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Global Economic Change, International Conflict and Cooperation

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International Political Economy has no shortage of concepts to explain international cooperation and conflict. Theories have been developed at several levels of analysis - the unit or agent level, the dyadic level, and the group or systems level.

However, few of these concepts have been tested empirically. In this project, Pollins set out to make progress in theory building by:

- Identifying both consistent and contradictory claims found in the field.
- Testing these competing models using a common information base.
- Building and refining a new theoretical framework based on these tests.

A few of the concepts tested include:

- Groups that include a dominant member or bloc are more likely to cooperate than groups that do not have such dominance.
- Two nations with asymmetric resources are more likely to cooperate than two nations with symmetric resources.
- States that plan far into the future are more likely to cooperate than those that discount future gains.

Pollins tested such concepts using "model specification," which identifies the premises of each contending model and confronts them with a common information base. A new model that integrates the most promising propositions from each contender is then identified and tested. These findings suggest new directions for research.

This project has contributed to publication of Pollins' book *Economic Interdependence and International Conflict: New Perspectives on an Enduring Debate* (with Edward Mansfield, 2004), as well as two articles and two data sets, one on international trade from 1880 to 1996 and one on military disputes from 1816 to 2001.



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