Ambiguous Boundaries, Contested Content, and Leader States:  
A New Approach to International Policy Analysis*

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Abstract

How can we improve the study of international public policy and governance? How could or should a researcher structure a sensible, comparable inquiry into the politics and political economy of a loosely-bounded international public policy arena such as “international environmental policy,” “security cooperation in the Americas,” or “financial relations among the BRICS countries”? The paper, extracted from a larger book project, takes the lessons from academic theories of international relations—including the contrasting traditions of neorealism, international regime theory, and constructivism—and shows how they may be used to inform focused and carefully-comparative research on international policy sectors. Our model, the leader state framework (LSF), is particularly appropriate for global or regional issue arenas characterized by ambiguous causal linkages, shifting geographic boundaries, unclear membership, unsteady multilateral alliances, and/or activist transnational actors. In contrast to a traditional bargaining or game-theoretic analysis (in which the participants, preferences, issue scope, and time frame are assumed from the study’s beginning to be known, fixed, and not themselves problematic), the LSF’s governance-mapping approach is explicitly designed for analyzing less-well-defined or rapidly-evolving international policy arenas.

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We live in an era of globalized problems. Numerous public policy arenas--from disease prevention, to protecting intellectual property, to managing natural resources, to dealing with climate change--simply have escaped the competence of even the best-organized and best-funded national government. Many policy challenges cannot be resolved by actions occurring only within a nation’s borders. A cross-border response is often needed. Government officials, private and non-profit sector leaders and concerned citizens also increasingly look abroad for solutions to other problems that affect many countries simultaneously, in areas such as education, urbanization, and health. In many cases, global problems may be tackled regionally.

This paper describes a new model for international policy analysis, the leader state framework (LSF), then provides step by step instructions for how it might be used. The model’s origins lie in the academic discipline of international relations. Its purpose is to assist academic researchers and policy analysts to conceptualize and identify the existing state of cross-border governance within any global or regional issue arena characterized by ambiguous or contested causal linkages, shifting geographic scope, multipurpose multilateral alliances, and/or activist transnational actors. The LSF should be particularly valuable for public policy analysis in a world that is becoming increasingly multipolar, and in which emerging powers will play an ever more consequential role.

The paper has five main sections. We begin in section one by distinguishing “governance mapping,” the type of international policy analysis that we understand ourselves to be doing, from two other broad types or families of international policy analysis. In section two we define a number of terms and concepts that are essential to our approach. The paper’s third section systematically lays out the two theoretical propositions, or assumptions, on which our approach to international policy analysis is based. These assumptions derive from major theoretical traditions in international relations. These two assumptions lead us to a research hypothesis about how international public policy cooperation evolves. The paper’s fourth major part consists of “mapping instructions,” or a detailed set of step by step instructions about how a researcher might implement a study employing the leader state framework. Our conclusions summarize what we see as the LSF’s likely contributions to theory (academic scholarship in international relations and international public policy) and praxis (real world policy analysis).

I. Three modes of international policy analysis

At least three very different approaches to international policy analysis exist, each involving modes of thinking about cross-border problems that are so different from the others that their practitioners may have great difficulty in understanding or appreciating one another. We call the three approaches problem-solving analysis, bargaining analysis, and governance-mapping. While one may find all three modes represented within both the international and the national levels of public policy research, governance-mapping is much more necessary for understanding global policy cooperation (in other words, for international public policy research).
than it is for successfully working within a country with a stable domestic political system (that is, for national public policy research). Table 1 compares major features of the three approaches.

Table 1. “Modes of international policy analysis,” about here

The first group of approaches is **problem-solving analysis**, as in the table’s first column. Problem-solving analysis is what most people imagine when they think of public policymaking. There is some policy problem—such as air pollution, illegal drugs crossing the border, different national regulatory regimes for trucking that complicate trans-border commerce—the solution to which intrinsically involves the authorities of two or more countries. The default and most natural way to think about a cross-border issue is to conceptualize it as a problem that may be addressed through the application of technical or scientific expertise. Implicit in this approach is the subtle yet significant assumption that for any given problem, given certain constraints of budgets and available technology, there is one, single optimal solution, as well as a first best methodology for locating that best solution. In some cases, there may be more than one good solution to a challenge, but the tradeoffs, for example between cost and reliability at the margin, typically can be made explicit. The core research question is, “Which is the best solution to our common problem?”

An example of international problem-solving analysis would be designing and implementing a plan to build several bridges, across a river whose course touched or ran through multiple countries. The list of participants or interested parties, and other parameters such as the relevant time frames for analysis and for the solution to need to be able to survive, also are given before the analysis begins. Once the sites have been decided on and agreed to, and the possibilities of negative externalities either dealt with or dismissed, then the actual engineering and construction decisions pose mostly economic tradeoffs and structural engineering challenges. These kinds of questions may always, at least in principle, be modeled with the appropriate quantitative knowledge and tools—although the question of whose national firm provides the winning bid could become politicized. The scope of related or linked issues that also must be considered is reasonably clear—with the important caveat that the authors or paymasters of technical studies will have a tendency to ignore indirect consequences that fall on someone else. The dimensions to be included largely are given by the nature of the technical problem itself. The issue scope is known, although there may be alternative possible solutions, such as a high suspension bridge versus a lower drawbridge.

We emphasize that the most ordinary and natural way to think about international policy challenges is via the problem-solving approach. Yet we observe that, before the problem-solving approach, which calls for technical or engineering analysis of a specific puzzle, possibly can come into play, a number of important decisions **already will have been made**. The scope of the issue arena will have been defined, as will the problem to be solved or decided, the time frame for the analysis, and the main participants in policymaking or policy implementation. For example, if, as we have postulated, the building sites already have been agreed on, and if the alternative engineering designs do not differ notably in externalities imposed on other neighbors, then the major interested parties would seem to be official representatives of transportation and economy ministries in both countries, business firms, and possibly other directly-involved social groups (labor unions, communities on either side of the bridge). The main point is that all
decisions that might be termed “political” already will have been dealt with. The focus of decision-making is not on whether, why, or by whom the bridges should be built, nor on who should pay for them, but instead is on how to construct them safely and efficiently.

For this type of policy problem the optimal training for an analyst or researcher will be in a technical field such as engineering, the hard sciences, operations research, or some branches of economics. Illustrations of this type of study include feasibility studies, cost-benefit analyses, environmental impact statements, and detailed engineering or architectural designs, and construction bids. While there may be more than one possible policy choice, the tradeoffs among alternate solutions can be clearly specified. For analysts operating within this broad paradigm, political interactions tend to be conceptualized as, at best, a distraction from the significant issues and decisions and, at worst, as a manifestation of the immaturity or even venality of national politicians and policymakers.

In contrast, both of the other two broad families of international policy analysis are intrinsically and overtly political. That is, they conceptualize international policymaking as principally a challenge of coming to a viable political accommodation among different national governments and interests, and only secondarily as a technical challenge. Political analysis of international public policymaking requires different kinds of analytical models. Once again, we begin with what we believe to be the most common, familiar way to approach the political analysis of international public policy issue arenas: the bargaining analysis approach. This second broad family of approaches asks, “What explains the course of this specific negotiating round or this momentous policy decision?” The answer to this research question is not singularly correct or incorrect, as social outcomes often have multiple and interacting causes—that is, to employ precise language, the outcomes of negotiating processes (or most other social interactions) are over-determined. Both academic and journalistic analyses of bargaining or decision-making processes are a matter of interpretation, which only may be judged as more or less convincing—not as absolutely correct or incorrect.

A bargaining analysis approach would be appropriate for analyzing any negotiation round between the representatives of two or more countries. Typically many complex debates over the scope of the questions to be considered in the negotiations, as well as the included participants, will have been decided prior to the opening of the formal process. Sometimes a political analyst will take on the task of chronicling these more informal pre-negotiations, but the bargaining analysis methodologies are most appropriate when at least the participants and broad scope of the question(s) to be decided have been agreed to ahead of time—even if this agreement represents a temporary truce in an on-going war over different ultimate goals and issue visions. Bargaining analysis also encompasses the study of foreign policy decision-making processes within a single country—as well as efforts to comprehend each national government’s bargaining with other domestic actors as well as with foreign governments. The time period examined by the researcher is relatively short, ranging from as short as a day or a week, or month, as with studies of international reactions to momentous foreign policy events or crises, such as the 1914 assassination of Austrian Archduke Ferdinand or the Cuban Missile Crisis (Holsti 1989; Snyder and Diesing 1978; George 1991), or as long as several years, covering a round of negotiations in an international governmental organization (Grieco 1990; Below 2009). For more than two decades now, much bargaining analysis has incorporated Putnam’s (1988) conceptualization of
international negotiations as a “two-level game” in which national authorities must simultaneously bargain with their domestic constituents and their international counterparts (Cameron and Tomlin 2000; Landau 2000; Odell 2003; Aggarwal and Espach 2003).

Think of the example of neighboring riverine states needing a regional transportation and bridge management plan going forward. A bargaining approach typically would pick a time period during which a particular plan or phase was being negotiated, often though not always focusing on a series of meetings called to resolve a specific issue, such as whether a new bridge would be built at one traditional ferry crossing, and how costs (and eventual revenues) would be allocated among both the immediate states and perhaps other countries indirectly affected by the proposed new transportation link. This example suggests that the cross-border and multilateral bargaining process typically precedes the problem-solving stage of policy making.

Theorists have asked questions such as: What generates different bargaining preferences and moves—that is, different bargaining “games”? The answers may lie in the structures of preferences among the players, of the social and political institutions within which bargaining occurs, or in the inherent structure of the problem to be solved itself. Some theoretically-oriented political economists and international relations specialists attempt to identify specific types of problems and the best type of formal institutions for solving them (i.e., the design that will be most likely to foster cooperation as the equilibrium of a game played by rational actors) (Koremenos et al 2001). For example, analysts have argued that for an environmental problem of the type “asymmetric externalities,” such as an upstream-downstream pollution of a river, may be solved via institutions that encompass a broad range of other issues; otherwise, the perpetrators of the problem (i.e., the upstream polluters) will not be willing to participate (Mitchell and Keilbach 2001).

This body of research within academia usually assumes “rational” behavior and known preferences, and is preoccupied with problems expressed at a relatively abstract level. Although occasionally this approach inspires empirical studies of existing formal institutions, usually it treats the substantive content and politics of policy and issue linkages as secondary to the challenge of building theory about how, when, and why social actors (including national governments) bargain over, and eventually come to, collective decisions—or how they fail to do this. The appropriate academic training for the investigator engaged in bargaining analysis is in social science, economics, and/or law, and the sorts of studies produced include those employing game theory, two-level game analysis, or decision theory. Business school case studies typically fit this analytical mode.

Once again, however, we note that bargaining analysis does not begin at the beginning. Most often, this type of approach is applied to a negotiating round or series of interactions, either focused on a particular international crisis or defined by the parameters set for multilateral negotiations within a particular international governmental organization (IGO), such as any of the many organizations loosely connected to the United Nations. But how should we as international relations scholars and/or policy advisors conceptualize that large though amorphous set of international policy sectors, or issue arenas, in which international governmental cooperation is only beginning to be talked about, or in which a patchwork quilt of different and frankly contradictory institutions or vague international understandings exists? While the
problem-solving approach assumed that the preliminary political questions had been settled, the bargaining approach also assumes a number of initial questions have been decided, or at least will be decided relatively early in the episode under study. These include such questions as the relevant time frame for the analysis (which most often either is given by some formal institution, such as the bargaining round within an IGO, or by a more or less pressing external crisis, which then imposes its own time limit on negotiations. Moreover, the researcher or policy analyst typically will have decided ahead of time whom the key parties or policy players are. These types of questions will be have been settled before the analysis per se begins.

**Governance mapping** is a third mode of international policy analysis. Governance mapping is logically prior to both bargaining analysis and technical problem solving. Governance mapping begins with an ambiguously-bounded international policy sector (or a potential or an emerging international policy sector). The set of specific issues to be included or excluded in the “international issue arena” is not known. The list of core participants often is contested. The relevant time period is fuzzy. Often there is no formal IGO governing international negotiations in the issue arena. Other times there are multiple distinct IGOs and negotiating or consultation or summit “processes,” whose membership and goals would seem to conflict with one another. Governance mapping is thus a means of constructing a coherent, analytically-plausible, description or narrative of an international policy sector or issue arena in a situation intrinsically and unavoidably characterized by conflicting narratives. Governance mapping is by its very nature conceptually messy. Yet, just as multilateral problem-solving international policymaking implies that the prior step of international political bargaining has been successfully accomplished, so institutionalized multilateral bargaining processes typically only come into being when each of the key parties first has engaged in its own governance-mapping exercise in order to understand the lay of the land and thus its possible options.

For most cases of *national* policymaking and policy analysis, the governance mapping step is implicit, unrecognized, and relatively quick. This is because, within any relatively stable national political system, the main players, as well as the ideological, social, economic, and political terrain are well-known and invariant across many issue arenas. Thus, the study of bargaining within a policy sector in the contemporary U.S. hardly needs to begin with a description of the U.S. Constitution, three branches of government, and so forth. However, for many cases of *international* policymaking and analysis, basic guides to the players, institutions, and topography of an issue arena do not exist, are unreliable, or are profoundly contested among those governments or other actors that appear to be major players. Therefore, some form of governance mapping is a prerequisite for the representatives of a state, a firm, an international governmental organization, or a trans-governmental or national organization to begin to map out a bargaining strategy for an emerging or confusing global or regional issue arena.

The approach is particularly appropriate for emerging or rapidly evolving issue arenas characterized by complex ambiguity, including uncertainty about what specific policy challenges are contained within (or excluded from) the core of an issue arena, who the key players are, whether indirect interest representation of non-included players is to be encouraged or even allowed, and what the critical technical questions (never mind possible solutions) are. The fundamental research question in the governance mapping family of approaches is, “What is the current state of international linkages in this issue arena?” Cross-border links may be physical,
social, economic, political, or ideational (as with shared ideologies, culture, history, or policy preferences). The researcher wants to identify links that have constructed channels, both formal and informal, are likely to pattern future issue arena interactions. As further explained below, cross-border social and political links may be either transnational ties of international integration (such as market-driven trade flows), which link one or more non-governmental actors, or multilateral ties of international cooperation (such as a trade treaty), in which all contracting parties are sovereign states.

In sum, governance mapping is appropriate whenever the issue scope is contested or shifting over time, when the range of essential actors whose views must be considered in collective policymaking is unknown or ambiguous, and when the nature of the core problem statement for the issue arena cannot easily be agreed upon. The usual time frame covered by the analysis is at least a decade, and may extend significantly longer. Most often the analysis will extend from the past into the present. However, an historical analysis is equally possible and valid. For example, each of the national governments intending to participate in our hypothetical multinational negotiations over a regional riverine transportation management plan first would engage in its own implicit governance mapping exercise to identify and catalogue existing cross-border links and relationships of dependence and interdependence, in order to clarify its own best strategy going forward. Firms that wished to bid on bridge-building contracts, populations living close to proposed bridges, or any other potentially-affected actor would first engage in a form of issue arena governance mapping.

The ideal researchers for governance mapping will be trained in international relations, political science/political economy, or a similar discipline. In the 1980s and 1990s, governance-mapping of international issue arenas often was known as analyzing “international regimes,” or international regulatory frameworks as well as evolving norms. Illustrative studies identify and analyze the stages of “regime creation” (Young, Haas, Keohane and Levy) or the history of particular regimes, such as global “regimes of prohibition” (Nadelmann). Other researchers have classified types of regimes (Hasenclever, Andreas, Mayer, and Rittberger), identified the influence of implicit and informal rules on the behavior of governments operating within international regimes (Young 1999), or traced issue linkages among overlapping arenas of governance (Alter and Meunier 2006, 2009). Researchers have explored the legitimacy of global governance (Beeson 2002), analyzed international epistemic communities (Adler and Haas 1992; Cross 2013), or employed techniques such as political or financial network analysis to identify the implicit linkages, as well as shared cognitions and norms, within international governance regimes (Kahler 2009; Oatley et al. 2013). Moreover, many of those who write political risk analyses (for example, Bremmer 2005) for business or government audiences implicitly are engaging in a form of governance mapping, as they are attempting to describe the multiple and interlocking ties that exist among an often loosely defined set of sovereign states attempting to manage international political (but also commercial) relations in a global issue arena.

Of these three modes of international policy analysis, governance mapping is the least well-developed as a set of techniques and as a disciplinary subfield within the policy analysis community. The majority of the scholars that we have listed as engaged in governance-mapping view themselves as international relations theorists, and as more inclined toward formal modeling than engaging in the necessarily grubby and imperfect world of policymaking,
including international and multilateral policymaking. Yet the more interdependent and
globalized are international political and economic relations, particularly within challenging and
worrisome cross-border policy arenas, the more valuable it is for both professors and
practitioners to think explicitly and systematically about how to do governance mapping well.
This volume is dedicated to this challenge. We note explicitly that we belief that our preferred
governance mapping approach, the LSF, is the most sensible. However, it is hardly the only such
effort. A great deal of the scholarship in international relations and international political
economy from the 1990s onward has been dedicated to describing the nature of global
governance. Many scholars have emphasized the importance of transnational links involving
non-state actors (for example, Keohane and Nye 1972, 1977; Held et al. 1999; Florini 2003;
Haas 2004; Hale and Held 2011). This paper’s LSF, in contrast, suggests the need for a
reemphasis on the state-to-state relations of national governments that have tended to be studied
more in the realm of national security studies than in those issue arenas associated with academic
research on international political economy. However, all of these are governance mapping
approaches to the analysis of international policy sectors.

II. Initial definitions

A governance mapping approach to international policy analysis is appropriate whenever
the scope of the issue arena, included actors, and/or key policy challenges are in dispute among
participants and would-be participants: the basic parameters of the problem needing solution are
not consensual among key players. It is also indicated when a generalist policy analyst wants to
understand the overall politics and political economy of an international issue arena as a
preparation for developing a bargaining strategy. This paper’s model (the LSF) is a governance
mapping approach.

We begin with eight definitions: governance, cross-border governance, international
integration, international cooperation, international policy issue arena, international regime,
international system, and international region. Within the borders of a reasonably well-
functioning sovereign state (country), governance consists of laws, rules, norms, and standard
procedures that lead to converging expectations and patterned behavior by participating actors.
Much of governance thus is the output of the national government (the “state”), as well as of
subnational governmental authorities. At the same time, social interactions and networks within
the country also generate social rules, norms, and institutions that shape expectations and
behavior, thus also contributing to governance. Thus the existence of governance—as the word is
defined here—may be inferred from the presence of actors engaging in predictable and orderly
behavior. The state takes the lead in supplying governance within a national territory, and has a
monopoly on the legitimate use of force to enforce laws. Nonetheless, informal social networks
and sanctions may reinforce, extend, or even substitute for state-led governance.

Cross-border governance exists when expectations and behaviors among
individuals and groups located in different national jurisdictions converge around
mutually-understood rules, law, norms, and standard operating procedures.\(^2\) Unlike
national government, which is authoritative and ultimately backed by the state’s

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\(^2\) This language derives from the literature on international regimes, discussed below.
monopoly of the legitimate use of force, cross-border governance exists in a realm in which each territorial unit is a legitimate, formally equal, sovereign unit of authority unto itself.\textsuperscript{3} Ties of cross-border governance are ties into which the parties---whether sub-state individuals, groups, and institutions or official national government representatives---enter voluntarily.\textsuperscript{4} In some cases, states may formally commit themselves to precise, “binding” obligations codified in international law (Abbot and Snydal).

Cross-border governance is the sum of two types of ties, which we term links of integration and cooperation (see Table 1.2).\textsuperscript{5} \textbf{International integration} refers to ties created by cross-border market transactions or social interactions. The participants are non-state actors, and the links are transnational, meaning that they span national borders but without the direct intermediation of sovereign states. International integration is the cumulative, often unintended result of many decentralized, usually uncoordinated, choices made by non-state actors---including individuals, firms, and other nationally-based or transnationally-organized social groups. For example, transnational corporations (TNCs) seek supplies, markets, and profits, while individuals travel and send money across borders—all without thought for the cumulative consequences of their individual choices. Organizations that lobby or interact across borders also are non-state actors, whether they be units of sub-national government, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), civil society organizations (CSOs), internationally-active non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or international governmental organizations (IGOs) themselves (Keck and Sikkink 1998). We emphasize that we refer to all actors other than the senior representatives of national, sovereign governments as transnational players. Transnational integration links expand organically and typically in an unplanned fashion, spreading new ideas, products, production techniques, labor market practices, and social and political institutions from one society to another (Fiorini 2000; Slaughter 2004; Rosenau 1990). Private actors also engage in diffusion of ideas, norms, and practices via learning from or emulation of each other. Occasionally private actors develop “private” cross-border governance, as with self-regulation and certification by global financial firms (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994; Tetlock and Belkin 1996:18; Ragin 2000; Gereffi, Garcia-Johnson, and Sasser 2001; Haufler 2001; Cashore, Auld, and Newsom 2004; Mattli and Buthe 2004; Murphy 2004).\textsuperscript{6} In some cases private governance may be a second-best solution for actors who would prefer state direction; in others, transnational organizations and states may both prefer private options.

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\textsuperscript{3} There are a few exceptions, such as Antarctica or the oceans.

\textsuperscript{4} In theory, cross-national governance is entirely voluntary. In practice, a regionally-dominant and politically or militarily aggressive state may engage in \textit{de facto} coercion of its neighbors in order to force their governments to permit deeper integration and cooperation.

\textsuperscript{5} Related terminology is market-driven “regionalization” (close to our concept of “international integration”), which may be contrasted to state-to-state “regionalism” (close to our term “international cooperation”) (Sbragia 2008). We simply found our terms easier to use and to remember.

\textsuperscript{6} Most of these are cited in Dimitrov, et al.
In contrast, international cooperation results from intentional choices made by national political leaders of sovereign states (or their designated senior agents and officials) to meet and interact. Cooperation is by definition multilateral, involving the national governments of two or more states. Cooperation links may simply involve informal discussions, and need not be formalized into either an international organization or an institutionalized program of summit meetings. Yet cooperation frequently takes the form of formal memoranda, joint statements, or treaties. As compared to transnational integration, state-to-state links of multilateral cooperation are comparatively centralized, intentional, and reflective of an underlying foreign policy vision held by a country’s senior leaders. State links of cooperation may influence the level of integration, often consciously, but also sometimes unintentionally; for example, multilateral agreements may result in the creation of NGOs (Young 1989). We note that, just as some transnational actors may hope to move the balance of issue-arena links from the territory of societal integration to that of government-to-government cooperation, so also on occasion a sovereign government may prefer that mere transnational links define international interactions in a given world issue-arena. For example, an authoritarian government may not wish to raise the profile of the issue of human rights, so may simple choose not to participate in multilateral cooperation around this issue. (Its other option is to participate actively in meetings with the intention of stonewalling meaningful international collaboration to promote human rights.)

Cross-border ties cluster in international policy issue arenas. They pertain to specific subjects such as trade, energy, migration, control of nuclear proliferation, or any other topic around which states and/or other international actors desire to influence cross-border governance linkages. A policy issue arena may be defined as any substantive arena of social or economic action and interaction in which a majority of participants perceive a need for conscious efforts to create or augment governance, that is, for deliberate actions by someone to promote converging expectations and patterned behavior. Any international issue arena may be broad (as with global environmental protection) or somewhat narrower (as in restoring fish habitat along the binational St. Lawrence River). Such international policy issue arenas often boast conflictive politics, as participants advocate dissimilar issue scopes and outcomes in terms of laws, procedures, or the implicit distribution of costs and benefits among member states or groups.

A more precise term in the international relations literature for cross-border governance links within a specific policy issue-arena is an international policy regime, or simply an international regime. An “international regime” is a set of “implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner 1982). We prefer this definition to some more recent ones, because it makes clear that regimes often are informal and as diffuse as “converging expectations,” rather than being limited to formal international organizations and treaties. By this admittedly broad definition, if senior policymakers in multiple countries jointly conceive of an international policy challenge, or of a global policy arena, then at least an embryonic

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7 Ernst Haas developed the concept of “spillover” to refer to a cycle in which economic integration produces a new transnational elite socialized to favor increased international and supranational regulation.
international regime necessarily exists. The cross-border links in some regimes may be very stable, in part because of “path dependence.” This is the idea that decisions made long ago, and which reflect the preferences and choices of historically-influential actors, tend to induce patterned behaviors and norms that subsequently become difficult to change (Stinchcombe 1968; Steinmo and Thelan [date]; Pierson 2000). However, other regimes are more dynamic.

An international system is simply a group of interacting states and non-state actors. However, in this paper, we are most interested in interstate systems. The international system, used without qualifiers, in this paper typically refers to the system containing all states in the world. Many sub-systems of interacting states also exist. Many international governance regimes are sub-global, that is, they exist within an international region, which contains both states and other types of transnational actors. Once again, we are most interested in state actors and thus will define regions in terms of their member states. Regional regimes may overlap with global regimes and other regional regimes. For the purposes of international relations, the homes to regional regimes are regional systems or subsystems. Most of the time, when scholars speak of international systems beneath the level of the global system, they mean systems in international regions, which usually are understood to be geographically determined, or constructed among neighboring states (Poggio Teixeira 2012). Geography matters for regional systems, because states are not mobile; they are stuck in certain regions. Many regional regimes, and shared approaches to public policy more generally, in fact correspond with geographically-defined regions (Zhukov and Stewart [date]; Simmons and Elkins 2004; Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñan 2005; Gleditsch 2002).

However, regions also reflect the political, economic, and cultural context of human beings interpreting the world (Hemmer and Katzenstein 2002). Thus, we often understand Suriname and Guyana, both located on the South American continent, as “Caribbean,” while the Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic, an island nation in the Caribbean, is easily joined to “Latin America.” Similar observations characterize almost every ostensibly geographically-defined region. Sometimes explicitly non-geographic defining criteria for quasi-regional systems or subsystems are used, including the level of interactions among the member states (Schulz et al.; Poggio Teixeira 2012) or their shared culture (Kakowiecz [date], as cited in Poggio Teixeira 2012). Thus, it is not completely outlandish to speak of a “region” encompassing all English-speaking countries or even a quasi-region of countries that share some other salient characteristic, such as being advanced industrial countries (as in the membership of the OECD) or major emerging powers (such as the BRICS). Certain influential international actors, such as extra-regional hegemons, transnational corporations, or the Vatican, may be more active in some regions than others, to the point that we might define a quasi-region associated with the activities of a key international player (former French colonies; Catholic countries). The governance-mapping approach to international policy analysis is particularly appropriate for the study of international sub-systems and regional-level issue arena governance regimes, as ambiguity very often characterizes their scope and membership.

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8 We thus part company with those who set a high bar in terms of institutionalization and efficacy for the existence of an “international regime,” and thus consider that not all global issue-arenas necessarily have an associated regime. See (Dimitrov et al 2007).
III. The sources of governance in international regimes

The study of governance regimes is crucial to understanding international public policy [chapter by Oran Young in Oxford Handbook]. But where do international regimes, whether global, regional, or quasi-regional, come from? What explains the directions in which governance, both de facto and de jure, develops in international policy issue arenas? This paper’s answer to that question builds on three propositions (the third of which is also an hypothesis, which we critically evaluate in the book length version of this paper) and three additional terms: leader state, overall foreign policy vision, and issue vision. Together these three propositions constitute the bones of a theoretical model—the leader state framework (LSF)—that underlies the practical suggestions for designing and implementing policy-relevant research on international public policy delineated in section four below.

Proposition #1. Leader state preferences dominate in international relations.

“The preferences pursued by (incumbent governments in) leader states will be more influential in shaping the character of intra-systemic ties than will the preferences of either incumbents in smaller states or of transnational actors.”

The first proposition states that leader states are crucial influences on the construction and behavior of the global interstate system or its regional subsystems. A leader state may exist at either the level of the entire international system (global level) or within a subsystem, such as a region or sub-region. It possesses two characteristics. First, a leader state is a state that is either a dominant or a major power within the relevant international system (or subsystem). If we imagine the systemic distribution of material capabilities among all member states, in most interstate systems we would see that one, two, or a small handful of states appear to aggregate significantly greater capabilities (such as military size and strength, population, total economic size, and technological capacity) than their fellows. These states are the potential major powers within that interstate system or sub-system. It is rare to find an interstate system in which all of the members are of approximately equal capabilities, or potential power.

Second, the national political authorities of a systemic (or sub-systemic) leader state must actively desire to influence the characteristics of cooperation and integration among the nations and peoples of the relevant interstate system. That is, incumbent policymakers in the leader state want to shape the conditions of cross-border governance. In other words, a leader state is defined by both relative capabilities and the volition of its incumbent political leaders to exercise influence internationally. To a limited extent volition may substitute for capabilities. In some cases, unusually intense national preferences to exercise international leadership occasionally may elevate a state that is only marginally able to be judged a major power to a leadership position among its peers, at least temporarily. Analytically, one may consider such intense preferences a form of “soft power” [Nye]. The other side of the coin is that some materially highly-capable states may not desire to be system leaders. Some analysts have said this about contemporary China and the global system (cites?)…. So leader states are major powers (and occasionally intermediate powers) whose leaders desire to exercise international leadership.

9 Like most social science propositions, this statement is anticipated to be probabilistically true, rather than always correct.
Generally states exercise leadership—and attempt to impose their preferences—across many international issue arenas simultaneously. However, in some cases a state may seek and acquire a position of international leadership only within a particular issue arena, either due to its leaders’ intense preferences about outcomes in that international policy issue arena or because that state possesses disproportionate capabilities within that issue arena. For example, several small and comparatively weak states in the Persian Gulf possess great influence within the global energy regime by virtue of their large petroleum reserves.

Under these circumstances, and ceteris paribus, we expect leader states with a clear preference for outcomes within an international policy issue arena to prevail over less capable states with different preferences. Similarly, we anticipate that leader states with a clear preference for outcomes within an international policy issue arena will prevail over non-state actors with different preferences. Furthermore, hegemony may work by changing the preferences of other state and transnational actors directly or via institutions (see Cao 2012).

Several additional interesting observations may be made. Most important is the recognition of path dependence in global and regional governance regimes (Stinchcombe 1968; Steinmo and Thelan [date]; Pierson 2000). Any given governance-mapping analysis necessarily begins at a particular point in time. We can assess the systemic distribution of interstate capabilities as of that date, as well as the issue arena preferences of the leader state or states, and subsequent outcomes. But we should not forget that, except in those rare circumstances when an entirely new topic suddenly comes to be perceived as internationally-problematic, an explicit or implicit international governance regime in virtually every possible international issue arena already exists. Hypothesis #1 states that a leader state will be in a relatively stronger position than other state or non-state actors to influence changes within an international issue arena governance regime in the direction of its preferences. However, the baseline institutions and biases within a global governance regime will be inherited from the past. Therefore, a leader state or hegemon will be in a particularly strong position to influence international governance outcomes when its current preferences largely accord with established and inherited formal and informal links and institutions—that is, when the leader state prefers no change. If, on the other hand, incumbent policymakers in a leader state wish to orchestrate innovations, our model asserts only that they will have a comparatively easier time in achieving their preferences than will other actors.

Crucially, a country’s active desire to influence international systemic governance need not be explicit or overt. For example, leaders of a large and potentially or actually hegemonic state within a world region often prefer to downplay their desires for regional leadership. Another possibility is that the incumbent political leaders of a regional leader state may prefer to promote regional integration via links mainly carried by non-state actors, while downplaying regional cooperation carried out by official state-to-state ties. In this case the influential role played by the leader state in furthering its preferences (that is, the preferences of its incumbent leaders) may be somewhat difficult to identify. We note also that leader states need not be in favor of closer ties or of formal cooperation among national governments. In this case leader-states may exert their influence in order to keep cooperation in certain issue arenas off the agenda in a dynamic some analysts have called “non-politics” (Crenson, Dahl).
Leader states and would-be leader states typically claim that their activities create public goods (Cowen 2002) or quasi-public goods for the entire relevant interstate system (such as a region or sub-region). In fact, there is considerable support in some branches of international relations theory for the notion that only a powerful leader state (a “hegemon”) can provide such quasi-public goods in the relevant interstate system as mutual security, dispute arbitration, the international rule of law, a mostly liberal and free-trading international economy, or a globally-accepted fiat currency that can operate as a unit of account, transactions medium, and store of value (Kindleberger, Gilpin, Buzan and Little 2000; Donnelly 2009; Hobson and Sharman 2005; Lake 2007 and 2009; Milner 1991; Weber 2000; Wendt and Friedheim 1995, Butt 2013). Public goods are provided by particular regimes. In order to create and maintain them, the leader state must be willing to pay a larger share than others of the costs of cooperation and/or to expend its “leverage” to pressure other states (Levitsky and Way). At the same time, the leader state typically promotes rules and procedures that allocate to it a disproportionate share of the benefits of the multilateral cooperative regime (cites). Part of leadership sometimes includes “constructing” regional cooperative identity where none existed previously. An example would be the creation of the “North Atlantic” region (Hemmer and Katzenstein). Regional construction may include literal mapdrawing: subsequent maps produced in North America and Europe minimized the distances between the two continents and placed the members of the NATO alliance in the center of the globe [history of cartography website: author is named Black].

Proposition #1 derives from the grand tradition of neorealist international relations theory (Waltz 1970; Mearsheimer 2001; but also Krasner 1982). It asserts that, although all sorts of integration and cooperation links shape governance within a more-or-less territorial region, ultimately the links backed by sovereign states (whose authority ultimately rests on the legitimate monopoly of force within a territory) matter most. Moreover, and even within quasi-regions or other international systems and sub-systems that are not geographically-defined, powerful, big, strong, and capable states are in general more able to impose their preferences on smaller, weaker states than vice versa.

Smaller, less-capable states may dislike and resist larger states´ ideas. They may also be the originators of ideas that the leader state later decides to incorporate and promote. What less-powerful states cannot do is impose cooperation at the system level against the will of the leader states. What a smaller state may do, however, is promote its own preferences at the level of a smaller sub-system in which it is itself a dominant (potential leader) state. We add that the LSF approach also should apply to the analysis of “weaker” international systems, such as regions or subregions whose members are all relatively smaller states, or poorer or “developing” countries. That is, the LSF framework may be applied to any international system and to multiple levels of sub-systems, even going all the way down to bilateral “regions” of just two countries.

We note that even leader states that are clearly the single dominant power (the “hegemon” or “unipole”) in a relevant international system are far from all-powerful. It is important to end our discussion of our first hypothesis by recognizing that a leader state is, at best, more powerful or influential than other actors (states that lack the conditions to be leaders, and non-state actors) in shaping international governance regimes. No state has ever been able to fully impose its will and power in all issue arenas all of the time, not even imperial Persia or Rome in their respective heydays, European powers at the heights of their empires, or the United
States at the end of World War II. Indeed, the lack of ability to go it alone has led some scholars (Burges, Pederson) to invent the concept of “cooperative hegemony,” in which states seek to dominate by convincing others to partner up with them and institutionalizing multilateralism. But the most important point is that hegemons and unipoles cast a wide shadow of power; other states and non-state actors alike must always be aware it is there, whether they choose to cooperate (in traditional realist terms, “bandwagon”) or persuade other states to “balance” against it.

Moreover, the tendency toward the structural persistence of existing institutions, norms, expectations, and practices (“path dependence”) means that it always is easier for policymakers within a hegemon or leader state to use their international influence to continue an existing set of international linkages than to change them. In addition, while weak states and even non-state actors may not be able to create new forms of international cooperation or integration, they may be able to resist the creation of new international governance links, or even to destroy or undermine those links that depend on mutual multilateral trust or on the willingness of a leader state or states to provide significant public goods. This is, of course, the strategy of terrorist organizations for becoming globally or regionally influential. Although their relative capabilities objectively are small, they possess sufficient influence to disrupt, or sometimes even to destroy global governance.

This first proposition thus establishes the basic, default expectation that in any interstate system the preferences of (the governments of) large powers are more influential than those of other actors. While leader states are very far from being all-powerful, they have greater opportunities to shape global governance regimes than do other actors.

**Proposition #2. Leader states develop foreign policy visions.**

“[Governing elites in] all states, including leader states, possess overarching foreign policy visions that influence their nation’s preferences about global and regional governance.”

A country’s overarching foreign policy vision is roughly equivalent to what a previous generation of international relations scholars termed a nation’s “national interests” (Tonelson 1985; Hastedt and Knickrehm 1991; Finnemore 1996; Nye 1999). The overall foreign policy vision operates as the central tendency of a nation’s foreign policy choices, as a trend line that seemingly new initiatives somehow return to. A country’s foreign policy vision may be directly and clearly articulated, but often it is not this obvious.

National foreign policy visions are shaped by a combination of two factors. First, a state’s foreign policy expectations and preferences are strongly influenced by its relative position in the global and regional interstate distributions of capabilities. Systemic structure matters: it provides political leaders with a menu of plausible options, given their state’s position in the interstate hierarchy (Waltz 1979). Thus a state whose relative material capabilities make it a regional hegemon may anticipate being able to direct the course of intraregional cooperation and thus see attractive possibilities for expanding its influence. Similarly, a regional hegemon may wish to institutionalize and thus strengthen its regional leadership as a means of enhancing its global power profile. At the same time, a regional unipole may fear having to pay all of the costs...
of regional cooperation, and thus could shun the creation of regional IGOs. In a bipolar regional system, leaders in one of the polar states could pursue a strategy of trying to bind the other to it through a dense blanket of economic and political ties—or instead could favor regional organization of smaller states in order to balance against the other large power.

Second, a state’s overall foreign policy vision will be shaped by its domestic conditions and unique history. A state may be ideologically or territorially expansionist, and its propensity to act in this way cannot merely be deduced from its relative position in the regional or global interstate hierarchy. Shared culture often induces foreign policy alliances, as do shared national political institutions or ideologies, such as democratic governments or liberalism (Brown, Lynn-Jones, and Miller, eds. 1996; Oneal, Russett, and Berberbaum 2003; Leeds 1999; Mansfield, Milner, and Rosendorff 2002). A state’s overall foreign policy vision may incorporate visions of international cooperation and regional identity. For example, the European Union has become an important part of German identity. In part, it is associated with the transformation of German identity after Naziism: Germany relies on the EU to show its character has changed (Risse 2005). A state that views itself as a global hegemon may even attempt to promote regimes in regions beyond its own: a case in point would be US support for the formation of the European Union (Beeson (2005). Thus, an important part of the foreign policy vision is identifying the networks and regional neighborhoods the state belongs to or feels that it is destined to influence (Hemming and Katsenstein, Zhukov and Stewart, Simmons and Elkins 2004, Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñan). Doing so will require consideration of both systemic distribution of power and domestic political and historical factors.

Proposition #2 begins with core insights drawn from neorealism (namely, the importance of systemic structure in shaping national options). It also draws from the constructivist tradition in international relations, as the hypothesis emphasizes the importance of ideas—including goals, values, and causal beliefs—in shaping foreign policy choices and outcomes (Ruggie 1982; Wendt 1992; Finnemore 1996; Klotz 1999; Klotz and Lynch 2007; Cox). The constructivist contribution was launched by Ruggie, who argued that US leadership after World War II produced a particular kind of liberal order (“embedded” in a broader socio-democratic one) because of values and beliefs. Beeson (2002) argues that realist and constructivist (Gramscian) conceptualizations of hegemony can help us understand the role of powerful states. This combination is often found in “neoclassical realism,” scholarship which understands systemic opportunities and constraints (as given by the global distribution of material capabilities among sovereign states) as the dominant influence on foreign policy choice, yet also recognize roles for domestic preferences as shaped by interests, institutions, perceptions, and ideas (Rose 1998; Kitchen 2010). Ideas, including self-perceptions of identity (possibly extending throughout a world region), matter. All manner of non-state actors may be the originators or carriers of ideas relevant to a state’s overall foreign policy vision (which has ambiguous boundaries and is always changing, yet for which a core set of ideas/beliefs can be identified).

In general, foreign policy visions change and evolve slowly over time. Routine transfers of power within a constant overall national political system—as through elections in democratic countries—allow for shifts in the leadership’s perceptions of “national interests” at the margins. Changes of the overall national political system, or national political regime type—that is, in the
entire national political system through which leaders are selected and how they rule, such as a transition from authoritarianism to democracy—may bring greater changes much more quickly.  

**Proposition #3. An international policy issue vision becomes influential through converging with the foreign policy vision of a leader state or states.**

“All international issue arenas generate multiple and competing policy issue visions. The most influential visions will be those that are, or can become, congruent with a leader state’s overall foreign policy vision.”

For any given international policy issue arena being debated within a global region, multiple and competing broad **policy issue visions** exist. Alternative policy issue visions will differ from one another with respect to ultimate goals for the policy arena, and/or preferred processes for reaching the desired goals, and/or in terms of their beliefs about cause-and-effect relationships within the policy issue arena. An international policy issue vision begins with a causal statement about the international reality within the international issue arena, which typically contains a policy goal or value to be promoted. From this core causal statement and underlying value, logical and tactical linkages to other issues will appear. Policy issue visions very often originate with non-state actors.

Within any given interstate system or regional subsystem, and within any given loosely-bounded international issue arena, there typically exist from two to four competing policy issue visions with significant political support among interested actors. The set of interested actors includes the official representatives of sovereign states and a variety of transnational (non-state) entities, including both nationally-based interest or advocacy groups and leaders or spokespersons of international governmental organizations (IGOs). Such competing policy issue visions often derive from ideas carried by the local representatives of transnational epistemic communities. Issue visions also may be championed by international governmental organizations. In the policy and political science literatures, issue visions are often analyzed as competing “frames” (Baumgartner et al 2009; Snow et al 1986; Goffman 1974) or sometimes “discourses” (Foucalt 1972).

**Proposition #3** suggests that, to become nationally-dominant within any sovereign state, a policy issue vision must be, or must become, broadly consistent with the country’s overall foreign policy vision. If the issue vision and the foreign policy vision are divergent at one point in time, they may, in principle, move closer together either by the issue vision coming to conform more closely with the nation’s dominant foreign policy vision—or by transnational activists working to convince incumbent political leaders and other nationally-influential persons and groups of the validity or importance of the issue vision. Moreover, and in accordance with our first proposition above, to become influential internationally within a region, an issue arena vision needs backing from a leader state. Ultimately, it is almost always those policy issue visions that are backed by political incumbents in a leader state that become internationally influential in helping to define international regimes in policy issue arenas.

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10 On the importance of national political regime types in shaping the public policy preferences of incumbent political leaders, see our other project, *Comparing Public Policy beyond the Advanced Industrial Countries: Voice and Money in India and Brazil.*
In common with our second proposition, Proposition #3 has both neorealist and constructivist elements. Its neorealist component emphasizes the dominant role of leader states in shaping the actual, both de facto and de jure, ties of cross-national governance in an international issue arena. Yet this third hypothesis also is deeply constructivist. It reminds us that leader states operate on the basis of ideas—a national foreign policy vision is shaped both by systemic structure and by the way that its political leaders and policy-relevant intellectuals interpret its history and social and political institutions. Proposition #3 recognizes that issue arena visions (that is, alternate conceptions of the ideal international regime in an issue arena) may arise from anywhere, and often derive from the activities of transnational actors, including IGOs and NGOs. However, to become successful (as by influencing cooperation links within an international regime), an issue arena vision must be or become consistent with the overall foreign policy visions of a leader state.

The LSF’s third proposition states that a successful (that is, an influential) international policy issue vision will be one that “converges with” a leader state’s overall foreign policy vision in terms of both policy content and regional scope. The wording of this proposition is intentional. In principle, ideational movement toward convergence may come either from the policy issue vision reforming itself to be more consistent with the incumbent government’s perception of the country’s national interests—or from the country’s overall foreign policy vision, through dint of much persuasion and lobbying on the part of committed transnational actors, itself incrementally migrating, so that it converges on a compelling international policy issue vision (Ruggie 1982; Klotz 1999; Keck and Sikkink 1998). An important example of the latter process is the story of the way in which abolitionists succeeded at convincing prominent political leaders in Britain to incorporate ending the global slave trade into the country’s conception of its national interest (Crawford; Keck and Sikkink). Abrupt changes in national political systems may allow more rapid gains (or losses) for some transnational groups. For example, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 led to greater influence for particular visions of petroleum extraction and commercialization (Heshmatzadeh 2001, as cited in Zahirinejad 2010).

In sum, the overall thesis of the leader state framework begins with the straightforward and neorealist assumptions that relative power matters a great deal in international relations, and that sovereign states are the ultimate repositories of such power. However, the incumbent leaders of major states act within a vision of their country’s place and goals in the world. These foreign policy visions are strongly shaped by objective factors, most importantly systemic structure, yet ideas and values (cognitions, which are intrinsically subjective) also play a role in determining foreign policy visions. These overall foreign policy visions change slowly, yet are not static. At the same time, issue visions prescribing ideal goals and processes for contentious international policy arenas may be originated by anyone. Ultimately, however, an issue vision will become influential in cross-border governance only when its perceptions and prescriptions converge with the overall foreign policy vision of a leader state or states.

IV. An abbreviated research protocol: Constructing an international issue arena governance map
We begin this paper by describing a class of problem for which we would offer a proposed solution. The challenge was to construct a governance map of an emerging, often poorly-defined or at least ambiguously delimited, international issue arena. We then discussed three propositions drawn from international relations scholarship that could structure a governance mapping exercise. But how, concretely, would this work? What follows are a series of steps that a would-be LSF researcher might follow.

The LSF framework and research protocol is appropriate for those principally interested in researching a specific international policy issue arena—and also for those whose main concern is to understand the characteristics of decision-making and policy choices within a particular geographic region or group of states. In either case, prior to beginning the analysis the researcher selects: a) a group of related states (or the set of all sovereign states in the world), b) an approximate time period, and c) an international public policy issue arena for study. (This section of the Research Protocol assumes these three decisions have already been made. Those looking for advice about how and why to select the states, period, and issue arena(s) will find suggestions in a different chapter draft not included here.)

The boundaries of each of these three components explicitly are subject to minor readjustments throughout the course of the research project. Thus a project focused on Southeast Asia may initially be in some doubt as to whether such states as Australia and New Zealand—or Myanmar—or China—should be included or excluded as part of the relevant international system. A similar problem arises with respect to the question of whether the English, French, and Dutch speaking states of the Caribbean are part of Latin America. The time period for the study should be at least a decade or so, but the analyst may wish to expand it in order to incorporate earlier periods of critical policy debates and decisions. The outer boundaries of the international issue arena itself are probably the most susceptible to redefinition over the course of the project, as the analyst acquires new information about how major participants in the issue arena conceptualize its purposes and scope.

Once these initial decisions have been made, the analyst proceeds in the five major steps we present below. The first three steps in particular appear almost as though they are three separate avenues of investigation, but ultimately the leader state framework (LSF) provides guidance for integrating them. The closest analogy would be to drawing alternative maps—physical, political, economic, or demographic—of the same geographic space. Step four asks for parallel policy histories covering the full time period of the study, with each policy history focused on the perceptions, goals, and experiences of the incumbent government in one of the leader states, as well as those of its national and international partners, rivals, and interlocutors. Step five provides hints as to how these disparate pieces might combine in a coherent analytical report on the state of the international governance regime in that issue arena within a particular historical era (including the present decade or recent decades).

**Step #1: Construct a power map—who are the leader states and what are their interests?**

The first necessary step analyzes the structure of the relevant interstate system, which may be the world, or a region, sub-region, or quasi-region. The purpose of this step is to identify
leader states and would-be leader states. In most regions it should be possible for researchers to identify between one and perhaps four leader states or would-be leader states.

To create a power map of the chosen interstate system there are two broad tasks. The analyst already has chosen to examine either the entire international system or a subsystem such as a region, during a particular time period. Here we assume that the researcher wishes to describe a regional regime. At least initially, the boundaries of the region may be whatever the researcher would like them to be, so long as there is some real world referent.

The first task in this step is to **identify the leader state or states** in the region during the period under study. Where the region is hegemonic or unipolar in structure, with one state whose material capabilities clearly outstrip those of its neighbors, this seems easy. However, even a hegemon may confront challenges, if not to its dominant position per se, at least from other states that would like to be perceived as full partners with it in regional problem-solving. The first and most obvious step is to construct a rough snapshot, usually as of the beginning of the study period, of the distribution of material capabilities, or “hard power,” among the states of the region. Material capabilities include such dimensions as population, military capabilities, economic size, importance in global financial markets, and natural resource endowments. “Soft power” capabilities include cultural influence, presence in global governance institutions, attractiveness of one’s national political or economic institutions, and the reputation of one’s universities and scientific laboratories (Nye 2004). Soft power may be factored into the map of capabilities, but only at the margins. For example, the longstanding and broad renown of French culture no doubt boosts France’s overall power.11 Other types of “soft power” may be specific to particular issue arenas and/or more fleeting in time. For example, South Korea was known for its advanced stem cell research, at least until the exposure of fraud committed by a top researcher in 2005 (Hwang 2009). Such issue-specific “soft power” does not belong in the broad “power map” but rather the “issue arena map” discussed in Step #3 of this protocol.

Evaluating the distribution of capabilities within a regional system is in principle simple for those capabilities amenable to quantitative measurement. We are interested not in absolute sizes of, for example, a county’s gross national product (GDP), but rather in a country’s share of the regional total of GDP. However, while it is easy to acquire measures for both population and GDP, there is no straightforward, entirely objective method for weighting or combining these measures—assessing relative capabilities is necessarily an exercise in “guesstimation.”12 For soft power capabilities such as a nation’s “international cultural influence,” assessment almost certainly is either qualitative or reliant on quantifiable indicators only tenuously related to the quality ostensibly being measured (as with USD sales of movie or music publication rights abroad to measure cultural influence). However, combining or averaging the subjective assessments of multiple experts is one path to improving the credibility of such measures.13

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11 One source (McCloy 2010) ranks France as the country with the most soft power in the world.
12 Political scientists and international relations scholars have compiled some quantitative indices of material capabilities. The best known of these is the Correlates of War Project (full cite for COW needed). COW and other similar indices may be useful, but policy researchers should not rely on them blindly. It is necessary to be aware of the limitations of any database of this type. For a discussion of some of the difficulties involved in trying to assess countries’ international financial capabilities, see Armijo, Muehlich, and Tirone 2014.
13 (McCloy 2010) uses this type of methodology to construct a quantitative index of countries’ soft power.
result of this exercise should be a **power map**, or a rough picture of the distribution of capabilities within the relevant interstate system.

Ideally, those states with the potential to be systemic leaders should be obvious from the data. Does the distribution of capabilities appear unipolar, bipolar, or tri- or multipolar? Of course this assessment depends on the characteristics that go into constructing the power map. At the global level, for example, Japan has the world’s second or third largest economy, depending on how national income is calculated, as well as a population placing it in the top ten, and high levels of industrial and technological development, education, and international financial capabilities. But Japan has not been a military power since the end of the Second World War. China is very large as measured by its economy, population, and military, as measured by men under arms and total spending—but China is not an advanced industrial society, and it lacks most of the long-standing soft power capital of the U.S. and Western Europe in terms of the global attractiveness of its economy and political institutions, although China’s senior policymakers have made improving its global cultural and economic profile a conscious foreign policy goal. Nonetheless, there has been widespread agreement among contemporary international relations scholars on the basic contours of the systemic capability distribution: the early 21st century was a unipolar moment, with the U.S. clearly dominant in terms of most capabilities, and the direction of the subsequent shift would be either toward bipolarity, with the U.S. and China as the poles, or toward multipolarity, with a politically-united Western Europe as the most likely third major pole [cites]. In most interstate systems, informed observers should not disagree markedly over identifying a clear unipole, if there is one, and/or a set of two to five major powers, and perhaps a tier of intermediate powers. For present purposes, we have no need to assess relative power gradations precisely, as our principal goal is merely to identify potential leader states.

We say **potential** leader states, because taking an international leadership position is in part a conscious foreign policy choice. Some states, such as unipoles and minor powers, have little choice as to whether they will or won’t behave as a leader state. Other states, typically intermediate powers, have more choice: their incumbent political leaders may choose to try to invent their country as a leader state at a regional level through actively seeking to influence events--or they may prefer to maintain a lower profile. For example, in the early 21st century, China has been somewhat reluctant to be seen as a world power, frequently preferring to present itself as a regional power and a newly-industrializing country [cites necessary?]. The reverse may occur as well: a state whose objective power capabilities are only those of an intermediate power in its region may aspire to be a major player in shaping international governance institutions.

To some extent, an intense desire to be a major power may substitute for objective capabilities. One means to assess a country’s desire to behave as a leader state is to verify whether it has actively sought positions of leadership in IGOs or promoted its nationals as leaders in prestigious transnational organizations. Another would be to examine other attempts to influence extra-national public or official opinion on regional policy issues. Sometimes intermediate powers (states whose objective position in the intra-systemic capability distribution does not place them among the clear major powers, but which are close to this level) have intense preferences in one or two specific international issue arenas. The LSF framework would direct researchers to incorporate such a state into the issue arena map described in Step #3 of this
protocol rather than labeling it a leader state in the power map. Alternatively, they may have intense preferences to behave as a leader state across many issue arenas, typically due to a strong and expansive overall foreign policy vision held by the incumbent political leader. At the global level and within the quasi-region of the Non-Aligned Nations group, India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in the 1950s probably fit this profile, as did Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez in the early 2000s within the Western Hemisphere and occasionally beyond. Such states should be considered for placement in the overall power map.

Finally, in many cases involving regional interstate systems, an extra-regional major power will be a dominant player, as with the United States in Central America or even all of Latin America, or China in contemporary Southeast Asia. In this very important class of situations, the extra-regional state may attempt to become a regional leader state. We emphasize that step one of this research protocol acknowledges that the boundaries of any regional or quasi-regional interstate system may be fluid or contested and are subject to change. A state whose incumbent leaders powerfully desire to play an international leadership role may attempt to redesign the borders and scope of the relevant interstate system in order to play a role in shaping international governance. Thus, a relatively smaller or weaker state often will prefer to reduce the scope of the regional interstate system in order to enhance its relative capabilities, thus becoming a big frog in a small pond. An extra-systemic major player, in contrast, may try to deal itself into regional institutions, or to exclude competing major powers. For example, the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) group was founded in 1989 to increase trade and investment ties between the U.S., Canada, and U.S. political allies in East Asia. In the early 1990s, China was allowed to join, along with Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mexico—and the question of the sovereign status of Taiwan and Hong Kong was intentionally left blurry. Russia and Vietnam both joined in the late 1990s, as well as Chile in South America, giving the impression that all were welcome. In the 2000s, however, both China and the United States have been active in trying to organize “Pacific Rim” monetary, trade, and other economic associations that exclude the other, China with the Chengmai Initiative (CMI) and its spinoffs (Katada and Sohn 2014), and the U.S. with the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Both China and the U.S. have eagerly included Japan (a highly capable but generally reluctant international leader state) in their favored regional groupings.

The second task in the construction of the power map is to assess each leader state’s (or would-be-leader state’s) overall foreign policy (FP) vision, or vision of its core “national interests.” As discussed in Chapter 1, our theoretical stance in this volume stresses the causal weight of both power and ideas. Thus we explicitly reject the assumption that a country’s national interests simply may be deduced from its position in the interstate distribution of capabilities. Norms and values embodied within a nation’s political institutions and subscribed to by its leaders also shape a country’s overall foreign policy vision (cf. Klotz and Lynch 2007). Assessing a country’s overall foreign policy vision ideally requires the skills of an international relations specialist, but may be approximated by any conscientious policy researcher. Practically speaking, it may be easiest to identify such a vision in an implicitly comparative fashion, as by evaluating how a country conducts its foreign policy as compared to the foreign policies of neighbors and other countries similar to it on some dimension. The researcher will want to pose questions such as: In what ways are the incumbent leaders of this country (as well as their recent predecessors and likely successors) satisfied or dissatisfied with their country’s position in the
world and in the region? What policy shifts on the part of other states do the leaders of this state hope for? In what direction would the state’s leaders—as well as other policy influential elites such as journalists, opposition politicians, and academics—prefer to see regional ties evolve?

In our example we are of course ultimately most interested in articulating a leader state’s *regional* foreign policy vision—in other words, that piece of its foreign policy vision that represents incumbent political leaders’ core attitudes toward participation in the international system that we wish to investigate. Most states will have a foreign policy vision that incorporates both their global posture and their postures toward several regional or quasi-regional interstate sub-systems. Even if one’s international policy research interest lies with the regional level, often it is helpful to begin with its global foreign policy vision, even if briefly. One source for such information is of course the official statements of national political incumbents. Yet often national foreign policy visions, because they are at least somewhat implicit, are best articulated by close observers such as journalists or contemporary historians, rather than solely by the public pronouncements of incumbent politicians.

By this point, the analyst has identified the relevant interstate system (the entire world, or a subset, frequently an identifiable region, although sometimes a quasi-region such as an important multilateral group or club, such as the G7 or the BRICS) and chosen a time period for analysis. S/he has calculated which states are leader states or would-be leader states, and has sketched their core overall foreign policy visions toward the relevant interstate system.

*Step #2: Map the major intra-systemic governance links (cooperation and integration)*

The second step turns to identification of the institutions, formal and informal, that link and bind together the international system selected by the researcher for study. This step focuses on the most important and obvious cross-border links within an international system or sub-system, across all issue arenas, while research step three below concerns only the specific issue arena(s) selected for study. In other words, step two provides the essential background for the more detailed investigation described in step three. Step two is in certain respects the most difficult section of this research protocol to implement, because it requires the researcher to draw from a vast body of information and then to identify and succinctly summarize key points.

By now the researcher already has identified a systemic leader state or states, based on evaluating both states’ relative power capabilities and the subjective desires of their incumbent national political leaders to play a systemic leader role. This next-step allows the investigator to focus on the relevant interstate system and what its collective or multilateral governance infrastructure looks like. We list two broadly-defined tasks, which together comprise the essential background for the study. We are aware that they may sound Herculean, and should be particularly challenging for the researcher without a background in international history, politics, economics, journalism or a similar discipline. However, composing a credible background analysis of international governance within a given interstate system is a skill that can be learned.

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14 For example, from the 1950s through at least the 1980s, the Cold War with the Soviet Union was a (or the) major influence on U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America and other regions.
The subtasks consist of identifying and analyzing the two types of intra-systemic links that together constitute international “governance” within the interstate system. These are, first, multilateral links of cooperation between representatives of two or more national governments, and second, transnational ties of integration between non-state actors (or a government and one or more non-state actors) located across national borders from one another. Such ties may be formally or legally specified, or may simply consist of repetitive interactions that come to construct predictable patterns. Ultimately the purpose of this research protocol is to investigate and explain multilateral cooperation within particular issue arenas, but ties of transnational integration also constitute an important part of their international environment and context. Both types of links may be depicted on the “map” as a picture that is drawn or generated via network analysis techniques, or they may be described in words.¹⁵

One may begin by describing intra-systemic cooperation. Multilateral political interactions exist along a continuum, as follows from our understanding of global governance links as being built up from a multitude of individual cross-border transactions that may or may not thicken into recognizable social institutions. Table 2.1 summarizes some of the possibilities. Increasing degrees or levels of state-to-state political collaboration range from ad hoc meetings during times of crisis, to simple verbal agreements among interested governments to meet regularly to discuss issue arena challenges, to the establishment of a permanent multilateral institution to perform service functions such as monitoring, to cooperative yet still voluntary joint policymaking, and finally to explicit grants of policymaking or enforcement authority to a supranational institution. The table’s cells are illustrative, and are not intended to be an exhaustive list. Moreover, occasionally the stages may overlap or even be reversed in order. The Group of Seven (G7) group of major advanced industrial economies, for example, met quarterly (level two in Table 2.1). Nonetheless, representatives of the chief executive of the G7’s member governments never constituted themselves as a formal, on-going international governmental organization with a charter, employees, and a building (level three in the table). The G7 also engaged in voluntary joint policymaking (level four in Table 2.1), as in the cases of their negotiation of the Plaza and Louvre Accords of the 1990s to realign exchange rates. From the 1970s (when the coalition was first constituted as the G5) through the late 2000s, the G7 constituted the most significant locus of political collaboration in the extremely important and encompassing international public policy issue arena of global macroeconomic governance. In other words, despite its relatively low level of formal institutionalization, the G7 represented a substantively influential example of international political cooperation.¹⁶

In some international systems, substantively important formal multilateral institutions exist. Western Europe, for example, has important formal institutions for broad multilateral cooperation, including the European Union, European Commission, European Parliament, and so on. In most other regions such formal institutions have less reach and overall influence. Where formal multilateral institutions are dense, it is also crucial to include an understanding of their functioning. What actual decision or policymaking authority, if any, do the formal multilateral

¹⁵ For discussion of network analysis in international relations, see Hafner-Burton and Montgomery, other cites that I have in some previous version).
¹⁶ Bergsten and Henning DATE; Tabb on IFIs.
institutions in an international system exercise? What is the relation of the multilateral cooperation to the “power map,” that is, to the leader state/s? It is likely that the formal institutions correspond to the interests of regional leaders, but at least at the margins and possibly to a more significant extent, the formal institutions may place brakes or limits on the leader states. Formal multilateral organizations may or may not overlap with the regional state system selected by the researcher. The degree of overlap also should be included in the “map” of broad governance links.

There also may be competing and/or overlapping governance infrastructure within and extending beyond a region. The network of trade and economic cooperation agreements in East and Southeast Asia, for example, have been described as a “spaghetti bowl” [cite Katada]. The map of formal institutional cooperation may well be messy, illogical, and confusing, and the addition of informal but real multilateral links (of cooperation, yet often mixed with competition or even large doses of animosity, as with contemporary relations between China and Japan) complicates the picture further. This task should also identify the broad categories of issue arenas contemplated in the existing institutions of multilateral governance. For example, what is/are the main purpose/s, as formally stated in founding agreements and charters? Has the scope of issues contemplated expanded or contracted over time? Finally, it is important to consider the level of consolidation of the institutions. Have they existed for a long time? Are states in the region likely to consider them worthwhile? The researcher’s goal in describing the background conditions of multilateral cooperation/competition within an interstate system is to understand the essential context within which issue-arena links are created and broken.

After the bones of multilateral cooperation within the chosen international region, quasi-region, or other system have been mapped, the major links of intra-systemic integration should be easier to identify. Construction of a map of general economic linkages should follow, as with a picture of basic trade and foreign direct investment patterns. What are the major patterns of exports and imports for states in the region? Do regional states mostly trade with and invest in one another, or with states outside the region? Are exports and imports mostly commodities or industrialized goods? As with all the other tasks in this step and the others, the governance map should ideally include not just a snapshot in time, but should convey a sense of the direction and intensity of any changes during the period endpoints. Many of the social, cultural, and other non-economic ties within a region or other international system may be obvious from the existence of the “region” or grouping itself. For example, “Latin America” is both a geographic and a cultural-historical construct. The linguistic, historical, religious, and family ties that bind citizens of Latin American countries together are quintessential transnational ties of integration. When new international groupings, from the G7 to the BRICS countries, are created, policy entrepreneurs, sometimes from within the state (national governments of the member countries) but often private, transnational actors, may attempt to generate transnational links of integration to accompany multilateral cooperation. In fact, as the would-be architects of a unified Western Europe repeatedly discover, it is very difficult to have a viable, enduring international region, quasi-region, or other grouping unless deepening integration proceeds alongside (or even in advance of) state-to-state cooperation.

**Step #3: Map the key issue arena links, dominant actors, and competing issue visions**
The third step investigates the *problematique* of the international policy sector, or issue arena, itself. It is an intermediate step, in which the researcher’s goal is to comprehend the issue arena sufficiently well so that it later is possible to construct the leader state-centric policy histories that comprise step four of this research protocol. There are three types of information that the policy analyst seeks—and thus step three involves three subtasks. The findings from a) investigating links of issue arena governance, b) identifying key players, and c) identifying competing issue visions become building blocks for accomplishing step four of the research protocol.

The first subtask is to map the state of issue-arena governance, focusing on changes between the period endpoints. What links of international cooperation and/or integration specific to the issue arena existed at the beginning of the period, and how did they evolve over the time to be studied? We note that not all possible international policy sectors will have a dense network of cross-border links.

In fact, in the international relations of most policy sectors, regional integration links often precede regional cooperation links. For example, national environmental advocacy groups make contact with one another well before their governments contemplate involvement, while multinational firms in potentially-controversial sectors organize to head off multilateral regulation. However, sometimes the reverse is true: an interstate system will have formal multilateral governance institutions, but these will not (yet) be mirrored by dense transnational links. The BRICS club—consisting of the emerging powers of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—is an example of formal multilateral cooperation that was established at the multilateral level well in advance of significant transnational ties among the peoples of the member states.

To identify issue arena links we can look in many of the same places as we did for the overall international governance links in the previous step. Within this policy sector (as yet with precise boundaries undefined), have there been formal multilateral agreements? Informal state-to-state meetings or negotiations? Are their transnational economic, social, or cultural links in this policy sector among residents of states in the region or quasi-region? How have they developed over time, particularly over the time period of the study? Since our ultimate research focus will be on the issue arena or arenas, the investigation should be more detailed than in in the general governance map presented in Step #2.

A second subtask is to identify key players in the issue arena within the region or other international system of interest. Key players may be governments—often but not necessarily the governments of regional or systemic leader states. Key players also may be civil society organizations (CSOs), other sectoral and national interest groups, business corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), subnational levels of government, transnational organizations (such as the Catholic Church), or international governmental organizations (IGOs). IGOs, we note, are in formal, legal terms merely executive bodies that represent their members, who are sovereign states. However, it is clear that senior officials in IGOs such as the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, or World Food Organization often act independently in global or regional policy sectors to pursue policies and promote issue visions.
Ultimately, this paper’s LSF method will emphasize the actions and views of national governments, so it is especially important to investigate official actors in the policy arena. One question for the investigator to pose is: Who have been the leader states taking a clear role within this issue arena? Occasionally the incumbent political leaders in a major power or intermediate power in a regional interstate system will have chosen not to take an active role in systemic leadership, although their country’s position in the systemic interstate capability distribution would indicate that their objective qualifications to behave as a leader state. (Arguably this was the case of Japan at the global level for much of the late 20th century.) However, the investigator must exercise great caution in concluding that an objectively-capable potential leader state within a given interstate system did not exercise policy leadership, because there are many cases in which the clear preference of the national government of a leader state is that there not be advances in interstate cooperation within the issue arena. The researcher’s default assumption should be that systemic leader states do have issue arena policies, even if these are low-key, implicit, and do not promote deepening global governance links.

The investigator also must ask: Are there additional states in this interstate system or subsystem which do not or cannot aspire to be systemic leader states across a range of international issue arenas, yet whose incumbent political authorities have taken a large role in defining issue visions or policy actions within this specific international policy issue arena? Are there extra-systemic states whose actions and preferences have been very influential within this issue arena? The LSF researcher must attend to their actions and preferences as well. Examples would include either a smaller (non-leader) state, or an extra-systemic state (such as a major power in the global system) that seems nonetheless to play an important role in advocating a particular issue vision within an international policy sector within the regional system. If at this stage it becomes apparent that a major role in the international policy arena has been played by state that cannot sensibly be framed as a leader state within the relevant interstate system, then that state may be incorporated into the analysis at this stage as playing a role similar to that of non-state actors. We revisit the problem of who is a systemic leader state in step four of this research protocol.

A third intermediate subtask is to identify the major contending issue visions within the chosen international policy sector. These issue visions represent alternate views of reality held by major players, including both transnational actors and the governments of significant states, about the international issue arena. Recall from Chapter 1 that an issue vision begins with a core statement, always promoting a value or goal to be maximized, and often containing a causal statement about how perceived issue arena challenges have been created or are to be resolved. Extra-regional states and other extra-regional actors may also be the source of issue visions.

In the beginning, the analyst may have a collection of many distinct issue visions, perhaps one associated with just about every distinct non-state actor involved in the issue arena. However, by analyzing patterns of alliance among these actors, and also the visions themselves, researchers should be able to locate at least two but no more than four contending issue arena visions, differing from one another with respect to the most important goals of cross-national governance in the issue arena, and/or in terms of the process (that is, the major steps needed) to achieved the desired goals for issue arena governance, and/or in terms of the issue linkages to other international policy arenas. Of course, it is always possible to generate a large number of contending international issue visions, as there will be many differences of strategy and tactics.
even among close allies. However, in this case, more is not better. The researcher must reduce the number of influential policy sector visions to four or less. In most cases, it is the external researcher who constructs or defines the issue visions, based on themes observable from conducting or perusing published interviews with experts, officials, activists, and other participants in the issue arena, as well as academic and journalistic articles about the topic. Another advantage of the LSF is that it has safeguards against ideological blinders. One is required to consider the views even of actors one considers marginal or objectionable.

The researcher ultimately will “map” these issue visions onto the leader states. Each leader state should be characterized by a dominant issue vision (the one promoted by the actions, if not always the words, of the incumbent political leadership) and perhaps also a secondary issue vision, typically championed by an influential non-state actor or non-ruling political parties. As issue visions for international policy arenas usually are transnational in scope, there typically will be other governments and other groups abroad that share the same basic perspective of any given issue vision.

This is the stage in the investigation within which the researcher can begin to think about objective reasons why this international issue arena might have been perceived as problematic, at least by some participants. In other words, why does this issue arena appear (to at least some actors, including national governments) to need cross-border multilateral cooperation and governance? In what respect were or are its challenges (of promotion, regulation, or allocation) intrinsically non-national or beyond the ability of a national government to manage? Such questions will help in identifying the most dynamic and influential competing issue visions, and in connecting them to incumbent policymakers in regional leader states.

**Step #4: Construct an analytical history of issue arena governance, possibly organized by leader state**

The final step in our LSF model is to construct an analytical history of shifts in issue arena governance within the relevant interstate system. This step produces the report that the analyst will publish or present to his or her intended audience. It is about explaining policy choices, outcomes, and events, and outcomes: “Who did what when where and why and what were the consequences?” We note that construction of the analytical history requires the skills of an artist, or at least a social scientist. These tasks need judgment and intuition as well as factual analysis. The output of one researcher employing this framework should be similar—but by no means will be identical—to the output of a different researcher beginning with the same question. Major sources for this analytical chronology include published accounts (in both academic articles and credible news media) and, where possible, interviews with, or other documents from, interested participants. However, most of the answers to these questions should already have been determined in previous steps. Of course, many researchers may be tempted to move directly to this step. We suggest that the exercise of having worked through the previous three stages of analysis, including the three subtasks of step three, will greatly improve the product. While every interstate system, and each international policy sector governance regime, is different, we offer some practical rules of thumb.
The introduction begins with the researcher articulating the research question: What explains the evolution of global governance links, especially those of state-to-state cooperation, among this group of states, in this international issue arena, and over this time period? The researcher of course must justify each of these research choices.

The second section of the work gives the essential background to global governance in this interstate system, summarizing the most significant ties of both interstate cooperation and transnational integration, across all issue arenas, among these states and their most influential non-state (or occasionally non-systemic) actors during this time period.

The heart of the work, and the third major section in the final research report, concerns the evolution of global governance within the specific issue arena or policy sector. The organization of this major section is left up to the researcher and his/her evaluation of the material. However, our own experience with the LSF research protocol suggests that parallel policy histories, each centered on a systemic leader state, may be the optimal means to present the research findings. (An alternative narrative structure focuses on issue visions and their associated state and non-state actors.)

The first important question addressed in this core part of the policy history is: Who are the main issue arena actors and what do they want from the issue arena? The researcher by now should have identified all of the significant players within the regional issue arena. In addition to regional leader states, these key actors in the issue arena governance regime are likely to include: civil society actors (CSOs) or interest groups, usually based within the leader states, transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national and transnational corporations (TNCs), international governmental organizations (IGOs), and sometimes sub-national levels of government and/or extra-regional states. Of particular interest is the viewpoint and experiences of each leader state. This seemingly-repetitious step is in fact crucial to the LSF approach, as it is the only way to map the interplay of interests (given by a country’s position in the interstate system, as well as the preferences of each incumbent’s constituents) and ideas (as expressed through the contending issue visions, which will be manifested differently within each national context). How has each leader state’s issue vision (whether explicitly articulated by national leaders or implicitly divined by the researcher from the leader state’s choices and other evidence) evolved over time?

Once it is clear who the players are, the next questions are: What happened, when, and where? This core part of the policy history should have a chronology of key events (or themes, representing clusters of related or repeated events), often numbering from three to perhaps five or six within the study’s time period. Events or themes may have multiple subcomponents, but it is harder to maintain the narrative thread with a proliferation of key points all given equal weight. In most cases, the analyst then describes the history of issue arena multilateral cooperation among states—which may range from regularly scheduled meetings and leaders’ summits to state participation in formal multilateral institutions (IGOs) with dedicated staffs and budgets—as it has evolved over time. Then he or she will move on to include informal sector actors promoting or opposing a variety of cross-border links of integration. What have been the major transnational links and how have they shifted over time? Have there been important differences in the governance regime of the issue arena across sub-regions?
Some international policy sectors within a given interstate system will reveal a story that lends itself to being told via a single narrative. Very often, however, the competitive nature of global politics (which take place in the context of what neorealist international relations specialists term international “anarchy”) implies that the organizational efforts of different leader states within a given international policy sector are overlapping, competitive, or operating at cross-purposes. Consequently, it is usually optimal to structure the policy sector history as parallel narratives organized around the perceptions and actions of those actors that the theory suggests will be most influential: the leader states. This narrative framework also allows for a discussion of the dominant issue vision(s) within each leader state, and also gives an opportunity for consideration of the consistency between a country’s dominant overall foreign policy vision and its issue arena vision(s). While most of the key events and themes may be similar across these parallel histories of the international issue arena organized around the experiences of each leader state, telling the evolution of cooperation and integration from multiple viewpoints may reveal surprising and consequential discontinuities and dissimilarities.

A fourth and final major section of the research report summarizes themes and provides answers to the initial research questions, especially the why? What has been stable and what has changed in terms of the net international governance regime linking these countries over the course of the study period, and why? What issue visions have leader states implicitly or explicitly pursued—and why? What was the contribution of policy choices (including decisions not to act and to avoid becoming involved) by leader states to creating these observed outcomes?

The final product is a “map” with a narrative analytical interpretation, of the governance regime of a single policy sector in a single international system in a particular time period. This picture and interpretation of governance is a stand-alone document that may be useful for issue arena specialists, policy-makers, activists, and citizens. It can help inform problem-solving or bargaining analyses. For example, it can help problem-solvers decide whether politics rule out certain types of solutions in that particular region for the time being. It can allow diplomats and negotiators to better understand the possibilities for agreement. It can help activists who want to promote certain types of cooperation decide whom to target and what arguments and tactics to use. It can allow transnational businesses in a particular region and/or sector to better understand the conditions in which they operate.

V. Theoretical and practical contributions of the LSF framework for governance-mapping

The LSF model predicts that there will be substantial continuity in any state’s, and especially any leader state’s, preferences about international public policy issues and foreign policy more generally. Yet inherent in the approach is the idea that international cooperation in any particular issue arena over time may become important to a leader state’s foreign policy vision.

In this way we diverge from a traditional view in international relations theory that holds that certain issue arenas are in and of themselves more likely to result in cooperation or be subject to the influence of domestic policy processes or non-state actors. A classic formulation of this argument is that of Waltz (1979), who suggests that non-state actors matter more in the “low
politics” of economics as opposed to the “high politics” of security. Neorealist scholars inspired by Waltz, accepting this argument, have contended that studies of “low politics” areas like economic policy may require analysis of domestic variables, the “high politics” of military policy can be adequately explained at the level of the international system. For example, Krasner argues that it is not necessary to consider the influence of domestic politics on security policy because “it could be assumed that all groups in society would support the preservation of territorial and political integrity” (Krasner, cited in Evangelista). We agree with Evangelista, who points out that no one “would…argue that ‘all groups in society support economic prosperity’ as a way to discount the effect of domestic factors on foreign economic policy.”

Our emphasis on the national political process in leader states also leads us to part ways with the traditional structural realist view that domestic politics matter more for some issue arenas than others—and with the even more extreme view that domestic politics are largely irrelevant, at least for understanding the main actions and outcomes of international politics. The LSF takes very seriously the domestic decision-making process, traditionally the subject of comparative politics. Our argument is more in line with that of Lowi (year), who argued that foreign policy-making was subject to the same political pressures and processes as domestic policy-making.

We also contribute to neoclassical realism, the self-description of a group of international relations theorists who, like ourselves, consciously combine insights from neorealism (which emphasizes power) and constructivism (which focuses on ideas) [CITES again]. Neoclassical realists are concerned with foreign policy rather than public policy. To our knowledge they haven´t thought or at least written much at all about international policy regimes or issue arenas. They have not spelled out the implications of their own approach for international cooperation around such common global concerns as environment or migration or finance, preferring to concentrate their analyses on security matters. However, presumably states will have, in many public policy issue arenas, what Kitchen calls “auxiliary goals.” In fact, neoclassical realists love to write about “grand strategy,” a concept which often is only nebulously-defined, yet which seems closely analogous to our notion of a state’s “overall foreign policy vision,” and thus capable of absorbing specific issue visions relating to many international policy issue arenas.

We differ with those who hold that the issue arena itself determines everything, and that issue arenas themselves are so different from one another that generalizations about public policy are impossible. For example, Zimmerman (year) hypothesized that “differences in policy process across issue areas within a state are as great as differences within an issue area between states” (cited in Potter). More recently, Dimitrov et al have argued that “The possibility of issue-area specificity, that is, that each issue area of world politics possesses idiosyncratic characteristics that shape its political dynamics should be considered seriously in future research” (Dimitrov et al). We do not deny that issue arenas have special features whose effects on cooperation should be examined. The bargaining approach to problem-solving institutions (Koremenos et al) is promising in this regard. However, we believe that a major flaw in this approach is its emphasis

17 The extreme “realist” view concedes that incumbent national leaders may be soft-hearted or excessively prone to engage in costly international cooperation. However, such theorists argue, such leaders do not last. Or if they do, then the states that they govern rapidly will lose capabilities and influence on the international stage. See Mearsheimer (2000?).
on formal institutions and binding international law. Our LSF approach allows for an analysis of both formal and informal institutions and procedures, as well as both market and social transmission of ideas, even as it maintains that states remain the key actors in international relations.

The LSF approach is traditional in that it starts with powerful states within any international system. It bucks the trend in many contemporary approaches to governance-mapping, many of which criticize the old emphasis on states. Some scholars go so far as to call the emphasis on Westphalian states to be an outdated “conceptual cage” (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). Why then do we promote a model with a stodgy, traditional approach, when the IR field is filled with admonitions about the importance of non-state actors, and many believe the state and the state-system to be in decline? The main reason is that we believe that rumors of the end of state domination of global governance have been, to paraphrase the writer Mark Twain, greatly exaggerated. Our world is characterized by the emergence of many more powerful states than in the past. This is known as multipolarity. At the same time, it would be foolish not to acknowledge that our world is also ever more complex, and the game of international relations has an increasing variety of players with diverse and overlapping ideas about and interests in international public policy. To be sure, in some policy areas transnational actors have more complete issue visions and may even appear to matter more than states. The LSF framework allows for this possibility. But, we also caution that even in cases where powerful states appear not to be actively engaged, it is still possible for the Gramscian process to be at work. State officials pay attention to all kinds of governance regimes, including implicit ones characterized by strong links of international integration alongside weak links of multilateral cooperation, because they believe that their national interest and their own positions of power may be influenced from any direction.

Although we hope the LSF approach may influence theoretical debates, its main intended use is as a pragmatic guide to making existing international relations theory useful for understanding global and regional public policy. Our world is complex. Globalization and the rise of inevitably multilateral yet urgent problems such as escalating climate change, coupled with the new and more complex security challenges created by rising global multipolarity, make interstate cooperation seem more essential than ever—yet do not allow for much theoretical parsimony. In the meantime it is useful to have a framework for understanding the politics of regional and other forms of international cooperation in public policy.

Which types of cooperation in diverse policy arenas are likely to begin and to endure? In which regional systems or subsystems is cooperation more likely? Which countries should activists with policy interests target? How can officials in small states make their opinions count? Why is cooperation in some issue arenas so difficult to achieve? The LSF has practical implications for each of these questions.

The claim that states are irrelevant or at least comparatively unimportant for some international issue arenas is most often made about international economic regimes, especially those in which self-regulation has become significant. Our view, in contrast, is that the mostly liberal global economy necessarily rests upon the commitment of the post-Second World War hegemon and other key leader states to liberal internationalism. As the global interstate system becomes more multipolar, certain mostly-beneficial characteristics of postwar global governance—such as the absence of major power war and the relatively open global trading system, will become more fragile. See Zakaria, *The Post-American World*...
Table 1. Modes of international policy analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Problem-solving analysis</th>
<th>Bargaining analysis</th>
<th>Governance mapping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core research question:</td>
<td>Which is the best solution to our common problem?</td>
<td>What explains the course of this negotiation round or momentous policy decision?</td>
<td>Which actors and links of cross-border governance are most influential in this issue arena, and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue scope is:</td>
<td>Clearly defined at outset</td>
<td>Clearly defined prior to, or early in, the bargaining process</td>
<td>Intrinsically contested, ambiguous, open-ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem statement for issue arena is:</td>
<td>Known, although solutions may be contested</td>
<td>Known, although solutions are contested</td>
<td>Problem statement and solutions are unknown or contested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time frame for analysis:</td>
<td>Specific; given by problem statement</td>
<td>Specific; given by political decisions prior to analysis</td>
<td>Ambiguous; analyst sets study parameters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core participants are:</td>
<td>Specific; given by problem statement</td>
<td>Decided at beginning of negotiation round</td>
<td>Contested and/or shifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyst’s training:</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>International relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hard science</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Political economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>International relations</td>
<td>Political &amp; transnational network analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations of included studies and approaches:</td>
<td>Feasibility study</td>
<td>Game theory modeling</td>
<td>International regime analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost-benefit analysis</td>
<td>Two-level game analysis</td>
<td>Political risk/forecasting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental impact analysis</td>
<td>Decision theory</td>
<td>Leader state framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction bid</td>
<td>Business negotiation case study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional analysis</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. International integration and cooperation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major organizational dynamics:</th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Markets</td>
<td>States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social interactions</td>
<td>Defined processes (e.g. summits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juridical space of links:</td>
<td>Transnational</td>
<td>Multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td>Non-state actors, including individuals, firms, NGOs, IGOs, sub-national govt</td>
<td>State actors only, such as senior national public officials in two or more sovereign countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination of transactions?</td>
<td>No, decentralized</td>
<td>Yes, centralized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caveat:</td>
<td>Some transnational actors may hope to promote state-to-state cooperation</td>
<td>Some national policymakers may prefer decentralized integration only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. An illustrative continuum of multilateral political cooperation
(from weaker to stronger links)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad hoc consultation, as during crises</th>
<th>Regularly scheduled official meetings &amp; summits</th>
<th>Permanent multilateral service organization(s) (IGO) established</th>
<th>Joint yet voluntary development of complementary national policies</th>
<th>Limited grant of authority to supranational body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

References (to follow; please contact the authors)