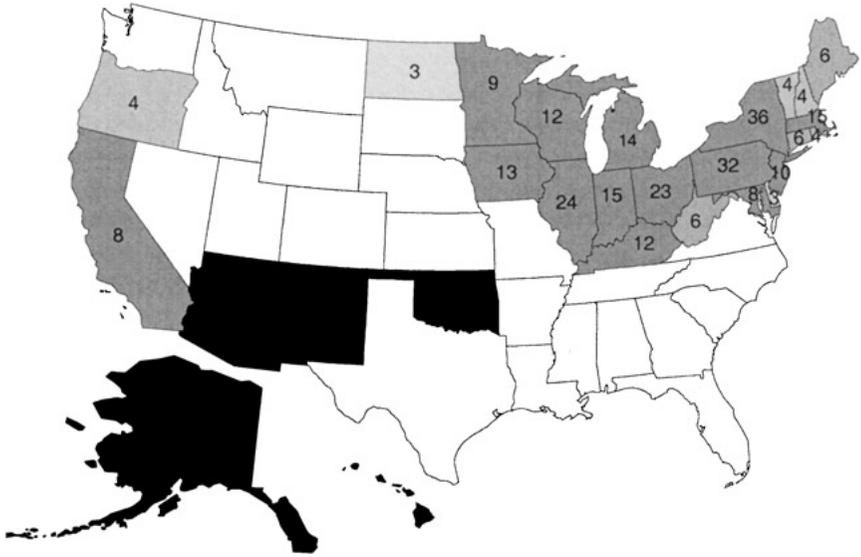
16. United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*, 302–3, 546–47; United States Department of Agriculture, *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, various years).

17. United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*, 686–88. My definition of the Northeast follows that of Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest*. That is, I include Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and all states to the north and east of these.

18. James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*, revised ed. (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1983), chap. 6.

19. Wilfred E. Binkley, *American Political Parties: Their Natural History* (New York: Knopf, 1963), chaps. 12, 14; William R. Harbaugh, "The Republican Party, 1893–1932," *History of U.S. Political Parties, 1910–1945: From Square Deal to New Deal*, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., vol. 3 (New York: Chelsea House, 1973), esp. 2072–80; Everett Carl Ladd Jr., *American Political Parties: Social Change and Political Response* (New York: Norton, 1970), 150–51.

Figure 2
ELECTORAL COLLEGE VOTES FOR WILLIAM MCKINLEY, 1896



Source: United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957*. Areas shaded black were not yet incorporated as states.

the Northeast was industrial, dominated by manufacturing.²⁰ This sector went through a major transition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After the Civil War, American manufacturers focused almost exclusively on the home market. They had little reason to make a sustained effort to export their products, since a growing population and the underdeveloped western frontier provided ample opportunity for domestic expansion. Then, as population growth decelerated and the frontier matured, businessmen began to conclude that they would need to find new markets abroad.²¹ From 1865 to 1893, foreign sales of

20. D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History: Continental America, 1867–1914*, vol. 3 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 241; Benschel, *Sectionalism*, 138; Chester W. Wright, *Economic History of the United States* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1941), 711–12.

21. Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860–1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 17–24; Harold G. Vatter, *The Drive to Industrial Maturity: The U.S. Economy, 1860–1914* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1975), chap. 5; Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest*, chap. 2.

finished manufactured goods consistently amounted to 15–17 percent of total exports and around 1.1 percent of the national income. By 1897 they had grown to 21 percent of total exports and 1.7 percent of the national income, and in 1929 these figures stood at 49 percent and 2.8 percent.²²

Northeastern manufacturers' integration into the international economy did not bring their interests into harmony with those of Southern farmers, however. As a share of the national income, exports of finished manufactures to Europe did increase from 0.43 percent in 1893 to 0.89 percent in 1900, but for the rest of the 1870–1945 period they never reached more than 1.0 percent in a year in which trade levels were not distorted by war or reconstruction.²³ Faced with high tariffs and intense competition in industrialized countries, businesses had little choice but to search for new markets in Latin America and East Asia. Europe purchased less than half of the value of U.S. finished manufactures exported after 1881, and that share dropped to less than one-third in nearly every non-war year after 1905 (see figure 3).²⁴ Americans also exported much more of their capital to the periphery than to Europe, though the absolute value of their investments in both regions grew rapidly in the interwar period.²⁵

In short, the economic interests of Republican voters and campaign contributors differed greatly from those of Democrats. Republicans' foreign income came primarily from the periphery of the international system, not Europe. Internationalist initiatives would waste their diplomatic capital, draw them into conflicts in which they had nothing at stake, and hinder the use of American military and economic power advantages in the periphery. They would be better served by a unilaterally interventionist foreign policy, which would be both more cost effective (because peripheral states are easier to coerce than great powers) and more responsive to their needs (because peripheral states tend to be less internally stable than great powers).

PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONALISM IN THE UNITED STATES

AN OVERVIEW OF American foreign policy in 1870–1945 confirms the prediction that Democrats should have been more internationalist than

22. United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*, 544; Friedman and Schwartz, *Monetary Trends in the United States*, 122–25.

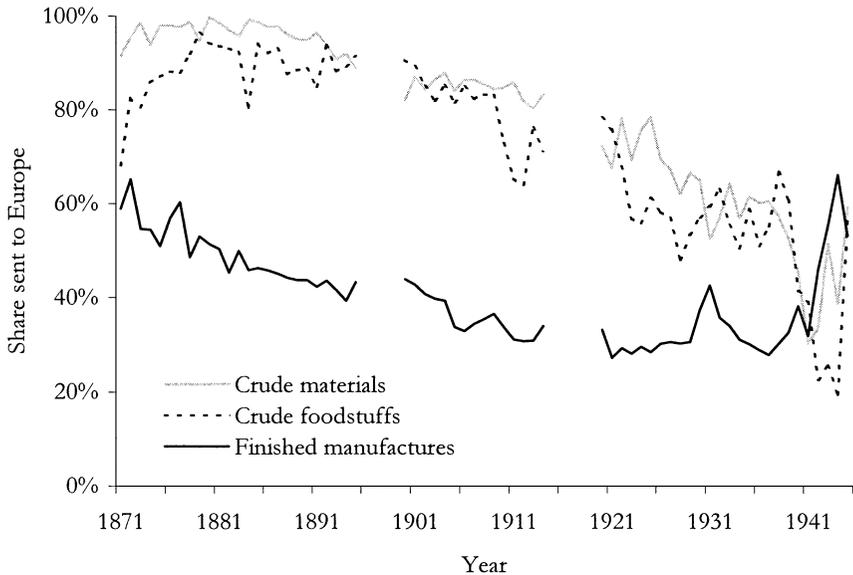
23. Matthew Simon and David Novack, "Some Dimensions of the American Commercial Invasion of Europe, 1871–1914: An Introductory Essay," *Journal of Economic History* 24, no. 4 (December 1964): 594–95; Friedman and Schwartz, *Monetary Trends in the United States*, 122–25.

24. Simon and Novack, "Some Dimensions," 594–95.

25. Cleona Lewis, *America's Stake in International Investments* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1938), 606.

Figure 3

EUROPE'S SHARE OF U.S. MERCHANDISE EXPORTS, BY CATEGORY, 1871–1945



Source: Simon and Novack, "Some Dimensions of the American Commercial Invasion of Europe, 1871–1914: An Introductory Essay," 594–95; United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957*. Data not available for 1870, 1896–99, and 1915–19.

Republicans. Every one of the three Democratic presidents who served in this period undertook a major effort to advance the cause of international law in the realm of high politics (see figure 4). The first of them, Grover Cleveland, is not often noted as having been an internationalist, but he nevertheless negotiated with Britain a strong general arbitration treaty that, for the first time in the history of the United States, would have obliged it to submit its high politics disputes with another country to adjudication.²⁶

The next Democratic president, Woodrow Wilson, was so clearly an internationalist that historians sometimes call this strategy "Wilsonianism." His record was by no means perfect; like other presidents who preceded and followed him, he frequently intervened in Latin American countries' internal affairs, in

26. Nelson M. Blake, "The Olney-Pauncefote Treaty of 1897," *American Historical Review* 50, no. 2 (January 1945): 228–43. The treaty, which was not ratified, is reprinted in W. Evans Darby, *International Tribunals*, 4th ed. (London: Dent, 1904), 390–99.

Figure 4
 MAJOR INTERNATIONALIST INITIATIVES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY FOUR-YEAR PRESIDENTIAL TERM, 1870–1945

Democrats	Republicans
1885–89 Cleveland	1869–73 Grant
1893–97 Cleveland	1873–77 Grant
1913–17 Wilson	1877–81 Hayes
1917–21 Wilson	1881–85 Garfield, Arthur
1933–37 Roosevelt	1889–93 Harrison
	1897–1901 McKinley, Roosevelt
1937–41 Roosevelt	1901–5 Roosevelt
1941–45 Roosevelt	1905–9 Roosevelt
	1909–13 Taft
	1921–25 Harding, Coolidge
	1925–29 Coolidge
	1929–33 Hoover

* Borderline cases (see discussion in text).

contravention of the principle of the sovereign equality of states. He worked strenuously for the cause of international law in other ways, however, most prominently with the creation of the League of Nations.²⁷ His secretary of state, William J. Bryan, also negotiated twenty-nine bilateral conciliation treaties. In the event of a crisis, the signatories would be obliged to refrain from the use of force against each other for a six-month “cooling off” period while a commission met to investigate the matter. Most of the agreements assumed that the disputants would cooperate to initiate the conciliation process, so neither state could be compelled to act against its interests. Six of the treaties, however—with France, Russia, Spain, China, Brazil, and Ecuador—specifically provided that one side could activate the commission and the six-month cooling-off requirement without the direct consent of the other, so these provided a meaningful constraint on American foreign policy.²⁸

Finally, Franklin D. Roosevelt must be considered a leading internationalist for his role in the founding of the United Nations.²⁹ That was not his only accomplishment, though. At the Inter-American Conference of 1933, he agreed to the creation of a permanent Inter-American Court of Justice and signed strong multilateral conciliation and arbitration agreements.³⁰ Unlike similar measures negotiated by his predecessors, Roosevelt’s Inter-American treaties were not rendered meaningless by an open disregard for Latin American states’ sovereignty. At the same time that he signed these agreements, he renounced the United States’ longstanding claim to the right of unilateral intervention in its southern neighbors’ domestic affairs.³¹

In contrast, none of the eleven Republican presidents initiated major internationalist policies between 1870 and 1945, and only three took actions that could even be considered borderline. The first Republican in the period, Ulysses S. Grant (1869–77), showed little interest in international law. He did call upon

27. Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

28. Norman L. Hill, “International Commissions of Inquiry and Conciliation,” *International Conciliation*, no. 278 (March 1932): 96, 127–29. The treaties are reprinted in United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols, and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1910–1923*, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1923).

29. Townsend Hoopes and Douglas Brinkley, *FDR and the Creation of the U.N.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in American Foreign Policy during World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967).

30. The treaty is reprinted in James Brown Scott, ed., *The International Conferences of American States: First Supplement, 1933–1940* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1940), 51–65.

31. J. Lloyd Meacham, *The United States and Inter-American Security, 1889–1960* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 114–17, 132–34; Gordon Connell-Smith, *The United States and Latin America: An Historical Analysis of Inter-American Relations* (New York: Wiley, 1974), 164–69.

Britain to submit to arbitration over the *Alabama* claims, for damages done by three commerce-destroying ships that private British yards sold to the Confederacy during the Civil War, but this demand was entirely costless. Britain had no comparable counterclaims, so any agreement would have resulted in a major gain for the United States.³²

Grant's successor, Rutherford B. Hayes (1877–81), was essentially an isolationist. The next three Republican presidents, James A. Garfield (1881), Chester A. Arthur (1881–85), and Benjamin Harrison (1889–93) all made greater efforts to promote American influence abroad, but they were certainly not internationalists. Harrison signed a general arbitration treaty at the Inter-American Conference of 1890, but he rendered it meaningless by asserting that the Monroe Doctrine gave the United States the right to intervene unilaterally in Latin American countries' domestic affairs.³³

President William F. McKinley (1897–1901) also exhibited little interest in international law. He approved the multilateral general arbitration treaty negotiated at the Hague Conference of 1899, but this agreement did not cover high-politics disputes.³⁴ His successor, Theodore Roosevelt (1901–9), took a similar approach. He signed a number of arbitration treaties, but he inserted in all of them an exception for conflicts involving self-defined "vital interests."³⁵ Roosevelt openly deprecated any stronger form of internationalism, preferring to rely on power politics to achieve his diplomatic objectives.³⁶ His response to calls for the legal resolution of a long-running dispute over the Alaska-Canadian boundary was characteristic of this position. Rejecting the procedures established in his own low-politics arbitration treaties, he convinced the British government to submit the question to a panel of six "impartial jurists," composed of three appointees from each side. The men he selected—Henry Cabot Lodge, Elihu Root, and

32. Glyndon G. Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), chap. 34; Allan Nevins, *Hamilton Fish: The Inner History of the Grant Administration*, revised ed., vols. 1–2 (New York: Ungar, 1957), 410–46, 470–93, 511–66; A. M. Stuyt, *Survey of International Arbitrations, 1794–1970* (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana, 1972), 96–100.

33. The treaty is reprinted in James B. Scott, ed., *The International Conferences of American States, 1889–1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), 40–43. It also had a serious weakness in that it contained no provision by which a neutral arbitrator or umpire would be selected in the event that the two participating nations could not agree to one.

34. The treaty is reprinted in Darby, *International Tribunals*, 604–33.

35. The treaties are reprinted in Scott, ed., *The International Conferences of American States, 1889–1928*, 100–5; United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols, and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1776–1909*, vols. 1–2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1910); United States Senate, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols, and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1910–1923*.

36. John Morton Blum, *The Republican Roosevelt*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 137; John P. Campbell, "Taft, Roosevelt, and the Arbitration Treaties of 1911," *Journal of American History* 53, no. 2 (September 1966): 294.

George Turner—were neither impartial nor jurists, so there was no chance that Roosevelt could have ended up with anything worse than a deadlock.³⁷

William H. Taft (1909–13) was the first of only three Republicans to come close to attempting a serious advance in internationalism. He negotiated general arbitration treaties with Britain and France that, unlike Roosevelt's, would not have excepted cases involving "vital interests."³⁸ They were, however, not nearly as strong as they could have been. Unlike the one signed by Cleveland in 1897, which gave arbitrators the right to work on their own terms, the Taft agreements required that the formation of a tribunal be preceded by the negotiation of a "special treaty" that would "define its powers, state the question or questions at issue, and settle the terms of reference." Either side could stalemate the process at this stage without violating any of its legal obligations, so the clause greatly undermined the significance of the pacts. Furthermore, as Taft himself admitted, his motives were murky:

It is strange how one happens on this sort of thing. When I made that speech in New York advocating the arbitration of questions, even those affecting the honor of a nation, I had no definite policy in view. I was inclined, if I remember rightly, merely to offset the antagonism to the four battleships for which I was then fighting, and I threw that suggestion out merely to draw the sting of old Carnegie and other peace cranks, and now the suggestion threatens to become the main fact of my four years as president.³⁹

Taft paid dearly for his capriciousness. His willingness to apply international law to questions involving "vital interests" not only caused great consternation among his Republican colleagues in the Senate, but also enraged Theodore Roosevelt, who eventually became so frustrated with his former protégé that he opposed him in both the Republican nominating convention of 1912 and in the national election.

37. Lord Newton, *Lord Lansdowne: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1929), 264; Calvin DeArmond Davis, *The United States and the Second Hague Peace Conference: American Diplomacy and International Organization, 1899–1914* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975), chap. 4.

38. The treaties are reprinted in Christian L. Wiktor, ed., *Unperfected Treaties of the United States of America, 1776–1976*, vol. 4 (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana, 1979), 217–31.

39. Quoted in Paolo E. Coletta, *The Presidency of William Howard Taft* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1973), 170–71. Taft demonstrated more enthusiasm in promoting the treaty for the American public; see Davis, *The United States and the Second Hague Peace Conference*, 324–25. He also agreed to the arbitration of a dispute over the U.S.-Mexican boundary. The territory at stake, however, was so small that it is questionable as to whether it should be considered a high-politics issue. Furthermore, Taft refused to abide by the decision of the tribunal, so his actions in this case clearly do not qualify as internationalist. See Sheldon B. Liss, *A Century of Disagreement: The Chamizal Conflict, 1864–1964* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of Washington, D.C., 1965), 20–42, 145–52.

The next Republican president, Warren G. Harding (1921–23), rejected any form of involvement in the League of Nations.⁴⁰ He did agree to the Gondra Treaty, a multilateral conciliation agreement proposed at the Inter-American Conference of 1923; however, he rendered it meaningless by continuing to assert that the United States had the right to intervene unilaterally in Latin American countries' domestic affairs.⁴¹ Similarly, Calvin Coolidge (1923–29) signed a general arbitration treaty at the Inter-American Conference of 1928, but he still claimed the right of intervention in Latin America.⁴² His secretary of state, Frank B. Kellogg, also negotiated numerous bilateral conciliation treaties, but none of them specified that only one party in the dispute could activate them.⁴³ Even the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact to outlaw war, which was enormously popular among internationalists, amounted to little more than a clever bit of public relations work. Kellogg offered the treaty, which lacked any real costs or commitments, only for the purpose of deflecting a French initiative that would have discouraged American retaliation for French restrictions on neutral shipping in the event of another Franco-German war.⁴⁴

Secretary Kellogg also proposed general arbitration treaties with Britain, France, Germany, and several other countries.⁴⁵ Like Taft, he did not exempt "vital interests" from their purview. He did make an exception, however, for "any dispute the subject matter of which . . . depends upon or involves the maintenance of the traditional attitude of the United States concerning American questions, commonly described as the Monroe Doctrine." As British foreign minister Austen Chamberlain noted, "[Kellogg] excepts every question which the United States were ever likely to have covered by the old formula [in Roosevelt's arbitration treaties] of 'vital interests, honour and integrity.'"⁴⁶ The treaty further required that the terms of each arbitration be determined by a "special agreement," repeating the wording that Taft had used in 1911 to ensure that negotiators could stalemate the arbitration process before it had begun.

40. Michael Dunne, *The United States and the World Court, 1920–1935* (London: Pinter, 1988), 78–79; Eugene P. Trani and David L. Wilson, *The Presidency of Warren G. Harding* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1977), 141–42.

41. The treaty is reprinted in Scott, ed., *The International Conferences of American States, 1889–1928*, 285–89.

42. The treaty is reprinted in *ibid.*, 458–61.

43. The treaties are reprinted in United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols, and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1923–1937*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1938).

44. Robert H. Ferrell, *The Presidency of Calvin Coolidge* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 159–60; Stephen J. Kneeshaw, *In Pursuit of Peace: The American Reaction to the Kellogg-Briand Pact, 1928–1929* (New York: Garland, 1991), 12.

45. The treaties are reprinted in United States Senate, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols, and Agreements, 1923–1937*.

46. Quoted in Lorna Lloyd, *Peace through Law: Britain and the International Court in the 1920s* (Suffolk: Boydell, 1997), 131.

The last Republican president to serve before the Second World War, Herbert Hoover (1929–33), restricted the conditions under which military action in Latin America would be considered, but he did not renounce the right of intervention entirely.⁴⁷ His policy was based on unilateral self-denial, not the recognition of general legal principles. His secretary of state, Henry L. Stimson, negotiated numerous conciliation treaties, but none of them provided that only one of the disputants could bring them into effect in any given dispute.⁴⁸ Stimson also signed several arbitration treaties along the Kellogg model, with all of their attendant weaknesses. Finally, he did little of substance to support the League of Nations in the first major challenge to its authority, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931.⁴⁹

In conclusion, Democrats between 1870 and 1945 were significantly more internationalist than Republicans. All three Democratic presidents in the period made significant contributions to the cause of international law and multilateral cooperation, whereas only three of eleven Republican presidents even came close to doing so. None of these three Republicans (Taft, Coolidge, and Hoover) consistently and vigorously pursued a strong internationalist agenda, whereas two of the three Democrats (Wilson and Roosevelt) did.

The partisan pattern of internationalism was not confined merely to presidents; the two parties' delegations in Congress exhibited similar predilections. For example, in the debate over the League of Nations, the vast majority of senators who voted for it without reservations were Democrats. Even when Republican presidents negotiated weak internationalist treaties, they often got more support from Senate Democrats than their Republican colleagues.⁵⁰ Republicans did vote

47. Gordon Connell-Smith, *The Inter-American System* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 78; Alexander DeConde, *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951), chap. 7; Robert H. Ferrell, "Repudiation of a Repudiation," *Journal of American History* 51, no. 4 (March 1965): 671–72. At the end of his term, Hoover may have been moving toward a repudiation of the "right" of intervention; see Samuel F. Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States: A Historical Interpretation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1943), 268–70.

48. The treaties are reprinted in United States Senate, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols, and Agreements, 1923–1937*.

49. Gary B. Ostrower, "Secretary of State Stimson and the League," *Historian* 41, no. 3 (May 1979): 467–82.

50. George L. Grassmuck, "Sectional Biases in Congress on Foreign Policy," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science* 68, no. 3 (1951): 72–82; Dunne, *The United States and the World Court, 1920–1935*, 80, 97. Senate votes over the arbitration treaties of Cleveland and Taft are notable exceptions, but each involved extenuating circumstances. On the debate over Cleveland's treaty, which was deeply affected by an internal struggle for control over the Democratic Party, see Blake, "The Olney-Pauncefote Treaty"; W. Stull Holt, *Treaties Defeated by the Senate* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1933), 160. On the debate over Taft's treaty, which was subjected to unusually divisive partisanship, see E. James Hindman, "The General Arbitration Treaties of William Howard Taft," *Historian* 36, no. 1 (November 1973): 52–65; Robert Fischer, "Henry Cabot Lodge and the Taft Arbitration Treaties," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 78, no. 2 (spring 1979): 244–58.

overwhelmingly in favor of the United Nations Charter, but their approval was by no means automatic. Many of the Republican leaders who swayed their party to accept the United Nations, including Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg and presidential nominee Thomas E. Dewey, were very recent converts to internationalism in 1945.⁵¹

The evidence presented in this article, which characterizes the political economy of each party in broad strokes, does not directly predict the rise of Republican internationalism in the 1930s and 1940s. A more detailed analysis of the developing interests of the American business community, however, can easily explain this phenomenon. In his seminal work on the political economy of American foreign policy, *Defining the National Interest*, Peter Trubowitz determines that the urban centers of the Republican Northeast were becoming increasingly connected to Europe in the decade leading up to the Second World War, due primarily to enormous increases in foreign direct investment and lending to European governments.⁵² If this trend led Republicans to reverse their traditional opposition to free trade and diplomatic engagement with Europe, as Trubowitz argues, then it should have had the same effect on their position over international law.

Oddly, most historians and political scientists who study the United States prior to the Cold War have paid little attention to the partisan divide over foreign policy. There are two likely reasons for this. First, many Republican presidents were willing to sign arbitration, conciliation, and antiwar treaties when they could do so without putting any binding constraints on their pursuit of other strategic interests. Consequently, the history of American foreign affairs is littered with meaningless and low-politics agreements that are too easily lumped together with more substantive, high-politics proposals. In this jumble it is difficult to see any real pattern to American internationalism. Only when the strong, costly, high-politics initiatives are separated out from the rest does one observe a definite partisan effect.

Second, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt happened to have been in office when the two world wars ended, so it is only natural to conclude that their internationalism should be attributed to historical circumstances rather than their party identification.⁵³ According to this view, a Republican president in the same situation would have made similar proposals. Yet, in the period following the First

51. James A. Gazell, "Arthur H. Vandenberg, Internationalism, and the United States," *Political Science Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (September 1973): 375–94; Divine, *Second Chance*, 131–33, 186–90, 234–41.

52. Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest*, 107–8. See also Ferguson, "From Normalcy to New Deal"; Jeff Frieden, "Sectoral Conflict and Foreign Economic Policy, 1914–1940," *International Organization* 42, no. 1 (winter 1988): 59–90.

53. Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy since 1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

World War, Republican Party leaders tended to be either ambivalent or outright hostile to the League of Nations.⁵⁴ Charles E. Hughes, the Republican presidential nominee in 1916, showed little interest in early proposals for the League; Senator Henry C. Lodge opposed any organization that would have imposed legal obligations on the United States; Theodore Roosevelt was adamantly against collective security; and Warren G. Harding, upon becoming president in 1921, ruled out American membership in the League. Ex-president William H. Taft did campaign for it, but his influence in the Republican Party was limited after his crushing defeat in the election of 1912. In the 1916 nominating convention, the best he could do to insert his views in the Republican platform was a single-sentence, non-specific affirmation of support for “the establishment of a world court.”⁵⁵ In contrast, it is not so great a stretch to imagine that a Democratic president other than Woodrow Wilson would have seized the opportunity to try to construct a multilateral, norm-based world order. After all, the idea for a “league to enforce the peace” did not originate with Wilson, and it had many strong advocates in the Democratic Party, including three-time presidential nominee William J. Bryan.

It should also be noted that the coding of Wilson and Roosevelt as internationalists does not depend on their postwar diplomacy. Before the First World War, Wilson made a substantive advance in international law by negotiating six strong bilateral conciliation treaties, and, before the Second World War, Roosevelt signed an Inter-American arbitration treaty while renouncing the use of force in Latin America. Thus, these two men did not need a major peace settlement to establish themselves as internationalists. Their strategic views were a function of their party affiliation, not their happenstance opportunity to negotiate a new world order.

Though few scholars have taken note of the partisan nature of American internationalism in the 1870–1945 period, many have written about foreign policy cleavages in regional or sectoral terms. As it happens, these divisions correspond well to the lines dividing the two parties’ core constituencies. Historians have long recognized that the South was more internationalist than the rest of the country, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century.⁵⁶ Since the 1960s, they have also charted how Northeastern manufacturers’ foreign policy preferences

54. Knock, *To End All Wars*, esp. 48–69, 99–101; Lake, *Entangling Relations*, chap. 4.

55. Kirk H. Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson, *National Party Platforms, 1840–1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), 204; Knock, *To End All Wars*, 100.

56. Paul Seabury, *The Waning of Southern ‘Internationalism’* (Princeton: Center for International Studies, 1957), 4; George B. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913–1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 33–69; Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest*, 126; Grassmuck, “Sectional Biases,” 73, 82. Alexander DeConde shows that a few selected politicians and newspaper editorialists from the South were opposed to internationalist projects, but he makes no attempt to demonstrate that they were not merely outliers. See “The South and Isolationism,” *The Journal of Southern History* 24, no. 3 (August 1958): 332–46.

changed in accordance with their exposure to the international economy.⁵⁷ In the 1870s and earlier, when manufacturers exported very little, they tended to be isolationist; then, in the 1880s and beyond, they increasingly favored a strategy of unilateral interventionism to protect their growing interest in trade and investment in Latin America and East Asia. Not all Northeastern manufacturers opposed internationalism, but most of them were much less enthusiastic about it than Southern farmers. Only in the mid-late 1930s, when businessmen began to conclude that the revival of the American economy depended on the opening of European markets, did they develop a somewhat stronger interest in diplomatic engagement with the continent. Thus, the foreign policy preferences of voters, not just their representative politicians, fit the hypotheses of political economy theory. Societal groups that exported to and invested in the great powers supported internationalism, while those that dealt primarily with peripheral states favored interventionism.

AN ASIDE: INTERNATIONALISM AND THE AGRARIAN MIDWEST

THOUGH MIDWESTERN farmers were not the core constituency of any president elected between 1870 and 1945, the relationship between their economic interests and strategic preferences merits attention. Not only does it offer an additional test of the logic of the theory, but it also helps resolve a longstanding point of confusion in the historical literature. Like Southern farmers, Midwesterners produced far more than could be consumed domestically and were particularly

George C. Herring and Gary R. Hess show that Southerners did not always support foreign commitments, but they make no distinction between legalistic treaties, which Southerners did support, and realpolitik ones, which they generally opposed. See George C. Herring and Gary R. Hess, "Regionalism and Foreign Policy: The Dying Myth of Southern Internationalism," *Southern Studies* 20, no. 3 (fall 1981): 247–77.

57. On the period before 1900, see LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 17–24; William A. Williams, *The Roots of the Modern American Empire: A Study of the Growth and the Shaping of Social Consciousness in a Marketplace Economy* (New York: Random House, 1969), 22, 50; David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Trade and Investment: American Economic Expansion in the Hemisphere, 1865–1900* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 23–24; Edward P. Crapol, *America for Americans: Economic Nationalism and Anglophobia in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1973), esp. chap. 3; Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 14–15, 22, 40. On the period after 1900, see Joan Hoff Wilson, *American Business and Foreign Policy, 1920–1933* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1971), 157–65; Herbert Ershkowitz, *The Attitude of Business Toward American Foreign Policy, 1900–1916* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1967), chap. 4; Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest*, 31–75; Bensel, *Sectionalism*, 88–101; Julius W. Pratt, *The Expansionists of 1898: The Acquisition of Hawaii and the Spanish Islands* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1964), 266–78; LaFeber, *The New Empire*, 326–417; Charles S. Campbell, *Special Business Interests and the Open Door Policy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1951), 15–17; Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, 43, 47–51.

dependent on European markets. For example, 10–20 percent of unmilled wheat was exported in most years before 1929, and over 80 percent of those exports were sent to Europe.⁵⁸ It was not until the Great Depression that Midwestern farmers' trade collapsed. Between 1933 and 1937, only 1.5 percent of the unmilled wheat crop was sold abroad. At that point, Midwesterners had every reason to become isolationist. Before then, however, the theory predicts that they should have been internationalist.

That the agrarian Midwest was isolationist in the 1930s has been established conclusively in numerous studies.⁵⁹ Less well known is the fact that the most prominent representatives of farmers' interests in the first two decades of the twentieth century were among the most ardent supporters of internationalism.⁶⁰ Nebraskan William J. Bryan, the leader of the agrarian revolt in the Democratic Party at the turn of the century, strongly favored an active foreign policy based on international law; so too did the Republican paragon of Midwestern progressivism, Wisconsin Senator Robert M. La Follette. Among the sixteen "irreconcilable" senators who opposed the Versailles Treaty, four were from the agrarian Midwest. Yet, three of those four advocated key internationalist policies, including the abolition of secret diplomacy, the promotion of interdependence, and the establishment of an international court of arbitration. These "peace progressives" were by no means isolationist; rather, they were more stridently devoted to internationalist principles than Woodrow Wilson himself. As Ralph Stone writes, they "protested most loudly against the Treaty's violations of the Fourteen Points . . . The League, they thought, would be controlled by the great powers who wanted to freeze the status quo and preserve the spoils of war."⁶¹

Scholars who deem Midwesterners to have been isolationist in the early twentieth century typically define the term as opposition to higher defense spending and military alliances. As a result, they misleadingly group together individuals who favored an antimilitaristic strategy of institutionalized, norm-based cooperation with those who rejected making any sort of international commitments at

58. United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics*, 297, 546–47; United States Department of Agriculture, *Yearbook*.

59. For example, see Ralph H. Smuckler, "The Region of Isolationism," *American Political Science Review* 47, no. 2 (June 1953): 386–401; Leroy N. Rieselbach, "The Basis of Isolationist Behavior," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (winter 1960): 645–57; Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest*, 145–64.

60. Kendrick A. Clements, *William Jennings Bryan: Missionary Isolationist* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 136; Ralph Stone, *The Irreconcilables: The Fight Against the League of Nations* (New York: Norton, 1970), 6–10, 41, 179–80; John Milton Cooper Jr., *The Vanity of Power: American Isolationism and the First World War, 1914–1917* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1969), 104, 151, 184–85, 198; Fred Greenbaum, "The Foreign Policy of Progressive Irreconcilables," in *Toward a New View of America: Essays in Honor of Arthur C. Cole*, ed. Hans L. Trefousse (New York: Franklin, 1977), 209–30.

61. Stone, *The Irreconcilables*, 179.

all.⁶² The few historians who do make a distinction between uncompromising internationalism and isolationism draw very different conclusions.⁶³ For example, Warren F. Kuehl finds that

far more than a majority [of editors of Midwestern newspapers] could be described as polity thinkers willing to commit their government to international political and legal institutions. . . . Legends and myths die slowly, but it seems time at last to put to rest some of the hoary stereotypes regarding Middle West isolationism in the interwar years. If that mood ever dominated, it did so in the middle to late 1930s, certainly not before. More significantly, this region, if editorial views are representative of thought, endorsed internationalist policies more regularly than the opposite pole. Perhaps it is time to start talking about the internationalist Middle West.⁶⁴

Kuehl does not inquire as to why Midwesterners should have been exceptionally internationalist, but the political economy perspective provides a clear-cut answer. As long as they exported their goods to Europe, they had a compelling economic incentive to advocate the advancement of international law and multilateral cooperation among the great powers.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF BRITISH INTERNATIONALISM

LIKE IN THE United States, the party system in Great Britain was defined by a strong sectoral divide. The Liberals represented manufacturing and coal mining, while the Conservatives stood for the interests of the landed upper class and the financial services sector.⁶⁵ The socioeconomic basis of the Liberal Party's electoral coalition was reflected in its parliamentary delegation, which always

62. For example, see Cooper, *The Vanity of Power*, 2, 184–85, 198; Selig Adler, *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth-Century Reaction* (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1957), 28–29, 43–45. On the problem of concept misformation in the term “isolationism,” see Albert K. Weinberg, “The Historical Meaning of the American Doctrine of Isolation,” *American Political Science Review* 34, no. 3 (June 1940): 539–47; Harvey Starr, “Alliances: Tradition and Change in American Views of Foreign Military Entanglements,” in *American Thinking about Peace and War: New Essays on American Thought and Attitudes*, ed. Ken Booth and Moorhead Wright (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1978), 44–48.

63. Warren F. Kuehl, “Midwestern Newspapers and Isolationist Sentiment,” *Diplomatic History* 3, no. 3 (summer 1979): 283–306; William G. Carleton, “Isolationism and the Middle West,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 33, no. 3 (December 1946): 381–82; Grassmuck, “Sectional Biases,” 82, 162.

64. Kuehl, “Midwestern Newspapers,” 302, 306.

65. Malcolm Pearce and Geoffrey Stewart, *British Political History, 1867–1990: Democracy and Decline* (London: Routledge, 1992), 69, 74–75; H. J. Hanham, *Elections and Party Management: Politics in the Time of Disraeli and Gladstone* (London: Longmans, 1959), 74, 91–92, 225; Rohan McWilliam, *Popular Politics in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1998), 49; David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), chap. 2.

Figure 5

ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (PERCENTAGE FOR EACH PARTY)

	1868		1892		1910	
	Liberal	Conserv.	Liberal	Conserv.	Liberal	Conserv.
Landowning	26.1	45.9	9.0	24.1	7.2	21.6
Military	6.9	13.6	1.8	8.6	2.6	9.5
Finance, commerce	16.4	10.3	16.5	22.5	16.9	20.9
Professional	17.3	9.4	29.5	18.3	28.5	16.1
Manufacturing	12.0	4.4	24.8	12.1	27.3	20.1
Transport	13.0	13.6	8.9	10.5	9.5	8.7

Source: P. J. Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914*, 139.

included a higher proportion of manufacturers than existed in the Conservative Party (see figure 5). Even as far back as 1832, when most politicians in both parties were wealthy landowners, the Liberals consistently beat the Conservatives in nearly every major industrial town.⁶⁶

The manufacturing and coal sectors were concentrated in northern England, Scotland, and Wales (see figure 6).⁶⁷ Consequently, Liberal candidates fared much better in parliamentary elections in these regions than in the rest of the country (see figure 7).⁶⁸ To understand the strategic interests of the party's socioeconomic constituency, it is necessary to examine the export dependence of manufacturing and coal.

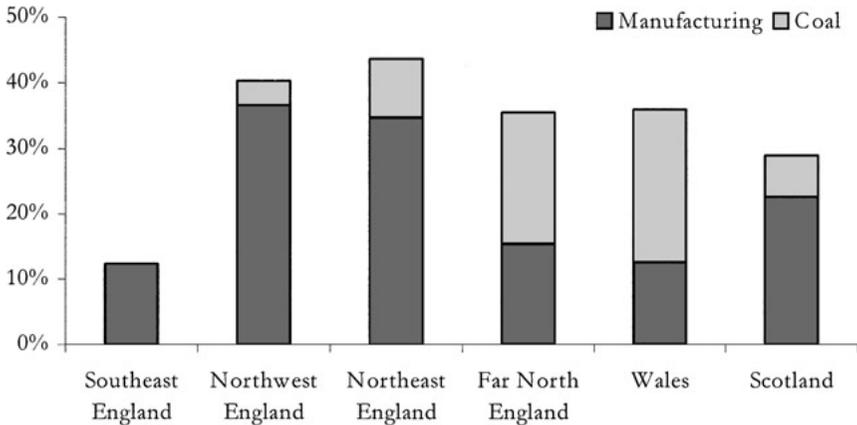
In fact, both of these sectors were highly reliant on trade with great-power markets. This can be seen in an analysis of British merchandise exports, which were composed almost entirely of manufactures and coal. In nearly every non-war year between 1870 and 1931, Britain earned over 7 percent of its national

66. Robert Stewart, *The Foundation of the Conservative Party, 1830–1867* (London: Longman, 1978), appendix 8.

67. See also E. Spencer Wellhofer, *Democracy, Capitalism, and Empire in Late Victorian Britain, 1885–1910* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996), 142–43; P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (London: Longman, 1993), 13–16; C. H. Lee, "Regional Growth and Structural Change in Victorian Britain," *Economic History Review* 34, no. 3 (August 1981): 438–52; C. H. Lee, "The Service Sector, Regional Specialization, and Economic Growth in the Victorian Economy," *Journal of Historical Geography* 10, no. 2 (April 1984): 139–55.

68. See also T. J. Nossiter, *Influence, Opinion and Political Idioms in Reformed England: Case Studies from the NorthEast 1832–74* (Great Britain: Harper and Row, 1975), chap. 11 and appendix A; Martin Pugh, *The Tories and the People, 1880–1935* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), chap. 5; J. R. Vincent, *The Formation of the British Liberal Party, 1857–1868* (Great Britain: Harvester, 1976), xxix–xl; J. A. Hobson, "The General Election: A Sociological Interpretation," *Sociological Review* 3, no. 2 (April 1910): 108–9.

Figure 6
 COAL AND MANUFACTURING EMPLOYMENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL REGIONAL
 EMPLOYMENT, 1911



Source: Coal employment figures from Church, *The History of the British Coal Industry, 1830–1913*, 304–5; manufacturing and total regional employment figures from Lee, *British Regional Employment Statistics, 1841–1971*.

income from merchandise exports to Europe and the United States.⁶⁹ This does not mean that British manufacturers were indifferent to the rest of the world; quite the contrary. With their relative decline in competitiveness in the late nineteenth century, they became increasingly dependent on peripheral markets, to the point that only 40–45 percent of British merchandise exports were sent to Europe and the United States after 1900. (If exports to European-held colonies and Japan are added to the totals for Europe and the United States, the share taken by these markets ranges around 50 percent.⁷⁰) The absolute value of that trade, however, was still enormous, so the Liberals' constituency retained a powerful interest in internationalism.

Over time, the Liberals lost ground to Labor. The last Liberal-dominated government fell in 1916; the first Labor government came to power in 1924. The two parties competed for many of the same voters, and they had quite the

69. B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 318–20, 367–68.

70. Based on data from 1896, 1913, and 1929 from Great Britain Customs Excise Department, *Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions* (London: His Majesty's Statistical Office, various years).

Figure 7
CONSERVATIVE SHARE OF SEATS IN PARLIAMENT, BY REGION

	1874–80	1892–1910	Interwar
Above 60%	79% East Anglia	78% Wessex	79% Wessex
	72% S. E. England	78% West Midlands	68% Central region
	67% Wessex	74% S. E. England	66% West Midlands
			63% S. E. England
		62% East Anglia	
Below 40%	33% Yorkshire	40% East Midlands	33% Scotland
	31% Northern England	39% Devon and Cornwall	32% Northern England
	28% Wales and Monmouthshire	36% Yorkshire	19% Peak-Don
	22% Scotland	32% Peak-Don	13% Wales and Monmouthshire
		31% Scotland	
		26% Northern England	
		12% Wales and Monmouthshire	

Source: Dunbabin, “British Elections in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Regional Approach,” 259. Figures are scaled to give Conservatives 50 percent of the seats in Parliament, so as to control for short-term electoral swings.

same geographic and sectoral bases of support.⁷¹ Consequently, their electoral coalitions had similar economic interests over foreign policy. Factory workers depended just as much on great-power markets as did the businessmen who employed them; likewise, coal miners had the same export interests as mine owners. In analytic terms, the two parties are essentially equivalent. Thus, the theory predicts that the Labor Party should have been equally internationalist as the Liberals.

The Conservatives’ socioeconomic constituency was very different from that of the Liberals and Labor. The party traditionally represented the interests of Britain’s upper class, the landed gentry.⁷² Consequently, nearly half of all Conservative members of parliament in 1868 derived income from landowning, compared to only a quarter of Liberals (see figure 5). This political elitism had definite advantages when the franchise was small, but it posed a serious problem for

71. Ross McKibbin, *The Evolution of the Labour Party, 1910–1924* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), chap. 3; Gordon Phillips, *The Rise of the Labour Party, 1893–1931* (London: Routledge, 1992), 35–36.

72. McWilliam, *Popular Politics*, 49; Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall*, chap. 2; Pearce and Stewart, *British Political History, 1867–1990*, 69, 74–75; Hanham, *Elections and Party Management*, 225.

the Conservatives after the enlargement of the electorate in 1867. At that critical juncture, the party sought to broaden its electoral base of support by co-opting the banking, insurance, and shipping industries.⁷³ These sectors were highly concentrated in southeast England, a region that was far less dependent on manufacturing and coal than the Liberal strongholds in the north and west (see figure 6). The success of the Conservatives' strategy is evident both in their strength in southeast England (see figure 7) and in the growing proportion of Conservative members of parliament who were financiers and merchants (see figure 5). Also telling is Robert Boyce's analysis of the party's campaign coffers: "even after World War I . . . the Conservative Central Office relied upon individuals in the City [the financial district of London] for up to three-quarters of its funds at election time."⁷⁴

The alliance that developed between the gentry and the financial service sector elite, collectively known as the "gentlemanly capitalists," was not merely a marriage of convenience.⁷⁵ Both groups relied heavily on income from investment in the periphery of the international system, particularly in the British Empire. According to the research of Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, approximately two-thirds of all British capital called up for foreign investment between 1870 and 1912 was sent to peripheral countries.⁷⁶ This figure excludes Canada but includes Japan, so if these two countries were recategorized, it would probably be closer to 75 percent.⁷⁷ Among London investors, who formed the core of the Conservative Party's economic coalition, the ratio was even more imbalanced. Davis and Huttenback find that these individuals "were half again as likely to put their resources to work in the Empire" as those from other parts of the country.⁷⁸ They conclude that "The attractiveness of the Empire seemed to decline

73. Richard Shannon, *The Age of Disraeli, 1868–1881: The Rise of Tory Democracy* (London: Longman, 1992), 169, 180–81.

74. Robert W. D. Boyce, *British Capitalism at the Crossroads, 1919–1932* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 21, 380 n 63.

75. Cain and Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, 33; Marvin Swartz, *The Politics of British Foreign Policy in the Era of Disraeli and Gladstone* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985), 6–7; Peter Cain, "J. A. Hobson, Financial Capitalism, and Imperialism in Late Victorian and Edwardian England," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 13, no. 3 (May 1985): 8–16; Lee, "The Service Sector, Regional Specialization, and Economic Growth in the Victorian Economy," 152; Raymond E. Dumett, ed., *Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism* (New York: Longman, 1999).

76. Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860–1912* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 46.

77. Based on data from 1914 in Herbert Feis, *Europe, The World's Banker, 1870–1914* (New York: Norton, 1965), 23.

78. Davis and Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire*, 314. Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey notes that some landowners diversified their investment holdings into manufacturing and mining, but she argues that the constituency interests of landowning members of parliament were a better predictor of voting behavior than their personal interests. See "Specific Factors, Capital Markets, Portfolio Diversification, and Free Trade: Domestic Determinants of the Repeal of the Corn Laws," *World Politics* 43, no. 4 (July 1991): 545–69.

almost exponentially the farther one traveled north of the city. The British capital market was clearly two markets, and it is from those segments, elites and London businesspeople, that the most strident support for the Empire could have been expected to come.”

In nearly every year between 1870 and 1939, overseas investments generated 5–10 percent of Britain’s national income.⁷⁹ Consequently, the gentlemanly capitalists had an overwhelming interest in ensuring that their government maintained the diplomatic freedom to protect their property in the periphery by any means necessary. The same applied to lower-class voters in southeast England whose local economy was much more dependent on financial services and trade, and much less dependent on coal and manufacturing, than in the rest of Britain. Thus, the Conservative Party should have been more reluctant than the Liberals and Labour to pursue any costly, constraining internationalist policies in the 1870–1945 period.

PATTERNS OF INTERNATIONALISM IN GREAT BRITAIN

AS FIGURE 8 illustrates, there was indeed a partisan divide over internationalism in Britain.⁸⁰ Seven out of nine Liberal and Labour governments engaged in a major internationalist initiative, whereas only three out of nine Conservative governments did. Furthermore, the two Liberal governments that did not undertake an internationalist project were both short-lived, lasting only three years (1892–95) and eleven months (1910). In general, the Liberals’ and Labourites’ position on internationalism resembled that of the Democrats. The longest-serving Liberal prime minister in the 1870–1945 period, William E. Gladstone, held views on international politics that were nearly identical to those of Woodrow

79. C. H. Feinstein, *Statistical Tables of National Income, Expenditure, and Output of the U.K., 1855–1965* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 37–38; Mitchell and Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*, 367–68.

80. Unlike in the United States, state leaders in Great Britain do not serve in office for fixed terms. Hence, it is not possible to code observations in a way that is wholly consistent between the two countries. To make them roughly comparable, I consider a new government to have been created every time there was either an election or a critical shift in parliamentary coalitions. I exclude two governments from this survey: the Lloyd George coalition of 1916–22 and the MacDonald coalition of 1931. In each of these cases, the foreign policymaking process was not clearly controlled by a single party, so the theory does not render a straightforward prediction. I do include four other governments that, though coalitions in name, were dominated by Conservatives: the Unionist governments of 1895–1900 and 1900–5 and the National governments of 1931–35 and 1935–45. Though the prime minister in 1931–35 was Ramsay MacDonald, the former leader of the Labour Party, he was entirely dependent on the Conservatives, who had an overwhelming majority of seats in Parliament. Finally, I treat Asquith’s coalition of 1915–16, which was dominated by Liberals and was not preceded by an election, as a continuation of his 1910–15 government.

Wilson.⁸¹ In his first government (1868–74), Gladstone agreed to arbitration in the *Alabama* claims dispute with the United States, a case that is widely considered to have been a landmark in the development of international law.⁸² Though it cannot be considered a costly commitment to internationalism on the American side, it required Britain to make two major concessions. First, Gladstone accepted the possibility that Britain would have to pay an enormous award to the United States. (The actual amount of the judgment, £3,100,000, consumed nearly 5 percent of the British government's annual budget when it was paid in 1873.⁸³) Second, and more importantly, he compromised British sovereignty by granting foreign judges the authority to determine whether British courts, by allowing the sale of the *Alabama* to the Confederacy, had violated wartime neutrality laws.

In his second term as prime minister (1880–85), Gladstone again followed an internationalist foreign policy. When trouble stirred in Egypt, he tried to persuade the European great powers to intervene in concert.⁸⁴ They refused, so Gladstone acted unilaterally. He did not, however, give up on the idea that Britain's occupation of Egypt should be endorsed by international law, so he later agreed to give control over Egyptian finances to the Concert of Europe. This move seriously constrained Britain's ability to govern Egypt; yet, that was exactly the point.⁸⁵ Gladstone made his position clear in an 1880 campaign speech:

In my opinion the third sound principle [of foreign policy] is this: to strive to cultivate and maintain, aye, to the very uttermost, what is called the concert of Europe; to keep the powers of Europe in union together. And why? Because by keeping all in union together you neutralize, and fetter, and bind up the selfish aims of each.⁸⁶

81. W. N. Medlicott, *Bismarck, Gladstone, and the Concert of Europe* (London: Athlone, 1956), 17–33; F. R. Flournoy, "British Liberal Theories of International Relations, 1848–1898," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 7, no. 2 (April 1946): 195–217; Maureen M. Robson, "Liberals and 'Vital Interest': The Debate on International Arbitration, 1815–72," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 32, no. 85 (May 1959): 41–42, 51–55.

82. Darby, *International Tribunals*, 794–95; Jackson H. Ralston, *International Arbitration from Athens to Locarno* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1929), 191–200. The treaty is reprinted in Darby, *International Tribunals*, 312–22.

83. Darby, *International Tribunals*, 795; see also 397–99. Budget figure from Mitchell and Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*, 397–99.

84. Agatha Ramm, "Great Britain and France in Egypt, 1876–1882," in *France and Britain in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, ed. Prosser Gifford and William Roger Louis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 100–2, 113.

85. F. H. Hinsley, "International Rivalry in the Colonial Sphere, 1869–1885," *The Cambridge History of the Empire*, ed. E. A. Benians, Sir James Butler, and C. E. Carrington, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 113; C. J. Lowe, *The Reluctant Imperialists: British Foreign Policy, 1878–1902* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 69.

86. W. E. Gladstone, "On Domestic and Foreign Affairs," *Modern British Eloquence*, ed. David B. Strother (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1969).

He also tried to assemble the Concert to make common policy on the reform of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁷ Then, in the Liberal government of 1886, Foreign Minister Lord Rosebery convened the Concert to arrange for a multilateral naval blockade of Greece, preventing it from going to war with Turkey.⁸⁸

The Liberals' record on internationalism was less impressive in 1892–95, when they made only one minor arbitration agreement. This government dissolved prematurely, however, so it is difficult to tell what might have happened if it had lasted longer. The next time the Liberals came to power, they held on to office for eleven years (1905–16). In that period, which was divided by elections in January and December 1910, they initiated three internationalist policies, two of which were particularly significant. First, Edward Grey, who headed the Foreign Office under prime ministers Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Herbert H. Asquith, negotiated a modest general arbitration agreement with President Taft. Second, Grey sought to manage consecutive crises in the Balkans through the Concert of Europe, acting as an impartial mediator to reconcile the continent's two opposing alliances.⁸⁹ Such a policy was not clearly in Britain's "national interest"; most Conservatives wanted Britain to abandon any pretense of neutrality and side firmly with France and Russia, providing a strong deterrent to German aggression.⁹⁰ Grey came around to this position in the final days of the crisis of July 1914, but internationalist Radicals in the Cabinet refused to let him take a stand against Germany until it had attacked neutral Belgium—an egregious violation of international law.⁹¹ Finally, after the war began, he proposed the idea for a "league of nations" to Woodrow Wilson. Grey continually pressured the American president to commit to joining with Britain to build a postwar world order founded on international law and collective security, even if the United States remained neutral for the duration of the war.⁹²

87. H. H. Dodwell, "Foreign Policy, 1858–1918: Central Asia," *The Cambridge History of the Empire*, ed. H. H. Dodwell, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 424–25.

88. Gordon Martel, *Imperial Diplomacy: Rosebery and the Failure of Foreign Policy* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 45–46; Unknown, *The Foreign Policy of Lord Rosebery* (London: Humphreys, 1901), 4–11.

89. George Macaulay Trevelyan, *Grey of Fallodon* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 74, 123–24, 136, 253–56, 263–67.

90. Keith M. Wilson, *The Policy of the Entente: Essays on the Determinants of British Foreign Policy, 1904–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 29–32, 135, 138; Rhodri Williams, *Defending the Empire: The Conservative Party and British Defense Policy, 1899–1915* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 197–98; K. G. Robbins, "The Foreign Secretary, the Cabinet, Parliament, and the Parties," *British Foreign Policy under Sir Edward Grey*, ed. F. H. Hinsley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 6–7, 14, 18–19.

91. Howard S. Weinroth, "The British Radicals and the Balance of Power, 1902–1914," *Historical Journal* 13, no. 4 (December 1970): 653–82; Wilson, *The Policy of the Entente*, 26–29.

92. George W. Egerton, *Great Britain and the Creation of the League of Nations: Strategy, Politics, and International Organization, 1914–1919* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), chap. 2.

The Labour Party was also quite internationalist. It strongly supported the League of Nations, attempting on several occasions to expand the organization's powers and Britain's role within it. Labour's first government lasted only eight months in 1924, but in that time it almost managed to effect a major change in Britain's commitment to international law. A week after coming to office, Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald ordered a review of Britain's position on the "Optional Clause" of the Permanent Court of International Justice, which allowed states to bind themselves to the arbitration of disputes with other signatories. By the time the government fell, it had not yet acceded to the Optional Clause, but every indication was that it was planning to do so.⁹³ When Labor returned to power in 1929–31, it made good on its promise, ratifying the Clause with only minor reservations.⁹⁴ It also signed the League's General Act of Arbitration, Conciliation, and Judicial Settlement, which filled in a gap in the Optional Clause by requiring the adjudication of "non-justiciable" disputes—that is, those in which no definite legal principle was in question.⁹⁵

While the Liberal and Labour Parties' staunch internationalism paralleled that of the Democrats, the Conservatives took the same position as the Republicans. They signed weak legalist treaties and agreed to minor, one-shot arbitrations from time to time, but most were unwilling to press for more costly, meaningful commitments. The first Conservative prime minister in this period, Benjamin Disraeli (1874–80), saw the Concert of Europe only as a convenient smokescreen for his game of power politics—"a means of throwing dust into the eyes of agitated public opinion," as P. J. V. Rolo writes.⁹⁶ Rather than take a chance on multilateral diplomacy to deal with the Balkan Wars of 1875–78, Disraeli delayed any action on the part of the Concert until he had worked out all of his issues of concern in bilateral agreements.

Lord Salisbury's attitude toward internationalism was not much different from that of his Conservative predecessor through most of his long tenure as prime minister (1885–86, 1886–92, 1895–1902). He was willing to use arbitration to

93. Lloyd, *Peace Through Law*, 24–29, 34–51. The government also signed the Geneva Protocol of the League of Nations, which combined aspects of arbitration, conciliation, and collective security into a comprehensive dispute settlement system. There is some doubt, however, as to whether Labour ever would have ratified the treaty. See David Carlton, *MacDonald versus Henderson: The Foreign Policy of the Second Labour Government* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 73–74; Lloyd, *Peace Through Law*, 37–38, 45.

94. Carlton, *MacDonald versus Henderson*, 75–78, 93–94.

95. *Ibid.*, 93; William Rayburn Tucker, *The Attitude of the British Labour Party towards European and Collective Security Problems, 1920–1939* (Geneva: University of Geneva, 1950), 146–47.

96. P. J. V. Rolo, "Derby," *British Foreign Secretaries and Foreign Policy: From Crimean War to First World War*, ed. Keith M. Wilson (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 110, 113; R. W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question: A Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics* (London: 1938), 339.

resolve territorial disputes in far-off parts of the world where Britain had few economic or strategic interests, but he went no further. Indeed, in his first term in office, he sought to break free of Gladstone's commitment to grant the Concert of Europe control over Egypt's finances.⁹⁷ On the whole, he showed little interest in furthering the cause of internationalism, and his dealings with other European powers were devoid of any attempt to promote norm-based cooperation as a good in itself.⁹⁸ Only late in his career did he begin to consider international law to be a useful instrument of diplomacy. In 1897, he reluctantly signed a general arbitration treaty with the United States, and shortly thereafter he proposed another such agreement with France.⁹⁹ He also convened the Concert of Europe to force reforms on the Sultan of Turkey, but he did so only after exhausting every other possible unilateral and bilateral alternative.¹⁰⁰

After the turn of the century, evidence for Conservative internationalism is spotty. Arthur J. Balfour (1902–5) called for the arbitration of the Alaskan-Canadian boundary, but only because he had little concern for its outcome.¹⁰¹ For the United States, it was about the territorial integrity of the homeland; for Great Britain, it was just another minor imperial border demarcation dispute. The next two Conservative governments, under A. Bonar Law (who died shortly after taking office in 1922) and Stanley Baldwin (1922–24, 1924–29), refused to accept the Geneva Protocol of the League of Nations or the Optional Clause of the Permanent Court of International Justice, both of which would have bound Britain to accept the arbitration of its high-politics disputes.¹⁰² The Conservatives also used Britain's influence within the League of Nations to downplay the organization's role in international dispute resolution.¹⁰³ Finally, Foreign Minister Austen Chamberlain temporized on the United States' offer of a relatively weak

97. F. H. Hinsley, "International Rivalry, 1885–1895," *The Cambridge History of the Empire*, eds. E. A. Benians, Sir James Butler and C. E. Carrington, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 258–59; Andrew Roberts, *Salisbury: Victorian Titan* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999), 436–38.

98. Roberts, *Salisbury*, 632; David Steele, *Lord Salisbury: A Political Biography* (London: UCL, 1999), 4, 125, 142–43, 151–52, 178.

99. Blake, "The Olney-Pauncefote Treaty"; A. L. Kennedy, *Salisbury, 1830–1903: Portrait of a Statesman* (London: Murray, 1953), 280–82.

100. W. L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890–1902*, 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1951), 381.

101. J. A. S. Grenville, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: The Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Athlone, 1964), 372–73.

102. Lloyd, *Peace Through Law*, 18–20, 46–51, 94–95. Lloyd argues that the second Baldwin government was moving toward acceptance of the Optional Clause before it lost the election of 1929. She admits, however, that "Whether they would have signed the Clause, and what reservations they might have attached to their signature, is one of history's unknowns." See 166–96, 249–51 (quote at 251).

103. F. P. Walters, *The History of the League of Nations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 343.

arbitration treaty in 1928, and he signed the already-meaningless Kellogg-Briand Pact only after asserting that it could not restrict Britain's freedom of action in "certain regions of which the welfare and integrity constitute a special and vital interest to our peace and safety."¹⁰⁴

The party's next foray into internationalism did not come until 1935, when the Conservative-dominated National government was embroiled in a crisis over Italy's impending invasion of Abyssinia.¹⁰⁵ Surprisingly, Foreign Secretary Samuel J. G. Hoare turned to the League of Nations. At first, he threatened sanctions against Italy; then, after it attacked, he led the movement in the League to impose an embargo on it. Britain and its fellow sanctioning states did not prohibit the sale of iron, coal, or oil, nor did they impose any kind of naval blockade or deny Italy access to the Suez Canal, so there were important limits to their willingness to adhere to the Covenant's requirement that sanctions be all-encompassing. They did, however, cut off all loans to Italy and refuse its exports, both important measures that had a major impact on its economy. The Conservatives' volte-face on the League may have been too little and too late, but it certainly should be considered a meaningful attempt at internationalism.

Yet, less than a year later, the Conservatives gave up on the League. The threat of an Italian-German alliance led France to appease Italy, and Britain followed its lead. In 1936, the Italian army made extensive use of mustard gas, which had been banned by a League convention in 1925, but the Conservatives did not demand additional sanctions. Faced with horrific casualties, Abyssinia gave up the fight. Britain then voted to lift the embargo on Italy and tried to convince the League not to allow the Abyssinian ambassador to be seated at the assembly's next session. In short, the Conservatives took an enormous step back from their previous advances, discarding the League for the faint hope of reconciliation with Mussolini. It would not be until the midst of the Second World War, when Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill puzzled over the design of the future United Nations, that a Conservative prime minister would undertake another internationalist initiative.

In contrast to the neglect of partisanship in the study of pre-1945 American foreign policy, many historians have noted that British politicians' preferences over internationalism were highly correlated with their political affiliations.¹⁰⁶ It is commonly recognized that Conservatives were reluctant to make open-ended,

104. Quoted in B. J. C. McKercher, *The Second Baldwin Government and the United States, 1924–1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 126. See also *ibid.*, chaps. 6, 8; Lloyd, *Peace Through Law*, chap. 6.

105. Walters, *The History of the League of Nations*, chap. 40.

106. Flournoy, "British Liberal Theories," 195; Henry R. Winkler, *Paths Not Taken: British Labour and International Policy in the 1920s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1994), chaps. 5–7; Lloyd, *Peace Through Law*, 21–23, 87, 201, 249–52; Carlton, *MacDonald versus Henderson*,

binding commitments to international law and multilateral diplomacy, whereas Liberals and Labourites tended to be enthusiastic supporters of arbitration and collective security. Of particular importance in analyses of this cleavage is the Concert of Europe, which evolved considerably from its original, conservative incarnation in 1815.¹⁰⁷ By the 1870s, most Liberals considered it to be an essential element in the maintenance of good international order and the pursuit of humanitarian causes, since it was the only legitimate authority for the creation and enforcement of international law. In contrast, most Conservatives were willing to convene it only on the very rare occasions in which they saw no other alternative to advance British security interests. Otherwise, in the words of Arthur J. Balfour, they viewed it as “an instrument for doing as little as possible with the greatest possible amount of friction.”¹⁰⁸ It was domestic politics, not Britain’s position in the European balance of power system, that dictated each government’s attitude toward the Concert.

There is also evidence of the connection between internationalism and economic interests in Britain outside of the context of executive policymaking. The “Manchester School” of politicians and economists, which included the most vocal supporters of internationalism and free trade in Britain in the mid-late nineteenth century, was bankrolled by northern English textile manufacturers.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, the most prominent internationalist advocacy group of the interwar period, the League of Nations Union, found it much easier to recruit volunteers and rally the public in northern England and Wales than in southeast England.¹¹⁰

In sum, the British case is quite consistent with the logic of the theory. The Liberal and Labour Parties drew most of their support from northern England, Wales, and Scotland, where manufacturing and coal were the dominant industries. These sectors were highly reliant on export to continental Europe and the United States, so Liberals and Labourites had a strong interest in promoting norm-based cooperation throughout the 1870–1945 period. In contrast, the Conservatives’ gentlemanly capitalist constituency in southeast England depended on investment to weak, peripheral states, not great powers, so the party usually opposed substantively constraining forms of internationalism.

20–22; William P. Maddox, *Foreign Relations in British Labour Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934), 27–30.

107. Carsten Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe: A Study in German and British International Theory, 1815–1914* (Harlow: Longmans, 1970).

108. Quoted in Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe*, 182.

109. William D. Grampp, *The Manchester School of Economics* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1960), chap. 1; John S. Galbraith, “The Little Englanders,” *Current History* 27, no. 160 (December 1954): 353–58.

110. Dame Adelaide Livingstone, *The Peace Ballot: The Official History* (London: Gollancz, 1935), 51–53.

ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

WHEN VIEWED in political-economic terms, the American and British cases exhibit some striking similarities. In both states, there was a clear partisan split over support for international law and multilateral diplomacy. The internationalist parties (Democrats, Liberals, Labour) were dominated by the interests of socioeconomic groups that relied heavily on export to the great powers, whereas the anti-internationalist parties (Republicans, Conservatives) were not. Though not every leader behaved exactly as expected and a few of the observations are sensitive to fine-grained coding decisions, the general pattern of behavior is quite suggestive.

Two considerations lend weight to the idea that support for international law and multilateral diplomacy was fundamentally determined by domestic economic factors. First, no other established theory of international relations can adequately explain the phenomenon of partisanship. One might think that the ideology of the Liberal and Labour Parties accounts for their internationalism, but the same argument cannot be used for the Democrats. In the United States, the internationalist party was rooted in a culture of tradition and hierarchy, not liberal idealism. Even if an ideational explanation could be found that were consistent with both cases, it would face the difficult burden of having to demonstrate that internationalist ideas are not a byproduct of economic interests.

Second, the theory presented here not only provides insight into the origins of internationalism but also confirms that the same logic applies broadly to other foreign policy preferences.¹¹¹ Societal groups that did not export or invest overseas, such as Midwestern farmers in the 1930s, tended to be isolationist, whereas those that exported to or invested in weak, peripheral states, such as the gentlemanly capitalists in London and manufacturers in the northeastern United States, tended to be interventionist or imperialist. Furthermore, divisions over internationalism were highly correlated with differences over foreign economic policy. In the United States, Democrats consistently supported the reduction of tariffs, while Republicans were strongly protectionist. In Great Britain, Liberals and Labourites championed free trade, while many Conservatives sought to create an imperial preference system.

In short, political economy theory is highly parsimonious, explaining a broad range of phenomena with a limited number of variables. Though it is most commonly associated with the study of “low politics” issues, it surely merits further attention in efforts to understand the causes of “high politics” behavior. Many

111. See the works cited in n. 13.

other countries, in many different time periods, have experienced partisan debates over various elements of security policy—not just internationalism, but also defense spending, alliances, and even decisions for war. Only a strong theory of domestic preference formation will ultimately be able to explain what motivates state leaders' fundamental strategic choices.

APPENDIX

TO DETERMINE which proposals and policies should be coded as internationalist, I evaluate each one according to the following criteria.

- It must involve a commitment to resolve interstate conflict through international law or multilateral institutions. All other forms of diplomatic engagement, such as alliances, ententes, conferences, arms control conventions, and negotiated dispute settlements are excluded, regardless of whether they produce positive-sum outcomes or conform to liberal values.
- It must be about high politics issues, pertaining to questions of war, sovereignty, or homeland borders. It cannot make exceptions for disputes that involve “vital interests” or the “national honor.”
- It must be recognized as creating meaningful obligations. It cannot be merely a public-relations ploy, nor can it coexist with policies that directly contradict its formal purpose.
- It must be costly, either directly or in expectation. In other words, the state must agree to bind itself to do something that might eventually be harmful to its security interests.
- It must be accepted willingly and embraced, not offered as a concession or last resort from a position of weakness.

For bilateral treaties, I include commitments to accept substantive constraints on future behavior and submit major conflicts to potentially deleterious arbitration judgments. I exclude one-time arbitration agreements in which the disputants make minor adjustments to water boundaries or the borders of distant imperial possessions.

In a multilateral context, I include commitments to create collective security institutions and resolve major crises through multilateral consultation. The latter category of action is costly when it requires the leading state to mediate between competing factions and adhere to international legal considerations at the expense of its own security interests (which it could pursue more easily through bilateral or alliance diplomacy).