
-the edited volume is about how ideas influence/explain political outcomes
-“Our argument is that ideas [defined as beliefs held by individuals] influence policy when the principled or causal beliefs they embody provide road maps that increase actors’ clarity about goals or ends-means relationships, when they affect outcomes of strategic situations in which there is no unique equilibrium, and when they become embedded in political institutions.”  [3]

-ideas as well as interests have causal weight in explaining action [following Weber] (3-4)
-the study is done b/c many IR thinkers, under the influence of economics and rationalism, have avoided the issue of how ideas influence foreign policy outcomes (4)
-G&K state that ideas are critical; this does not mean that they displace rationality or self-interest, but that ideas are causally important in behaviour and preference formation [5]
-the role of ideas in causing behaviour must be investigated empirically; G&K take a broad swipe at ‘reflectivist’ approaches (Wendt and all) for not being empirically driven: “Without either a well-defined set of propositions about behavior or a rich empirical analysis, the reflectivist critique remains more an expression of understandable frustration than a working research program.”  (6)
-as such, they are not concerned with the sources/origins of ideas (that is fuzzy psychological theorizing) but are more concerned with their effects (see critique of cognitive approaches on pp. 6-7)

-three types of ideas
 -first, world views
   -ideas that define the universe of possibilities for action; example: rationality, sovereignty, privacy
 -second, principled beliefs
   -normative ideas; criteria for distinguishing right/wrong, just/unjust
 -third, causal beliefs
   -beliefs about cause-effect relationships; typically come from authorities; a set of shared beliefs
   -strategies for the attainment of goals (what Kant calls hypothetical morality)

-three causal mechanisms for ideas influencing policy
 -first, ideas as road maps  (13-17)
   -people have incomplete information; ideas about causality mean that the expected effects of action influence how individuals act
 -second, ideas as focal points/glue—coordination  (17-20)
   -in any game theoretic situation, there are multiple equilibria; ideas are important because the only way to find an acceptable solution is by analyzing the interests and strategic interactions of the players (utility functions and payoffs)
   -ideas alleviate coordination problems; they serve as focal points/solutions to problems of incomplete info.
 -third, institutionalization of ideas  (20-24)
   -ideas over time have a lasting influence if they become institutionalized

-the methodological problems of ideas as causal mechanisms is discussed—see pp. 26-29