World Politics, Critical Realism and the Future of Humanity: An interview with Heikki Patomäki, Part 1

Heikki Patomäki and Jamie Morgan[1]

Abstract: In Part 1 of this wide-ranging interview Heikki Patomäki discusses his early work and career up to the Global Financial Crisis. He provides comment on his role as a public intellectual and activist, his diverse academic interests and influences, and the many and varied ways he has contributed to critical realism and critical realism has influenced his work. In Part 2 he discusses his later work, the predicament of humanity and the role of futures studies.

Key words: Heikki Patomäki; critical realism; financialisation; world politics; World Social Forum.

Heikki Patomäki is Professor of World Politics (Global Political Economy) at the University of Helsinki.[2] Professor Patomäki has been an advocate of and prominent contributor to critical realism for over 30 years and is probably best known to readers of this journal for his various works on critical realism's relevance for international relations (IR) theory, global political economy and future studies. However, his academic influence is far wider than this suggests and outside the confines of the *Journal of Critical Realism*, he is also perhaps better known as a public intellectual. Since the late 1980s he has combined work as an activist on numerous issues with prolific publication in Finnish and English. In 1993 he was a founding member of Radical Democracy, which became the Network Institute for Global Democratisation (NIGD) in 1997.[3] The NIGD was one of the founding organizations of the International Council of the World Social Forum – an initiative to forge links and foster global solidarity between civil society groups around the world, which stands in counterpoint to the World Economic Forum.[4] Since 1998, he has also been a prominent figure in the ATTAC movement, formed to develop and propagate policy to control and transform the power of finance (beginning with the implementation of the 'Tobin Tax').[5] He is a member of DiEM25, the trans-European movement/party dedicated to democratizing European governance as an alternative to dissolution of the European Union.[6] His work over the years has led to his current interest in the development of a world political party in order to transform and democratize institutions of global governance. The need for humanity to transcend nationalism and country-based conflict through cultural and civilizational learning is also reflected in his research and writing interests. He stood as a candidate for the European Parliament in 2014 and the Finnish Parliament in 2011 and 2015. He is a frequent guest on TV and radio, writes regularly for and is interviewed in print and digital media, both domestically and internationally, and maintains his own blog site.

Besides work in Finnish (most notably Patomäki 2005a, 2007e, 2012c), Professor Patomäki is the author of seven single-authored books in English (Patomäki 2001a, 2002a, 2008a, 2013a, 2018a, 2022, 2023) and a number of joint and edited texts (e.g. Minkkinen and Patomäki 1997; Patomäki and James 2007; Patomäki and Teivainen 2004a; Morgan and Patomäki 2018; Forsberg and Patomäki 2022). These cover subjects as diverse as the methodology of social sciences, university politics, IR theory, the Tobin Tax, crisis in the Eurozone, Brexit,

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https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/en/persons/heikki-patomäki
https://Patomäki.fi/en/ and https://blogs.helsinki.fi/Patomäki/

[3] Visit: http://nigdwp.kaapeli.fi

[4] Visit: https://wsf2021.net

[5] The acronym ATTAC stands for The Association pour la Taxation des Transactions financières et pour l'Action Citoyenne. Visit: https://www.attac.org/en/overview

[6] Visit: https://diem25.org/about-us/

war in Ukraine, global political economy trends and global security, and governance and the future of humanity. In dealing with this wide range of subjects his work is typically posed in terms of progressive alternatives to identified problems. Professor Patomäki has published, in some cases multiple times, in a wide range of journals including, for example, *Globalizations* (Patomäki 2005b, 2006b, 2014a, 2019e), *Alternatives* (Patomäki 1999), *Journal of Peace Research* (1994c, 2001b), *Cooperation and Conflict* (2000b, 2012b) *Millennium* (1992a, 2007a), *International Relations* (2015a), *International Studies Quarterly* (Patomäki and Wight 2000), *Review of International Political Economy* (Patomäki 2009b), *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* (1991a, 2020a), and *Theory, Culture & Society* (2000a, 2002b; Patomäki and Teivainen 2004b; Held and Patomäki 2006), as well as a series of articles and essays in *Journal of Critical Realism* (Patomäki 2003c, 2006a, 2010a, 2010b; 2017c; Jones 2002; Hostettler 2010).[7] In addition, he has written numerous chapters and entries for edited texts, handbooks, encyclopaedias and academic dictionaries – including *Dictionary of Critical Realism* (Patomäki 2007b, 2007c, 2007d).[8]

At the time Patomäki began his university studies in 1983 the Finnish system was unusual insofar as it had no standard 'bachelor' undergraduate programme, but rather a series of examined units followed by a final extensive dissertation, for which was awarded a MA degree. Patomäki initially studied mathematics and physics before switching to economics at University of Turku in 1984. He then subsequently reoriented his interests towards philosophy, politics and IR. The Finnish system required two MA dissertations in order to be eligible for PhD study, and Patomäki was awarded a MA in Political Science 1988 and Economics 1989. He began his PhD studies in early 1989 and spent 1989-1990 as a training fellow at the University of Kent.[9] He was awarded a PhD, again from Turku, for a thesis titled 'Critical Realism and World Politics' in 1993. Patomäki's professional academic career began as a full-time member of teaching staff prior to completion of his PhD, but his first significant appointment was as a Senior Researcher at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs 1994-1997 (an equivalent of Chatham House in the UK). In 1998, he moved to the UK and was appointed Reader in International Relations at Nottingham Trent University, transitioning to Professor of World Politics and Economy in 2001. From 2003 he has been Professor of World Politics, University of Helsinki.

Over the years Professor Patomäki has also spent periods at other universities. Between 2007 and 2010 he was Innovation Professor of Globalisation and Global Institutions at RMIT University, Melbourne, which overlapped with a period as Visiting Professor at University of Wales, Aberystwyth, UK, 2009-2011. He was Visiting Professor at Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan, 2012. Professor Patomäki has been a member of the Finnish Academy of Sciences and Letters since 2018, and after a stint as visiting fellow at Clare Hall Cambridge in 2019 is now a lifetime member of the college. He is a docent (a participatory honorary affiliation) at University of Turku and University of Lapland, a member of the advisory board of several well-known journals and academic book series and consultant to numerous government and civil society organizations. He is a founding member of the Helsinki Centre for Global Political Economy, vice-chair of the Euro-Memo network (2021-2022), and an Associate Fellow of the Tellus Institute (in a capacity related to his initiative to develop the idea of a world political party).[10] Professor Patomäki's work has been translated into several languages including Arabic, Greek, and Spanish.

[7] For sense of his range see also, Patomäki (1996, 2003a, 2009a, 2011a, 2017a, 2019b); Patomäki and Pursiainen(1999); Patomäki and Wight (2000); Patomäki and Teivainen (2002, 2004b); Patomäki and Held (2006); Patomäki and Steger (2010); Patomäki and Kotilainen (2022); Gills et al. (2019); Morgan and Patomäki (2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2021).

[8] See also, Patomäki (1992b, 1994d, 1995, 1997, 2000c, 2002c, 2003b, 2010c, 2011b, 2012a, 2013b, 2014b, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b, 2017b, 2018b, 2019a, 2019c, 2019d, 2020b, 2021); Patomäki and Morgan (2007);

[9] The final award of degrees followed later than completion.

[10] Visit: https://www2.helsinki.fi/en/networks/global-political-economy
and: https://www.tellus.org/about/people and https://greattransition.org/publication/world-political-party

The following interview with Professor Heikki Patomäki was conducted by Professor Jamie Morgan for *Journal of Critical Realism*.[11]

Jamie Morgan (JM): Perhaps we might start with how you became interested in critical realism – given this was the subject of your PhD, which followed time at University of Kent at the beginning of the 1990s. You published an early article in *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* (Patomäki 1991a) before completing your PhD in 1993. This makes you part of the early 'generation' of critical realists (though perhaps not the earliest). All this is a long time before the formation of the International Association for Critical Realism (IACR) in 1997…

Heikki Patomäki (HP): That's right my interest in critical realism began a long time before IACR was formed. Of course, when I first started studying at university there was very little reference to (what was to become) critical realism in the subject areas I was studying. There were, however, interesting people to read. Georg Henrik von Wright was working in Finland – von Wright was a world-famous analytic philosopher who had started to write more political/social or cultural essays on real world problems that were quite influential, and there were also works by Finnish scientific realists, such as Ilkka Niiniluoto (1983); Niiniluoto later wrote *Critical Scientific Realism* (Niiniluoto 1999).

As your introduction suggests I was studying economics and although I had a background in mathematics, which made 'mainstream' or what many people call 'neoclassical' economics quite easy, like many studying economics at university I was frustrated by its formalistic optimisation approach that seemed to have very little to do with the real world. Most of what we studied began with assumptions that put aside or scarcely mentioned the real world – especially the global problems I thought it would be about and which I was keen to learn more about. This predisposed me to be interested in realist-type ideas and issues.

JM: Tony Lawson, Andrew Sayer and Dave Elder-Vass said similar things about economics in their interviews.

HP: I don't want to be reductive at this point and give the impression I was *only* studying economics and then switched. My interests were always wider. The university system allowed for minor subjects or 'electives' and from the beginning, I took the opportunity to explore different subjects. It is true to say that my interest in alternatives was in part a reaction against what we were being expected to learn about mainstream economics. But I also had an independent curiosity to know about other subjects. For both reasons I started to read and study more about philosophy, social theory and political economy – though I already had a longstanding interest in philosophy.

JM: What were you reading?

HP: I was spending a lot of time in different libraries. I loved libraries. Remember, this was before the internet, libraries were a different resource and experience than they are today… They were more of a material place of space and discovery where you could wander and explore the shelves.

JM: Obviously you can still do that – though I take your point that online services have changed the way many interact with libraries. In any case, what kinds of things were you reading?

HP: I, for example, read all the books of John Kenneth Galbraith and started to get acquainted with classics from Marx to Schumpeter.

[11] See also in this series Archer and Morgan (2020); Rescher and Morgan (2020); Porpora and Morgan (2020); Norrie and Morgan (2021); Lawson and Morgan (2021a, 2021b); Jessop and Morgan (2022); Elder-Vass and Morgan (2022); Sayer and Morgan (2022); Alderson and Morgan (2022); Groff and Morgan (2022); Little and Morgan (2022).

JM: And philosophy?

HP: I was inclined to read from a realist perspective, and this informed how I read a variety of philosophical texts. I was involved in debates on positivism and realism, especially philosophy of science, with friends studying analytical philosophy; so I was reading that stuff (e.g. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and the contrast with his later *Philosophical Investigations*; Popper's work – the limits of falsification, the relevance of Kuhn's work, Lakatos and so on). Meanwhile I was also discussing ideas with friends studying world literature who were enthusiastic about Jacques Derrida and the post-structuralists. This led to a lot of conversation, some of it heated, about the nature of language and what is real – very common issues for critical realists.

Going back to your original question, when trying to think about what's wrong with neoclassical economics, I started to synthesise ideas drawn from Frankfurt School critical theory and the scientific realism of Mario Bunge, Rom Harré, and others.

JM: So you were already reading Rom Harré?

HP: I had a philosophy professor, Juhani Pietarinen, who gave a course entirely on Harré's *Social Being* (Harré 1979). I also read independently Anthony Giddens's *Central Problems in Social Theory* around this time and learnt a lot from it (Giddens 1979).

JM: Giddens's work at the time was quite a common entry point into social theory – though you never read it in quite the same way once you've read Margaret Archer. In any case, given the nature of the Finnish education system, I take it all of this was feeding into your Masters dissertations?

HP: Indeed, in IR I focussed on international environmental cooperation and the argument was really a realist and critical theoretical critique of rational choice theory in general and the Prisoner's Dilemma model in particular.[12] This direction of travel was clearly also visible in my MA dissertation in economics where I relied on ideas drawn from Galbraith, Schumpeter, Mira Wilkinson, the Reading School and social theory in explaining the development of technology and the multi-nationalization of production – the essence of the argument was published in the Finnish Journal of Economics (Patomäki 1989).

JM: The Reading School?

HP: The Reading School was a neo-institutionalist school in economics and political economy focussed precisely on multinational corporations (e.g. Buckley and Casson 1985). I found its reliance on transaction cost analysis problematic and I struggled to develop a better conceptual basis for explanations, but what it provided was at least some sort of systematic framework for analysing the question of why corporations become multinational, grow and become dominant.

JM: How was your dissertation received?

HP: The economist who examined it praised how the argument was constructed, but complained that the work contained a lot of methodological criticism of mainstream economics.

JM: But it was the criticisms that meant more to you…

[12] Note from Heikki: the prisoner's dilemma refers to a game-theoretical model in which individual utility maximisation appears to be self-defeating, or at least contradictory to some kind of social or collective rationality. Various 'market failures' and systems of subordination have been analysed in terms of this model, but it has had numerous other applications; the 'tragedy of global commons', as well as inter-state insecurity, arms races and crisis bargaining etc.

HP: That's right, but for the purposes of this conversation, it is probably more important to point out that it was a few months later that someone working as a research assistant (a non-military serviceman, now a professor in history) recommended Bhaskar's *The Possibility of Naturalism.*

JM: That was when?

HP: In winter 1988-89. Roy's book resonated and very soon I got the idea of systematically comparing Anthony Giddens's theory of structuration and Bhaskar's TMSA and making an argument of my own.

JM: And this was your paper in *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* (JTSB)? And that was well before completing your PhD…

HP: Exactly, but the paper almost wasn't published. Again, this was before the internet and the kinds of systems we have now which make it easy to upload your work to a common system for processing. It was common to print something out and put it in the post. So I just sent the paper to JTSB by ordinary mail.

At that time I was about to move to Canterbury to attend the University of Kent. When I started my PhD studies and became an assistant at the University of Turku in early 1989 or so, it was clear that I needed to study abroad for a while and get involved in wider discussions. I did not want to go to the US, so the UK was an obvious choice. I got offers from three universities and I chose Kent over Oxford and Sussex because they provided me the status of Training Fellow (a staff member rather than just a student) and because Professor John Groom at Kent was really helpful and expressed his willingness to assist in making contacts with interesting and useful academics at other universities in the UK. In any case, I informed JTSB I was going to Canterbury but never heard back from them. At some point after my return to Turku in autumn 1990, I sent, just in case, a fax asking about the fate of the paper. Charles Smith who was editor then responded (again by fax) that they had not heard back from me (they sent something to Canterbury but it never arrived in my pigeon hole) and they were about to give up and erase it from their publication schedule.

JM: So, lucky then? What was the argument in your paper?

HP: I defended the relational view of social reality (Bhaskar's TMSA against Giddens's structuration), but questioned Bhaskar use of naturalist metaphors and analogies, especially his analogy between magnetic field and social structure.

JM: You might want to clarify here, were you arguing that Bhaskar's derivation technique was problematic or the use of a particular metaphor was contestable?

HP: The latter, but I think the point is important. As I put it in the paper:

> the problem with magnetic field analogy – and this may have misled Bhaskar in some crucial points – is that it is quite reasonable to say that a magnetic field sometimes produces or brings about changes (alone), whereas as social structures are never able to do so (alone), because social structures do not have action-independent existence. (Patomäki 1991a: 224)

JM: So you were concerned about using metaphor that may imply (inadvertently in Bhaskar's case surely) a version of structure that is not continually dependent on action of agents for effects?

HP: Well, basically yes, though the term 'continually' may also be slightly misleading because structures are layered and some may be activated only occasionally or revived in rare and specific circumstances.

JM: Though clearly you both agree that society is different insofar as structure depends on, in some sense, human activity in the way a magnetic field does not…

HP: Yes, my point was only to say that Bhaskar was a bit ambiguous about the ontological status of structures and that the way he used the analogy may have tilted the balance of his reasoning in some contexts too much on the structuralist side. Nuance matters.

JM: We can come back to this later when discussing your views on social process – but it is probably worth noting here that you are interested in George Lakoff's and Mark Johnson's work on language and metaphor.

HP: This interest in metaphor came from at least two directions. First Harré's concept of an iconic model (Harre 1970).

JM: Which is?

HP: Harré was not the only one to develop the notion, but for Harré (1970: 33-62), an iconic model is a descriptive picture of a possible mechanism, which can explain the thing or outcome to be explained, providing an image to make sense of reality. Iconic models are based on idealisations and abstractions, and they always involve metaphors, metonyms and analogies ('a statement-picture complex'). An iconic model proposes a hypothetical mechanism and implies claims about its relationship with reality.

JM: A brief illustration might help clarify here…

HP: Iconic models are like metaphors: we try to understand something new or poorly understood in terms of something that is familiar to us. For that we envision a picture of how what is poorly understood might be connected to something we understand much better. Harré (1970) for instance discusses at some length the Bohr-Rutherford model of the atom. Rutherford's model is sometimes called the planetary model of the atom (one of its sources is the solar system) but Bohr went beyond that, drawing on both the mechanical and electromagnetic attributes of matter and then adding something else, the 'motion' of electrons from orbit to orbit with loss or gain of energy – an instantaneous transition. Bohr's model was thus multiply connected to its sources. Another good example is Darwin's theory of evolution, which used as its sources the known process of domestic selection and the combative metaphor of the struggle for existence drawn from political economy (Malthus's theory of population). In addition to Harré's work, a well-known methodological example from social sciences is Max Weber's earlier 'ideal types'.

Although iconic models are interpretative and based on implicit and explicit conventions of language, these conventions are also projective: the model describes and posits existential hypotheses about real structures, mechanisms and relations. The concept of iconic model was adopted but not developed by early Bhaskar, who wrote for instance that 'pictures, diagrams and iconic models play […] an indispensable role in scientific thought' (Bhaskar 1975: 239). Later critical realists have tended to associate the concept of 'a model' entirely with sentential or mathematical models (which brings us back to the archetype of mainstream economics), which I think is problematic. The two should be distinguished because the conflation tends to undermine reflexivity about the metaphors and analogies and abstractions and idealisations on which realists too necessarily rely in their explanation of things and outcomes.

JM: The idea that mental models are pervasive even if some versions of modelling are defective, perhaps… (this is a common source of confusion and debate insofar as the term model is used quite loosely). And second?

HP: As you suggest, the approach of Lakoff and Johnson (1980; 1999). This has provided additional resources for many purposes, including analysis of political conflicts and wars (e.g. on the Gulf War, Patomäki 1990, 1991b)

Going back to the analogy between a magnetic field and social structure, I should mention that although I still think the point of the quotation from my early JTSB paper is correct, I have changed my mind somewhat concerning the relevance of the concept of the field, at least at a more generic and abstract level (Patomäki 2022, particularly chp 2). Anyhow, what was perhaps more important from that paper, is that I developed the notion of causal complex, which has provided a basis for many of my studies and arguments.

JM: Causes in combination is a common conceptualisation among realists. Is your conceptualisation uncommon?

HP: Perhaps. Most critical realists have stuck to the notion of mechanism, whereas I argue that 'complex' is a generally applicable concept and the concept of mechanism applies only when there is something 'mechanistic' about the organisation of things (Harré had argued that mechanisms may or may not be 'mechanical', but I found that somewhat confusing). The concept of causal complex is built on J. L. Mackie's (1965) idea that causes can be analysed as INUS conditions. The INUS acronym comes from Insufficient but Non-Redundant part of an Unnecessary but Sufficient condition for the outcome.

JM: That's quite a mouthful and might need unpacking a little. Necessary typically means 'cannot happen *without* something' (*unless* x, then no y), but need not mean that something can happen solely based on that necessary condition (so it may be true that being a bank customer is necessary for a bank to lend to you, but alone does not guarantee a loan will be given). Sufficient implies 'enough for something to happen' (if x, then y will follow) but need not imply 'has to be the case for something to happen' (it is not the case that, if no x, then no y). One can have no x but still y, unless x is also necessary. As I understand it, Mackie's is an exploration of the complexity of possibility, turning some of this on its head and combining parts. As he put it, events entail 'a plurality of causes' (which come in combinations). For example, in the case of an accidental gas explosion destroying a house, a spark and concentration of flammable gas (a leak) in a confined space (doors and windows closed) produces an explosion, but a spark alone does not…

HP: Precisely, the plurality of causes in any given context is a key part of the idea of causal complex. If we run with this typical example, then the spark is an insufficient condition (alone it cannot induce an explosion, and other things could also induce an explosion), it is non-redundant in the example (no spark, no explosion), and the combined condition(s) of spark, concentrated gas, confined space and lack of ventilation are an unnecessary condition for an explosion (together they resulted in an explosion but other things together could also result in an explosion). But it is important to emphasise also that any and all of the conditions are INUS – no gas leak then no explosion, open a window and there is no explosion…

In *The Possibility of Naturalism* Bhaskar adopted this conceptualisation as in principle adequate for explanation in open systems, but criticised Mackie's empiricist (since Mackie remained committed to event regularity under some description) ontological commitments (Bhaskar 1979: 165). Agreeing with Roy, in the JTSB paper I reframed the idea in terms of real-world relational components that form a causal complex. Unlike for Mackie, these relations include internal relations. Complexes are intricately connected and they or their aspects or parts can form organised wholes. Apart from Roy's few remarks in *The Possibility of Naturalism*, I have not seen much discussion about this among critical realists. Years later, I provided a more systematic criticism of 'mechanism' (Patomäki 2010a), but we can come back to that…

JM: It might be worth at that point picking up the link to the distinction between 'internal relations' and 'external relations' as categorises of social relation, insofar as this affects whether we think of something as 'necessary' to what something is and thus to the scope of what might happen – the way current rules, options, interests and

motives may depend on a necessary relation and one's place in it (student or teacher, worker or owner etc.) but still be diverse (a standard distinction for realists).

OK, so we are around the time you were doing the research for your PhD. Having arrived in Kent and having started to become part of networks of researchers working on IR, did you at this time come into contact with any of the well-known realists in the UK – besides Roy, Andrew Collier, Margaret Archer, Tony Lawson, Bob Jessop, Andrew Sayer, and so on.

HP: No, not yet, not before the mid-1990s. The only generic and well-known social theorist I contacted while in Canterbury was Anthony Giddens, but I only received a letter from his secretary that he was too busy to see me. This didn't matter much to me at the time because there were so many exciting things going on in IR. The Berlin Wall came down (an event so momentous, John Groom, knowing I didn't have a TV, drove round to my home to deliver one, so I could watch history unfold). Apart from the end of the Cold War, there was also debate in IR, at times heated, concerning theory and metatheory. For example, Chris Brown from Kent was debating the issue of communitarism vs. cosmopolitanism with Mark Hoffman from the LSE, a debate that I then de- and re-constructed (Patomäki 1992a).[13]

While in Kent, I met well-known IR theorists from the LSE, Lancaster, and Bristol and received extremely useful feedback on my PhD work. At the British International Studies Association (BISA) Conference in 1989, which by coincidence happened to be in Canterbury, I encountered people with whom I have interacted and collaborated a lot over the years. These included Ole Wæver, who was developing his theory of securitisation at that time, and Stephen Gill, who had just published a book called *Global Political Economy* with the economist David Law (Gill and Law 1988).

JM: And Gill, not to be confused with the equally well-known Barry Gills, has been one of the most prominent names in international political economy (IPE) and global political economy (GPE) – something we will likely come back to.

HP: I sent Stephen many pages of comments on the book, which he later referred to many times when we met. As readers may know, Robert Cox's work in the early 1980s had begun a period of growing interest in what became known as the Neo-Gramscian School in IPE and Gill was part of that.

JM: We might be getting ahead of ourselves here. Given you had not yet started to meet many other critical realists, how did you go about writing a PhD on critical realism?

HP: The thesis was eventually titled 'Critical Realism and World Politics', but it did not start that way. It is also important to point out that the term 'critical realism' was only just coming into use at the start of the 1990s – Roy himself previously used other terms.[14]

The idea for my PhD was originally to develop some kind of generic and dialectical theory of cooperative or collective action in world politics. I quickly realised that a generic theory of world politics of the kind often created in IR theory (for example, Gilpin 1981) is not possible. Generic IR theories typically assume that the realm of international relations is repetitive and involves regularities, for instance states are always responding to a limited set of given kinds of situations in the same way. A closed-system theorisation – a term readers are likely familiar with.

[13] Note from Jamie: the concept of cosmopolitan world society has had various proponents, notably David Held. Held suggests eight principles underpin the theory (Held 2011: 11-15). The theory's main focus is rights of the individual - hence a difference of emphasis to communitarianism. See later mention of Held.

[14] Note from Jamie: in particular, 'transcendental realism' and 'critical naturalism', see Bhaskar and Hartwig (2010: 93) and Chapter 9 'What is critical realism' in Bhaskar (1989).

JM: So, the kind of 'political realist' theory tradition (a different idea of realism) in IR? Say, Kenneth Waltz (1979). Political realism typically provides a set of universal principles and structured actions in which states engage or interact in a hierarchical 'balance of power' system – a theorisation overwhelmingly focused on event-regularities – interaction A, outcome B, based on conditions Y (e.g. 'a Cold War bipolar world system is stable')?

HP: Basically yes, but this does not concern only 'political realism'. In many theories that were prevalent in the 1980s (and still may be prevalent) this repetitiveness is articulated in terms of rational choice theory and closed systems. That was clearly the case with Waltz, whom you mention, but was also a more general problem in the field. For example, the sociological theory of neo-functionalist cooperation, while nuanced, included claims about regular feedback and 'spill-over' effects that follow from cooperation and common institutions – the kind European integration has supposedly generated.

JM: For context and clarity for readers unfamiliar with IR theory and given we are likely to be discussing related issues, we should probably mention here that IR theory typically decomposes into various schools – notably the often dominant political realist position (international relations is a situation of 'anarchy' or an absence of a world state able to impose and regulate action, leading to a security dilemma at a global level for states that, in turn, leads to a set of rules of engagement between states that they conform to, even if this is despite themselves) and historic and institutional alternatives (suggesting the 'rules of the game' are not a given but made via historical contingencies and are thus more malleable).

HP: Well there is a lot more to it than just that though what you say is a nice summary. In IR, liberalism is often represented as 'idealism' that advocates historical and institutional alternatives such as the League of Nations or the United Nations system. Oftentimes this liberalism has been associated with free trade, but it can also be based on the idea of 'market failures' or the need for proper Keynesian management of the economy. US-based IR liberalism became increasingly positivist or empiricist and technical from the 1950s to 1980s, most typically in terms of rational choice theory. Social constructivism (notably, Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986) emerged as an alternative showing that international organisations and formal institutions on a global scale (not just domestically) are constructed through processes that involve dialogue. The legitimacy of regimes may be questioned and formal organisations may be changed by social actors 'making history'. This is the theme that was subsequently picked up by Alexander Wendt, whose name is sure to come up as we progress.

In my PhD, instead of closed-system theorisation, I concluded that it is better to move toward explicating an emancipatory, change-oriented and processual methodology involving ontology and epistemology. I had already published related work by this time that I draw on in the PhD.[15] To begin with though, my PhD did not have its final title – it went through several versions. It was my second 'pre-examiner' Hayward Alker[16], then Professor of IR at MIT, who proposed the title in 1992.

JM: A pre-examiner?

HP: In Finland the thesis examination process consists of two stages. In the first stage, 'pre-examiners' read and evaluate the thesis (they could also recommend changes) and decide whether it proceeds to a second final stage which is a public defence. Alker suggested the title because it better reflects the content and main thrust of the thesis. It was more about reconstituting a discipline on the basis of my version of critical realist ontology and

[15] Note from Heikki: these included a paper titled 'Scientific Realism, Human Emancipations and Non-Violent Political Action', which I first presented at a peace research conference. The paper was subsequently published in an Indian journal *Gandhi Marg* (Patomäki 1992c). It discusses Bhaskar's scheme of explanatory emancipation and its normative and political underpinnings. I used Habermas to explicate hidden normative presuppositions in Bhaskar's account, and I elaborated emancipatory explanation in pacific-ist terms. A revised version of this became chapter 6 of *After International Relations* (Patomäki 2002a).

[16] Note from Heikki: I should mention that Alker's unique and inspiring papers played a major role in my early intellectual development (see Patomäki 1997; 2008b). I first met him in 1992, after pre-examination.

epistemology, with a number of ideas drawn from other traditions. Some themes remained unchanged, in particular the notion of global security community based on the possibility of peaceful change, which I developed on the basis of critical realist ontology, but combined with Roberto Unger's social theory, which he refers to as being 'in the service of radical democracy', and from which I took the key idea of 'negative capability' (I talk about the self-transformative capacity of contexts). All of this was formative for my later work and activity on global democracy.

JM: Was it published?

HP: No. But while my thesis was not published, many of the ideas and some of the chapters provided the basis for the book *After International Relations. Critical Realism and the (Re)Construction of World Politics* (Patomäki 2002a).

JM: Yes, and that book was reviewed in JCR by Branwen Gruffydd Jones, and the journal also published your reply (Jones 2002; Patomäki 2003c). But we are getting ahead of ourselves again. Where and when did you first meet other recognized critical realists?

HP: Well, an answer to this question needs a bit of context. I continued to read philosophy, social theory and other fields quite widely – and this was reflected in what I was writing. For instance, the title of my first monograph played with Wittgenstein's famous phrase 'the limits of my language mean the limits of my world', where 'limits' was taken to mean also 'borders' or 'borderlines' (Patomäki 1992d).[17] I still regret that I never had the time to rewrite that small book in English or find the funds to have it translated.

Anyway, I was already interested in dialectics, critical argumentation theory, processual thinking etc. so when Bhaskar's *Dialectic* was published in 1993, I ordered it immediately through a local bookshop in Turku (it was a bit complicated in those days, the book had to go through customs etc.). The book fascinated me (and I was probably also a bit flattered when I saw that I was cited in the book).[18] I must have been among the first (if not the first) in the world to review *Dialectic* – and I did that in what could be called the Finnish version of the *New York Times*, namely *Helsingin Sanomat*.

Years later, I learnt that my review had instigated, at least in part, a small critical realist following in Finland. By that time, I had been able to introduce a bit of critical realism to the curriculum of political science in Turku, most notably by making Andrew Sayer's *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach* an obligatory reading – a book that still remains useful.

JM: So – as Alan Norrie also said in his interview – developments in critical realism gave you added impetus to make the effort to attend related conferences as the 1990s continued?

HP: As your introduction makes clear I have a longstanding interest in activism and emancipatory projects, and it was during this time that the theme of global democracy started to emerge in my theoretical writings and practical-political activities. This was very much in the spirit of critical realism and in Roy's dialectical spirit of 'a transformed transformative praxis for the retotalization of the human race' (Bhaskar 1993: 12), though like others I have my reservations about the book. Still, I fully share Roy's idea of remedying the failings of emancipatory projects in an era of global counter-revolution and in a 'world dominated by the logic of commodification in the global village of late/postmodernity and consumer capitalism' (Bhaskar 1993: 98).

So all of this was background in deciding to go to a conference at the University of East London in 1995…

[17] Note from Jamie: the opening statement 5.6 of a lengthy set of sub-statements; one of Wittgenstein's pithier statements from *Tractatus*.
[18] Note from Jamie: see note 94 from Chapter 2, Bhaskar (1993).

JM: Convened by which organization to do what?

HP: I can't remember that well (it is more than twenty five years ago), but it was a conference focussed on critical realism before the formation of IACR. At that conference, I met Roy for the first time.

JM: At the risk of digression, it might have been one of, if not the last, Realism in the Human Sciences Conference. These were a precursor to IACR conferences. Bhaskar briefly discusses these conferences in his extended interview with Mervyn Hartwig, the *Formation of Critical Realism* (Bhaskar and Hartwig 2010: 120 and 220). Since many of the attendees were contributors to the journal *Radical Philosophy* in the 1980s and early 1990s, several of them were reported in its pages (sometimes also using the term Standing Conference on Realism). By going back through the News section of old copies of the journal I found reference to several, beginning in 1985.[19] The 1991 conference is referred to as the seventh and the last I could find was a report from Howard Feather for the 1992 Conference held at Oxford University, at which Hilary Wainwright, Kate Soper, Peter Manicas and Alex Callinicos are mentioned, and which seemingly was a venue where Bhaskar discussed *Dialectic* (Feather 1993). Does any of this jog your memory?

HP: Not really. Alan Norrie also refers to attending a conference in the mid-1990s at University of East London and it was probably that one (Norrie and Morgan 2021: 109). I've checked with a few people and it seems Professor Bill Bowring, now at Birkbeck College, University of London organised a realist conference around then. I think it was 1995. In any case, Roy asked me to join him for the conference dinner and I remember we discussed the idea of 'levels of explanation' in IR.

JM: The idea, most commonly associated with Kenneth Waltz (and J D Singer following Waltz) that there are units of analysis or distinctive levels at which analysis might take place, individual, state and international system, leading to debate over the relative significance of each and so on?

HP: Yes, and each level was typically conceptualised as consisting of separable and empiricist-conceived 'factors'. Roy was in general quite positive about the idea of levels (within a basic realist conception), while the critique I was working on at that time was concerned with these specific IR levels. My critique of them was based on the spatiality of causal complexes – 'How to Tell Better Stories about World Politics' (Patomäki 1996a).

Anyway, I think that at the conference I met several critical realists, some of whom I came to know to varying degrees over the years, for instance Tony Lawson and Andrew Sayer. I also met Colin Wight there.

JM: Mention of Colin is timely. You, of course, are not the only person associated with the development in or application of scientific realism in general and critical realism in particular to international relations (including

[19] Note from Jamie: Andrew Collier provides a brief report on the 1985 Realism in the Human Sciences Conference held in December at Sussex University and refers to it as an opportunity to draw together people (mainly socialists) from different disciplines working on the 'new realism' and names Roy Bhaskar, Ted Benton, Russell Keat and John Urry (Collier 1986). Ted Benton reports on the next conference held at Strathclyde University in September 1986, which mentions a workshop by Alison Allister, as well as talks by Bhaskar on dialectics, and Andrew Collier on human emancipation (Benton 1987). The following year's conference – 1987 – was held at University of Sussex and according to the report by Joe McCarney was organised by Roy Bhaskar, Sue Clegg and William Outhwaite, and included plenaries by Andrew Sayer and Sylvia Walby (McCarney 1988). According to a report by William Outhwaite, the 1989 conference was held in September at Manchester Polytechnic and included a plenary from Bob Jessop, as well as presentations by Derek Layder, Andrew Collier, Alex Callinicos and John Shotter (Outhwaite 1990). The next I could find was the 1991 (apparently seventh) annual conference, held at University of Sussex, which, according to the *Radical Philosophy* notification, was organised by Andrew Sayer (with typical modesty he did not mention this in his own interview; John O'Neill refers later to the conference in a later paper published in *Radical Philosophy*).
Visit: https://www.radicalphilosophyarchive.com/issue-files/rp57_news.pdf

international studies, international political economy or global political economy). Besides yourself. Colin, Jonathan Joseph, and Alexander Wendt come immediately to mind as among the earliest…

HP: Yes, of course, I cannot claim originality in that regard and we have already mentioned Wendt. Wendt's paper 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory' was the first to draw explicitly on Bhaskar's early works, especially *The Possibility of Naturalism* – I cited Wendt's paper in passing in my 1991 JTSB article (Wendt 1987; Patomäki 1991a: 243-4). Similar themes had appeared already in Cox's (1981) 'Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory' (drawing on Max Horkheimer) and Richard Ashley's (1984) 'The Poverty of Neorealism' (drawing on Bourdieu, Giddens and E.P. Thompson), though neither cited Bhaskar or any other scholar later associated with critical realism.

As our earlier brief discussion of different approaches in IR indicates, IR has its theories and debates and these intersect with issues common to social science and social theory (which of course was a major strand in my interest in critical realism, philosophy and social theory; agent-structure problems, the nature of social science, the scope and nature of change and so on). In the 1980s and 1990s Wendt was a big part of the growing contestation of political realism (structural or neo-realism). For example, his 'Anarchy is What States Make of It' (Wendt 1992). In the early 1990s, Wendt turned to social constructivism and made that his trademark. Particularly after his response to Martin Hollis and Steve Smith's 'Beware of Gurus' (Hollis and Smith 1991).

Hollis (1938-1998) was a well-known philosopher (and former member of the foreign office) with an interest in economics and rational choice theory who teamed up with Steve Smith to write *Explaining and Understanding International Relations Theory* in 1990, a highly influential book that took a broad look at the different ways IR had been theorised. 'Beware of Gurus' is a response to Wendt's 1987 article and his review of *Explaining and Understanding* and argues that agent-structure solutions drawing on Jon Elster, Giddens and/or Bhaskar have not resolved the issue. Wendt subsequently avoided citing Bhaskar or critical realists. Steve went on to be head of Department at University of Wales, Aberystwyth, during the period of its massive expansion in the mid-to-late 1990s (and while you were there doing a PhD). Smith has gone on to be a high profile Vice Chancellor, President of Universities UK and Chair of UCAS.

JM: While Wendt became one of the most cited scholars in IR…[20]

HP: That's right. This was the period after the Cold War when there was a great deal of interest in Francis Fukuyama's 'End of history' thesis and the triumph(alism) of Western 'market economy' and democracy – neoliberalism, a new phase in globalization etc. were recognisably developing. Wendt crafted a small series of carefully positioned papers published in the top US IR journals, such as the 'Anarchy' paper mentioned previously (and also Wendt 1995) and these culminated in his book *Social Theory of International Politics* (Wendt 1999).

Wendt contributed to the replacement of Marxism with 'constructivism' as the third pole of IR (to add to the standard US mainstream focus on 'liberalism' and 'realism'). It does not seem to have mattered that – unlike Marxism – 'constructivism' is not a substantive theory of anything as such, but rather a metatheory or social ontology. To make his position acceptable to the mainstream IR audience in the US, Wendt combined a realist-constructivist ontology with what he called 'positivist epistemology'. As he himself wrote, 'I hope to find a 'via media' through the Third Debate by reconciling what many take to be incompatible ontological and epistemological positions' (Wendt 1999: 40). Others followed the same path (e.g. Adler 1997), consolidating a new order of things.

JM: In any case, Wendt was part of a growing interest in the 1990s in what philosophy and social theory might contribute to IR (IPE, GPE etc.) and some interest in critical realism was and continues to be part of that. I've never met Wendt (though we have corresponded). Colin Wight and Jonathan Joseph, however, are likely more

[20] Note from Jamie: for a sympathetic take on Wendt (especially his early work) responding to Kratochwil see Morgan (2002).

familiar names to readers of this journal, since they have been far more actively involved with CR. And, of course, there is also Milja Kurki…

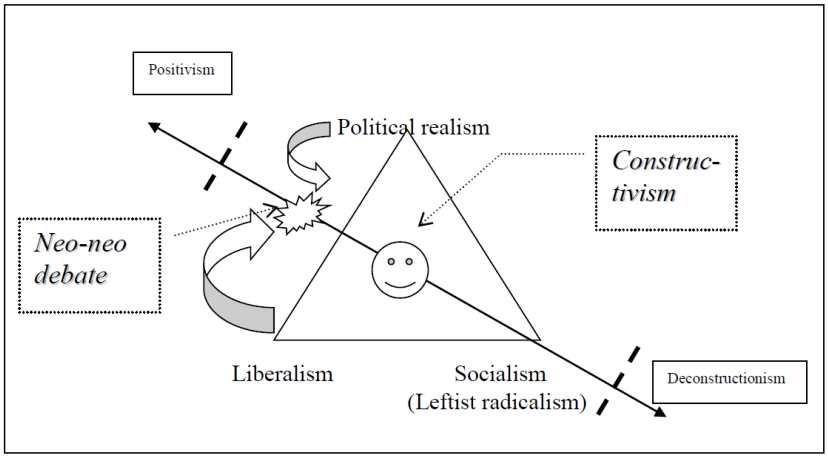
HP: As I said, I first met Colin at that University of East London conference in 1995. We subsequently had many conversations in Aberystwyth in 1996-1997. We had a common friend there, Tuomas Forsberg. Around this time Colin published his first scholarly article drawing on Bhaskar (Wight 1996). This focused on the apparent problem of Kuhnian incommensurability. It was subtitled, 'What's the frequency Kenneth?', a reference to both Kenneth Waltz and the 1994 R.E.M. indie hit song with the same title. The title also played with the fact that you can only hear anything through the radio if you are on the same frequency as the sender of the message (another play on commensurability…). Colin has often chosen attractive and funny titles for his papers.

In any case, I remember that almost immediately after I moved to the UK and took the job at Nottingham Trent in early 1998, he came to visit and we started to plan an article advocating critical realism as a way of overcoming the positivism vs. post-positivism debate and the 'via media' ('the middle road') of constructivism.

JM: This became 'After Post-Positivism? The Promises of Critical Realism' (Patomäki and Wight 2000). This has been a standard reference in the field for over 20 years, with over 800 citations and counting. As I recall, the paper includes a playful schematic of IR debates – IR theorists do love a diagram (though probably not quite as much as economists).

HP: That's right, in the case of IR, not least in categorising 'paradigms' or approaches. We developed the schematic on the basis of Wæver's (1996: 165-169) attempt to picture various overlapping debates in IR – I mentioned Ole earlier. The happy face of 'constructivism' in the middle is indicative of the spirit in which we wrote this paper. It makes an indirect and ironic reference to Hegel's category of Unhappy Consciousness.[21] The happy face represents a 'constructivist' who is aware of contradictions but happily just lets them be.

Figure 1: IR debates in the 1980's and 1990's



A few years later, Colin's PhD-thesis was turned into *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology* (Wight 2006). This has become another standard reference, especially in IR. Colin has made his

[21] Note from Heikki: Hegel's basic idea is to analyse the logic of the development of consciousness through stages, in which each stage involves theory/practice and other contradictions and also social conflicts, though Hegel has a lot more to say about this.

entire academic career in metatheory grounding all his arguments on critical realism, albeit at different times in different ways (see e.g. Wight 2007; 2017). For many people in IR, he personifies what critical realism is.

JM: It was Colin who gave me my first realist book while at Aberystwyth (a copy of Tony Lawson's *Economics and Reality*).[22] And Colin is probably familiar to readers as a sometime member of Margaret Archer's Centre for Social Ontology and chapter contributor to her edited book series. Colin went on to be chief editor of *European Journal of International Relations* (2008-2013) and moved to University of Sydney in the 2000s and is now professor emeritus. Are you as familiar with Jonathan Joseph's work? Jonathan was more focused on currents in Marxism, social theory and critical realism – the work of those influenced by Gramsci and also 'open Marxism'. As Bob Jessop noted in his interview, the two had various exchanges in regard of his work on 'hegemony' (Joseph 1998, 2003).

HP: Yes, of course, I do know Jonathan, we have met several times at various conferences and in other contexts. Among other things (e.g. Dean et al. 2006), Jonathan co-edited a book with Colin entitled *Scientific Realism and International Relations* (Joseph and Wight 2010), which included a chapter by me on the methodology of studying global futures and revising probabilities for different scenarios (Patomäki 2010c). More recently, Jonathan has undertaken interesting work on Foucauldian issues such as resilience and governmentality, though I think he still considers himself broadly critical realist.

JM: And Milja Kurki?

HP: Milja comes from Finland, but has resided in the UK and latterly in Aberystwyth for most of her adult life. Milja is a bit younger and her career has been somewhat meteoric. She was appointed professor quite early and is now a senior professor. I met her first at the IACR conference in Amsterdam in 2003, where she presented a paper on combining the Aristotelian categories of causation (material, formal etc.) with a critical realist account of causation in society. At that time she was still a PhD-student. Her work resonated with my work on causal complexes, on which she was also drawing, but the point about using Aristotelian categories was original to her, although Wendt's (2003) paper 'Why a World State is Inevitable' also discusses them.

In similar fashion to Colin, Milja's PhD-thesis was subsequently turned into a book in the Cambridge Studies in International Relations series (whose Board included Steve Smith and John Groom). The book was titled *Causation in International Relations: Reclaiming Causal Analysis* (Kurki 2008), which is another work that has become standard in the field. Among other things, Milja restricted formal and final causation to the hermeneutic world of meaningful social actions, whereas Wendt tried to use teleological explanation to understand the direction of world history.

JM: Milja's article on causation and critical realism in *Millennium* is similarly well known and she also reviewed Ruth Groff's work on causation for JCR (see Kurki 2007, 2009).

HP: I should mention that Milja's research interests have shifted away from critical realism since then. She is more interested in the contested nature of democracy promotion, relationality as an ethical category and cosmological imagination in the study and practice of international relations.

It is probably also relevant that, following Milja's and Alex's contributions inspired by Aristotelean categories, I started to think more about the role of formal and final causation at different levels of reality. I had already written something on the philosophy of history and the direction of the future of emancipation in my 1995 essay on Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (published in Finnish because it was related to the publication of the first Finnish translation of Hegel's 1821 *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*). But later, as my interests

[22] Note for Jamie: In my final year at Aberystwyth my main supervisor was ill, and having just completed his own thesis Colin was given the job of stand-in supervisor, an unenviable task which he bore with good grace. Heikki was eventually my external examiner.

geared more and more toward futures studies, the problem of teleology became pressing. I am sure we will come back to this.

JM: Reference to future studies and the trajectory of your work seems to signal an appropriate point to begin to focus more explicitly on the substantive content of your work over the years. Probably the best way to do that is to work sequentially through your books. No doubt there are some other persons worthy of note we have omitted and it might also be worth turning to other matters of context as we go – especially the revival of interest in critical political economy as IPE and GPE in international relations/studies departments following Susan Strange's seminal work – but anyway, let's start with *Democratising Globalisation. The Leverage of the Tobin Tax* (Patomäki 2001a).

HP: OK, that's my first properly published single-authored monograph in English, though as your introduction partly sets out, it was preceded by a series of books published in the 1990s both in Finnish and English, such as the 'limits of my world' book mentioned above; an edited collection on peaceful changes in world politics that included several well-known IR scholars such as Forsberg, Stefano Guzzini, Wæver and R. B. J. Walker (Patomäki 1995c); a book on 'morality of world politics' written with two Finnish philosophers and used as an entrance exam book in a couple of Finnish universities (Lagerspetz, Patomäki and Räikkä 1996); and books that originated in the projects that I led at the Finnish Institute (i) on EU-Russia relations (Patomäki 1996b) and (ii) on the politics of Economic and Monetary Union (Minkkinen and Patomäki 1997a, 1997b).

I am not sure when I first heard about the idea of the Tobin tax, but it was probably from Stephen Gill, who refers to it in his paper in the politics of Economic and Monetary Union book I just mentioned (Minkkinen and Patomäki 1997b). The Asian financial crisis 1997-98 started in summer 1997 and led to the famous December 1997 call in *Le Monde Diplomatique* to 'disarm markets' through closing down tax havens and establishing a global currency transaction tax. Transaction taxes on finance are in general intended to deter the adverse effects of 'hot money' and the kind of speculative attacks which result in destabilisation of economies (since inducing patterns of volatility is a main way hedge funds and similar entities create profits and a primary way to do this is to spark panic trading in a currency), but such taxes can also provide a means to create a revenue source from financial activity. The call to 'disarm markets' was also the beginning of the ATTAC movement (see Cassen 2003). By this time, I was increasingly involved in global civil society activities.

In May 1998, my wife Katarina (Sehm Patomäki) happened to buy *Le Monde* from the Nottingham railway station when we were on our way to the G8 shadow summit in Birmingham (this event and an OECD development meeting in Bamako, Mali play a central role in my 'Good Governance of the World Economy?' paper, Patomäki 1999). In that issue of *Le Monde*, there happened to be a small piece of news on the founding of ATTAC, mentioning in passing that an international ATTAC was to be established in Paris in December 1998. Through internet and e-mail, we found relevant contacts, who then invited us to the founding meeting – which we attended with our daughter Anna, who was at that time only a few months old. Following this, Katarina and I participated in (and Anna slept through) several meetings, and I participated in several others, of the Scientific Council of ATTAC France. The meetings included some well-known experts on the Tobin tax and various other scholars and public intellectuals working on issues of global political economy, including Bernard Cassen, Susan George and John Grahl.

The story of my involvement with ATTAC and the global campaign is too multifaceted to be told here in any detail, but it does provide some context for *Democratising Globalisation.* This book was the next-to-final outcome of a multiphase process that involved several publications, what I mean by that will become clear as we go on. For the readers of JCR, what may be particularly noteworthy about the book is that it follows the critical realist scheme of emancipatory explanation.

JM: Do you mean 'explanatory critique'? This archetypally argues for a schema (I have reduced this to two though it can be refined to more than this):

1. theories T show some belief P about an object of interest (the (re)produced situation O – typically some set of social relations) to be false, where theories T also explain why P is believed and what its consequences are in (re)producing O.
2. it then becomes inconsistent to hold belief P and sustain O.

Hence explanation undermines adverse ideology, and knowledge is both explanatory and in principle emancipatory – a motive for change in the interest of consistency of belief and practice (Bhaskar 1986: 184). There has been quite a lot of discussion of whether this is overly formal and simplistic – though many realists remain committed to the general idea behind the formulation…

HP: Yes in general that is what I mean, and my work has been part of those discussions. I first qualified and extended the argument in a paper titled 'Scientific Realism, Human Emancipations and Non-Violent Political Action', which I first presented at a peace research conference and which was subsequently published in an Indian journal *Gandhi Marg* (Patomäki 1992c).[23]

In Bhaskar's scheme of emancipatory explanation, no value premise is required for the inference from truth to practical critique, or for there to be an imperative or normative obligation to transform social realities. I had already developed the argument that there is a hidden value premise in the argument, and this is that truth is a universal normative presupposition of all speech-acts, a point found in Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas. Furthermore, emancipatory argument also requires other value premises (besides a truth-seeking commitment), as well as a substantial direction (Patomäki 1992a, 1992c).

Democratising Globalisation starts with an analysis of the problem of financial instability, in particular focussing on the foreign exchange markets, building an iconic model to explain the Asian financial crisis. Then it moves to deeper layers of social reality in terms of history and social relations, explaining the growing power of market movements, stemming from the processes of financial multiplication, financialisation and global geo-economics.

JM: You've used the phrase 'deeper layers of reality' a couple of times now. In what sense do you mean this phrase – it can readily invite connotations of 'what is happening behind the scenes'… do you mean it in some strict sense of an ontological claim of distinguishable domains of reality or do you mean 'perspective on multifaceted reality', or perhaps something else…

HP: Perhaps, in a way, 'behind the scenes'… Oftentimes 'depth' is conceived in a reductionist way (e.g. explaining some chemical structures or magnetism in terms of quantum-level realities). Depth can also be conceived epistemologically, as in providing new and deeper grounds in dialectical argumentation (Rescher 1977: 66).

JM: That does not clarify or answer the question though – since you have now invoked the term depth which has a specific meaning in critical realism re depth realism…

HP: Well, I am not rejecting depth realism as an ontological conception, I am suggesting in social sciences, when we are trying to explain something, the metaphor of 'depth' refers to what is not immediately apparent, we 'go deeper', and we do so systematically. We attempt to specify layers of understanding and explanation in pursuit of the pertinent parts of the causal complex. The pertinent parts form a partial and open whole, causally responsible for the *explanandum* (X to be explained). Knowledge is, of course, part of reality. We can uncover the deeper determining layers or characteristic dispositions understood historically (emergent practices and institutions sedimented in the *longue durée* of social life) or in terms of background capacities (as in Bourdieu or Searle) or deeper layers of meaning or knowledge (as in some forms of discourse analysis). The metaphor of

[23] Note from Heikki: see previous note 14.

depth can also be taken to mean the structural organisation or composition of a whole and its emergent properties and powers, as in Post Keynesian macroeconomics, where a deeper explanation of unemployment focusses on macro-dynamics.

These possibilities do not exhaust the meaning of 'depth'. In any case, in *Democratising Globalisation,* the point was to explain the growing power of market movements and finance both historically and in terms of deeper meanings – evolving dispositions that were either grounded or at least justified in terms of a false theory (notably the efficient markets hypothesis and related ideas). I argued further that the power of financial markets distorts investment, subordinates firms to financial interests and draws increasing resources from consumption, investments, and public spending to mere hedging and speculative searches for financial gain.

JM: Nick Shaxson's later book *The Finance Curse,* follows similar reasoning concerning how the scale of the finance sector can cumulatively come to undermine economies – absorbing labour and resources etc. (Shaxson 2018).

HP: So it seems – though I know his book, I haven't actually read it. What is noteworthy is that Shaxson like many others is critical of the form and functioning of finance. You mentioned the role of Susan Strange earlier. In IPE growing interest in the power of finance is often attributed to Susan Strange.

JM: Though she by no means invented interest in the power of finance – Rudolf Hilferding etc.

HP: True, but I would stress that Strange was a key figure in recreating an institutional and critical interest in finance and political economy in the late 20th century. According to Chris Brown, in the UK Strange was 'almost single-handedly responsible for creating 'international political economy'' (Brown 1999: 531), though her influence spreads further than IPE. There has been some dispute as to whether she was a 'naïve empiricist' because of her journalistic style, but many who knew her (Christopher May etc.) and followed her work closely have rejected this claim (e.g. Palan 1999: 122-126). For context, Strange wrote numerous books and articles (May 2018), she was Montague Burton Professor of International Relations at the LSE (1978-1988), and previously worked at University College London and as a journalist for *The Observer* and the *Economist* – as well as, as a researcher at Chatham House. From 1988-1993 she held a Professorship at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy (Strange died in 1998 at the age of 75). In terms of the significance of her work, she spotted a lot earlier than most, notably in the books *Casino Capitalism* (Strange 1986) and *Mad Money* (Strange 1998), that deregulation of finance was changing the nature of credit creation and that derivatives were a coming problem (with scope to exacerbate uncertainty in times of crisis), although it is perhaps for *States and Markets* (Strange 1988) that she is best known. In her later years, I met her a few times but only in passing, though once in a small seminar in Helsinki she was unimpressed by my attempt to apply Arendtian republican theory to the governance of the world economy.

JM: Since her work gives context to the growth of critical IPE, it is probably also worth noting she was a trenchant critic of mathematical mainstream economics and highlighted the ideological role it played in legitimizing inequality and power. She was also concerned by the way other disciplines tended to leave economic problems to economists. Both led her to be highly sceptical of theory without evidence or clear relevance, and she was well known for encouraging her students (of which many went on to be influential academics as IPE took off in the UK) to find out how things actually work – and especially in banking and finance.[24] She was a

[24] Note from Jamie: those influenced by Strange included Roger Tooze, who was my original supervisor at Aberystwyth (see Tooze 2000). Roger suggests her work has 3 commitments: political economy must look beyond the state (hence IPE); IPE should investigate power; and: 'The professional/textual and social/ideological separation of 'politics' and 'economics', with their respective disciplinary superstructures built upon this separation, makes an effective analysis of political economy almost impossible, and when carried out produces inappropriate analysis as the basis for ineffective policy. The adoption of 'rationality'

founder member of BISA and President of the International Studies Association in 1995, though despite the many accolades she received during her lifetime, it is curious that she is not better known today (see Dyer 2022; Germain 2016). She was, of course, notoriously 'anti-school of thought' and disparaging of praise (Palan 1999: 132).

HP: Well, she was an iconoclast who spared no-one from her criticisms (as she said in her ISA Presidential Address, 'conformity is much overrated as a career strategy'; Strange 1995: 295). Though your reference to the Germain book indicates that she is not entirely forgotten. Still, younger generations may not know her because she is not associated with any particular theory or school of thought, while the Neo-Gramscians emphasised theory and worked to build a school of thought. The Neo-Gramscians were for a time quite dominant, particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In any case, Strange's work and theirs meant that there was growing interest in study of economies outside of economics departments in the 1990s and onwards. For reference, the 1990s was also a period in which mainstream academic economics was experiencing extreme formalism – a problem that critical realists such as Tony Lawson were critiquing.

JM: And your work has been part of the growth of interesting work outside of mainstream economics and as a an alternative to it, which brings us back to *Democratising Globalisation…*

HP: Perhaps my work has played a small role in the process, but what matters is that IPE and later GPE were an acknowledgement that a lot of important systemic or structural features of economies are regional, international or global and that also the power of states is dependent on their positioning in the world economy. World system theorists and continental regulation theorists too highlight this – with the latter focusing on regimes of accumulation and transnational classes etc. In the 1990s, international studies departments and sociology were beginning to recruit more people with an interest in theorising and studying economy. As we have already suggested there were lots of major changes under way in the world – debates over the economic transition of the Soviet bloc countries, neoliberal globalization, an interest in the power of international organizations (the IMF, World Bank etc.) to shape the economic policies of states in the 'new world order', and so on. Others focussed on the role of new technologies and information in 'network society' (Castells 1996; 1997; 1998; for a critique, Patomäki 2003d).

Democratising Globalisation, like many of my 'applied' works, is based on the conception of the unity or coherence of theory and practice in practice. A transaction tax was meant to be a practical response to a situation that had been caused by various processes such as shifting power relations and the gradual rise to dominance of a false theory that underpins those relations.

Going back to Strange, one thing I would note though is that in her texts the problem of inflation figures more prominently than deflation, whereas I argued that the power of financial markets and related knowledgeable practices tend to compel states to follow deflationary policies.

JM: 'Underlying deflation' in some key sectors has been a key feature of economies until recently – as many have noted – deindustrialisation and offshoring, which transfers production and services to lower cost sites combined with industrial farming, allowed food costs and the cost of a wide variety of consumer goods to both reduce as a proportion of incomes, while in general income growth stagnated for many in the wealthy world, a situation ripe also for growing household debt as finance was liberalised… but this underlying deflationary effect has spread over the last forty years (and is now seemingly collapsing in on itself), so I take it from the point of view of the time when you were writing *Democratising Globalisation* (published 2001 – sometime before the role, for example, of China in the global economy came to the fore) you have something slightly different in mind?

by both economics and (US) political science is a flawed attempt to gain theoretical precision and scientific legitimacy at the expense of realism.' (Tooze 2000: 282).

HP: A good point, these kinds of shifts have obviously contributed to the deflationary tendencies in the OECD world. Deflation in general, however, refers to a tendency for either or both general prices and asset prices to be falling. While this may seem advantageous in an individual sense, as a systemic feature it can have numerous problematic consequences in a capitalist economy (on consumption, value of debt, motive to lend and to invest etc.). It can, of course, also be a long term part of other effects as you suggest.

At the turn of the 2000s I tried to locate financialisation in a wider global context, but largely in terms of the repositioning of the US and the UK in the world economy and how their actions enabled and reinforced tendencies toward financialisation.

JM: And by financialisation you mean the general process in which financial actors become significant sources of power and their interests come to dominate decision-making (so, there is theory emphasising financialisation as a systemic effect, financialisation as an influence on the form and function of firms, and the financialisation of 'everyday life' – though the categorisations are not intended to imply discrete levels for analysis)…

HP: Although all these aspects may have been part of my analysis, the precise distinctions have emerged in later scholarly discussions. The focus of *Democratising Globalisation* was connected to my interest in how a financialised system prioritises creation and trading of financial assets and deflation.

JM: Why deflation?

HP: Well, to be more precise, asset price inflation and deflation of general prices and wages. I have to be careful though in order to avoid conflating what I have later learnt and what I wrote in *Democratising Globalisation*. I was aware and wrote about Keynes's early 1940s plans to prevent countries from resorting to deflation as a means to correct maladjustments. It was a general observation already at that time – as repeatedly pointed out for instance by Paul Krugman – that states were following increasingly deflationary economic policies. My earlier work on the EMU had revealed its deflationary biases. Same for the IMF. There were historical examples such as Japan (at the time Japan had been delving deeper and deeper into a deflationary spiral, also because of its banking crisis). And so on. By 2000 all this seemed rather clear.

I argued that both the intentional and non-intentional (structural) power of finance has increased, reinforcing neoliberal policies implying deflationary tendencies. My focus was on the power of actors and structures. The argument in the book is multifaceted and draws also on Keynes and Hyman Minsky and various aspects of history, but the basic point concerns the positioning of financial actors in global political economy including through states and international organisations…

JM: In causal complexes?

HP: That's right, including indirect mechanisms such as the effects of credit ratings or expectations of financial actors. I was particularly interested in effects on global demand – and how declining demand may help to explain the gradually deepening stagnation of the world economy, especially in OECD countries. I was starting to think about the collective consequences. Inefficiency interested me, though not in the simplistic sense the term is used in mainstream economics as deviation from Pareto-optimality, determined in an abstract closed-system model based on the notion of equilibrium. At this point I was already drawing on Lawson's critique of equilibrium etc. in *Economics and Reality*, though I was less clear about the commitments of many Post-Keynesians.

JM: Re efficiency you've already suggested that 'the power of financial markets distorts investment, subordinates firms to financial interests and draws increasing resources from consumption, investments, and public spending to mere hedging and speculative searches for financial gains'…

HP: Yes, this is an aspect of 'input-output' efficiency at a collective level. This cannot be properly addressed in terms of abstract production functions, but requires more qualitative causal analysis (though quantitative data is needed too). But even more importantly I was interested in Post-Keynesian macro-dynamics. Post-Keynesians are interested in cumulative causation, emergent macro-level properties and how systems develop differently depending on institutional power of different groups, which influences the priorities of the system (wage led versus profit led systems and so on). This is quite different from the standard mainstream economic sense of Pareto-efficiency. Pareto-efficiency impacts on distribution and has mainly operated as a way to justify inequality.

JM: And you were thinking about all of this – the structural development of economies and global economy from the point of view of 'explanatory critique'… Still, the focus in *Democratising Globalisation* is mainly practical rather than philosophical – there are chapters on the case for the Tobin Tax, its feasibility and overcoming technical problems – essentially how to create a lever to start to affect the power of finance in the world… A particular kind of political economy from a global perspective, and motivated by your interest in practical interventions to improve the lot of (if we use a phrasing that has become popular) the many rather than the few… Still, I doubt it is that obvious to readers how what we have been discussing fits the formal explanatory critique formulation I previously referred to – contesting theory and establishing its inconsistency etc., so perhaps you might just summarise if and how it does fit before we move on…

HP: A currency transaction tax is only one form of financial tax and can be generalised, but it would be an important means to curb the capacity of powerful transnational flows of financial capital. At the same time, it would enable new possibilities such as global redistribution and an end to tax havens. These were and are far-reaching aims, so political feasibility matters a lot to the plausibility of the argument. I elaborated claims about political possibilities and technical feasibilities in some detail. These included many ideas, for instance: a formal, regulated and centralised net settlement system could be helpful in monitoring forex transactions; and the tax could be realised first by a coalition of some 20 willing countries.

This fits the extended and improved version of the 'explanatory critique' scheme.

JM: You've still not said how… So, I'm going to ask you again…

HP: In *Democratising Globalisation* I do not discuss any metatheoretical issues as such, but rather apply the critical realist methodology and the scheme of explanatory emancipation as I then understood it. My criticism was targeted against the efficient market hypothesis (EMH) and related ideas (the 'ideology' in the scheme). I've already briefly referred to the EMH, but this is the claim, most closely associated with Eugene Fama, that *properly* functioning markets (especially, but not only, capital markets), where all participants have access to the relevant information, are sites of rapid and common information processing, which means, in turn, prices internalise that information and so, markets rapidly 'clear', and tend to equilibrium. Not only do markets represent the best use of capital (hence 'efficient' as economists understand that term), one cannot, in general and consistently, 'beat the market' (there are no 'free lunches'). This leads to the claim that lightly regulated free markets are best and clearly this is highly contestable and obviously ideological. The EMH as we will no doubt discuss, played a major role in creating the conditions of the global financial crisis. The first three chapters of my book tried to provide a better explanation than the EMH for the Asian crisis and at the same time show how EMH enables and justifies practices that were responsible for the crisis. You split Bhaskar's schema into two, but my argument would suffice for an enlarged four steps in that schema, using an iconic model:

1. The proposed iconic model is more true (explains and illuminates more) than the EMH; it also covers at least some of the relevant areas of the range of the T(ideology), which in turn is a part of a larger discursive formation.
2. The iconic model explains the (re)production of T(ideology) in terms of a causal complex K_i.

3. As such, one should evaluate negatively the relevant parts of the causal complex K_i that are responsible for the (re)production of false beliefs.
4. Consequently, one should also evaluate positively political action directed at absenting or transforming the relevant parts of complex K_i.

Furthermore, my normative argument in favour of the currency transaction tax in Chapter 4 includes, apart from truth, several values: efficiency, justice as fairness, autonomy and democracy. It also includes a rational direction. I agree with Sayer (2000:161) that although a society would be clearly improved if its illusions, contradictions, violence and injustices were reduced, do we actually know how this could be achieved? Mere negative criticism is not sufficient for concrete action. Criticism presupposes the possibility of better practices.

JM: So, the focus is a variety of critical realist emancipatory vision of transformative change?

HP: The rest of the book develops an applied concept of concrete utopia (or what I have later called concrete *eu*topia – similar to *eu*daimonia), namely a two-tier system of the tax and a global-democratic organisation governing the tax and the bulk of its revenues for the purpose of the global common good.

JM: To summarise…

HP: As you suggested earlier, I conceived the book as a practical version of the strand of critical realism which connects social science to emancipatory potentials… How to effect positive change in the world – in this case how to address the otherwise growing and adverse power of finance.

JM: You, however, referred earlier to *Democratising Globalisation* as 'the next-to-final outcome of a multiphase process' and said what this meant would become clear and this too warrants comment.

HP: The book was just one aspect of various things I was doing at the time. There were all kinds of working papers, interviews and popular articles. Campaigning highlighted the need for a 'coalition of the willing' to implement the tax, and this required at least one state to take the initiative. For obvious reasons I tried to get Finland to take that role and towards this end I published various things there. Erkki Tuomioja, the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, wrote the Preface to *Democratising Globalisation.* (He was seemingly unaware that I had instigated an e-mail campaign encouraging him to activism via *Le Monde Diplomatique*). I also wrote a more theoretically oriented introduction to the tax idea (Patomäki 2000a), appealing to various philosophers and theorists such as Bhaskar, Derrida and Horkheimer. This was republished several times, including in Indonesian.

JM: As I recall there was also a draft treaty…

HP: Yes, this was the final outcome – a draft treaty for new international law (with all the technical and legal details in place) to enact a currency transaction tax. The idea was that this could readily be adopted (debated and modified) by a grouping of countries committed to participation in a new global democratic organisation.

The idea to write a draft treaty did not come to me immediately, it occurred during campaigning for a transaction tax. The campaign was global and included all kinds of events, from presentations to the general and interested public and citizen meetings, to debates with central bankers, seminars at various parliaments and expert meetings in various places around the world. At one of these events in Vancouver, Canada, in 2000 or 2001, I had the idea of writing the draft treaty as a way to create momentum.

I knew that Lieven A. Denys, then a professor in international and European tax law at the Free University of Brussels (now Emeritus), had written a widely circulated memo on the legal compatibility of the Tobin tax with the principle of free capital movements in the EU, so I contacted him. Lieven was very enthusiastic about the idea and we also had some help from Phoebe Moore, who worked for a short while as my

research assistant in Nottingham (she is now a professor of management and the future of work at the University of Essex Business School and senior fellow at the International Labour Organization).

However, by the time we published our proposal as an NIGD Working Paper in 2002,[25] the momentum for the tax was (temporarily) nearly over. Nonetheless, the draft treaty provided a partial basis for a law enacted in the Belgium parliament in summer 2004.

JM: Though ATTAC continued as did your involvement…

HP: I served three times as the chair of ATTAC Finland (2004, 2011-12 and 2016) and have over the years participated in many European meetings.

JM: The general idea for the tax and a global organisation remains quite unique…

HP: I'd say it was quite distinctive and transformative. Not only has taxation been so far confined to territorial states, but the idea of a new democratic global organisation commanding more resources than all the existing international organisations (perhaps the EU included) together was meant to reconstitute the parameters of world politics. Now capital is free to move across the world but taxation and regulation is confined to states. That was the reason for the subtitle of the 2001 book: 'the leverage of the Tobin tax'…

JM: I guess Thomas Piketty's later global wealth tax proposal in *Capital in the twenty-first century* shares some features?[26] In any case, is it accurate to say that writing the book was formative for the trajectory of much of your later work with its focus on how different problems and issues might best be solved globally?

HP: Yes and no. I'd say that my consciousness was already globalist in the 1980s. I first read the world system theorist Immanuel Wallerstein (1979) in the mid-1980s, but even before then I was aware that problems like the environment and nuclear proliferation, and the possibility of nuclear war, were global issues requiring a global perspective.

JM: OK, perhaps we should move on…

HP: Well yes, but before we take a step forward, we may have to take a step backward, at least in a way. My next single-authored monograph was *After International Relations. Critical Realism and the (Re)Construction of World Politics* (Patomäki 2002a). While I continued campaigning for the Tobin tax and participated in various global civil society activities, including through the World Social Forum, I revised and rewrote my (meta)theoretical papers from the 1990s into a three-part book. Some of these papers were already part of my PhD-thesis, while others had been written later or were written specifically for this book.[27]

JM: OK, the World Social Forum was a major new development in world politics and, given your participation, warrants discussion, but let's start with *After International Relations*. You noted earlier that IR has its theories and debates and these intersect with issues common to social science and social theory – something which makes sense of your interest in critical realism, philosophy and social theory…

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[25] Note from Heikki: the original publication was Denys and Patomäki (2002), but we slightly modified a few parts of the text in 2005. The draft treaty was also included in an edited collection published by Brussels University Press (Denys and Patomäki 2004), together with my explanations of the basic ideas (Patomäki 2004a, b). Neither NIGD nor its website are active anymore, but the text of the draft treaty remains available at https://patomaki.fi/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Draft-Treaty-on-Global-Transactions-Tax-modified-2005-version.pdf.

[26] Note from Jamie: Heikki provided an essay on Piketty's proposal for Fullbrook and Morgan (2014); see Morgan (2015)

[27] Note from Heikki: a few years after the publication of *After International Relations* when Roy was visiting Helsinki, he said politely yet encouragingly: 'Heikki, your book is ahead of its time, its time will come'. I suspect he was thinking also of some his own works, but I liked the idea that this could be a book for the future.

HP: While *After International Relations* partly collects together previous work, it is not without a theme or structure. I try to develop an argument at the intersection of philosophy of the social sciences, social theory, IR theory and political economy. The book's starting point is that there are signs of far-reaching transformations in international relations into something more akin to *world politics*.

J**M:** And the difference is?

HP: International relations is concerned with relations among 'nations'. World politics covers a wider area than traditional international relations and is also more explicitly political. The subject of scrutiny is not only politics that is international or global, but also those countless social and political spaces that permeate or cross the boundaries of traditional political communities. In the blurb of *After International Relations*, I state that the book explores the future role of critical realism in the construction of non-violent and democratic world politics, which overcomes the Kantian antimonies and dilemmas that have been constitutive of the field.

In the book thinking about this transformation from IR to world politics led to an interest in the genealogy of what I then called 'the international problematic' – how the 'international' had been conceived as a problem-field (later I have generalised the analysis under the rubric of the 'peace problematic'). The point of the book was to develop a methodological and metatheoretical framework, which would enable the theoretical overcoming of the problematic. As always, theory and practice go hand in hand. In order to overcome the problematic in practice, one needs to understand, explain and critically assess contemporary practices, relations and processes, and, thereby, contribute to making them more emancipatory and empowering. Thus the projects of *After International Relations* and *Democratising Globalisation* were intertwined. A democratically organised global tax would be constitutive of a new kind of space for *world politics*.

What may be particularly interesting for the readers of this journal is that I was seeking to draw out a repetitious cognitive structure of IR. To do so I used both Immanuel Kant and David Hume (familiar figures in critical realist critique). The international problematic was articulated systematically by Immanuel Kant in the 1780s and 1790s, but Kant's metaphysical or political writings would not have been possible without David Hume. The problematic was obviously built on major shifts in the world-historical context of the time and its background, from cartography and European expansionism to the rise of capitalist market society and increasingly powerful states. Anyway, my aims were also deconstructive vis-à-vis IR theory and I distinguished between three different historical takes on Hume (classical, scientist and Nietzschean anti-scientist) and two takes on Kant (traditional, scientist). These exemplify the repetitious cognitive structure of IR since the time of Kant and Hume (Table 2).

Table 2. The repetitious cognitive structure of International Relations

	Orthodoxy	**Challenge**
First debate ('realism vs. idealism')	$Kant_1$	Hume1 & $Hume_3$
Second debate ('traditionalism vs. positivism')	$Hume_1$ ($Kant_1$)	$Hume_2$ & $Kant_2$
Third debate ('realism vs. globalism')	$Hume_2$	$Kant_2$
Fourth debate ('positivism vs. post-positivism')	$Hume_2$ & $Kant_2$	Nietzsche & $Hume_3$ & $Kant_1$ & $Hume_1$

JM: How was the book received?

HP: Its position at the intersection of various subject specialisms meant it likely fell between audiences. As Jones notes in her review in JCR, 'resistance to philosophical consideration of "these core issues" remains common within international relations' (Jones 2002: 147-148). It's notable that the book was not published in an international relations series, but in the Critical Realism Interventions series.

JM: Where presumably IR-specific discussion deterred many philosophers and social theorists from reading it. This failure to meet expectations is a continual problem for people who try to work across multiple disciplines. I take it that, given the title and given the book involves discussion of theory and methodology, it parallels Colin and your earlier 'After Postpositivism' paper?

HP: That's right. The book makes use of the concept of causal complex and of explanatory emancipation, as well as the idea of a security community based on the possibility of peaceful change. The book, however, develops my thinking in various ways. There's a chapter on Thucydides' Melos-dialogue demonstrating the methodology of iconic modelling; and a similar political economy explanation of neoliberal transformations of the Nordic countries in the post-Cold War era. In rewriting the 'How to tell better stories about world politics' paper for this book, I started to stress more than before the role of emergent powers and properties of systems Recently, this approach became the basis of my *Three Fields* book (Patomäki 2022).

Around this time Ulrich Beck and others started using the concept of 'methodological nationalism' and although I did not explicitly use the term, in *After International Relations* I was making a strong case against the reification and naturalisation of national states. As such, in retrospect my approach could be seen as a contribution to social theory, since a great deal of social theory is tacitly committed to methodological nationalism. I emphasise that social contexts and that systems are not only open but are also, among other things, overlapping and inter-penetrated in space and time.

I should also mention that Roy's work on dialectics turned out to be useful in conceptualising how the past and/or outside might be said to be present in social contexts. This provided a better way to think about the processual world system as a whole compared to, for example, Wallerstein and others structural-functionalist world systems analysis, which tended to be based on quite fixed structures and related empirical regularities.

JM: This brings us to both the World Social Forum and your next book, *A Possible World. Democratic Transformation of Global Institutions*, co-authored with Teivo Teivainen (Patomäki and Teivainen 2004a), someone with whom you have collaborated quite a bit. You might briefly introduce the World Social Forum…

HP: As you note in your introduction, the World Social Forum (WSF) emerged as a response to the World Economic Forum (WEF) and was a co-creation of the ATTAC movement and Brazilian activists. Since 1982 the Davos meeting has focused on bringing world economic leaders to its annual meetings, and in 1987 it adopted its present name of the World Economic Forum. The Davos meetings are widely considered a key location for the reproduction of the political influence of corporations (though its significance is sometimes overstated). The idea of a critical counter-event to Davos was initially formulated during the 20th anniversary of the Tricontinental Centre in Leuwen, Belgium, in 1996. In January 1999, various organisations including ATTAC and *Le Monde Diplomatique* started preparing a counter-event under the banners of 'another Davos' and 'anti-Davos'.

In April-May 1999 I did some field work with Teivo in the Mercosur countries (Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil) exploring different civil society responses to globalisation (see Patomäki and Teivainen 2002) and I had a parallel project on Russian civil society (see e.g. Patomäki and Pursiainen 1999). ATTAC and the idea of the Tobin tax started to have a bit of impact in South America and Cassen had just visited Brazil (over 1,000 Brazilian parliamentarians, intellectuals, trade unionists and popular movement activists had taken part in

the meetings organized during Cassen's visit). It was in this context that Oded Grajew, coordinator of CIVES (Associação Brasileira de Empresários pela Cidadania), had the idea for WSF. In February 2000, Bernard Cassen, met with Grajew and Francisco Whitaker in Paris to discuss the possibility of organising such a forum.

Since 2001, the WSF has been organized annually, at first in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and later in other places. In the first years the Forum was a huge success, quickly growing from 15,000 to 50,000 and then more than 100,000 participants from around the world. It garnered a lot of media attention and raised hopes about global transformative possibilities.

JM: Yes, there was a powerful well of optimism at the time and numerous people producing works regarding the potential for reconstructive politics and civil society influence. And it was in the context of the WSF that you started to write *A Possible World*…

HP: That's right, though the story is somewhat convoluted. A philosopher friend and activist Thomas Wallgren visited us in Nottingham and we started to develop the idea of a new 'Helsinki process' (named in reference to the 1975 Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe that contributed to the end of the Cold War). The focus was to be globalisation and global democracy and the NIGD received some funding from the Finnish Foreign Ministry. The aim was to discuss and select a particularly promising global democracy initiative and then realise it through a conference of a coalition of civil society actors and willing states. The first-phase evaluators came from different parts of the world. I wrote the framework for evaluation (a shortened version was published in Rikkilä and Sehm Patomäki 2002) and subsequently this framework became the first chapter of *A Possible World*.

In autumn 2001 I was on sabbatical from Nottingham Trent University and Katarina was coordinating the global democracy initiatives project. Teivo was a full-time researcher funded by Academy of Finland. In preparation for what turned out to be an exciting 2002 WSF, we all relocated to Porto Alegre for a few months, including our two daughters and Teivo's (at the time) Peruvian wife and daughter. The idea was to do several things simultaneously: organise events at the WSF, continue the 'Helsinki process' project and write a monograph on global democracy initiatives.

Teivo became rather involved in other things and I ended up writing most of parts I and III and half of part II, but we succeeded in getting the first working paper version out in 2002. It was then translated into Finnish and published in 2003 before the final English version came out as *A Possible World* in 2004 (Patomäki and Teivainen 2004a). This was then subsequently translated into Arabic and Spanish (with part III also translated into Swedish).

JM: Among other things, it was published in Egypt in 2008 and reviewed in the press there and so perhaps contributed in small part to the growing civil society movement that became the Arab Spring there in 2011.

HP: Well, that's speculative at best, and as you know the process in Egypt did not end well. In any case, the book is not about national but global democracy.

JM: You might usefully summarise here.

HP: Behind every initiative to democratise the global system there is some theory about democracy: what democracy means, what its justification is, what the right scale of democracy is, who the actors are, what is feasible and what is not, whether a democracy initiative is institutionally conservative or transformative, and so on. We argued for a processual view of democracy and for the conception (based on Dryzek 1996) that democratisation can be assessed in terms of criteria.

JM: And these are?

HP: Franchise, i.e. the number of participants in any political setting; scope, i.e. the domains of life and social relations under democratic control; authenticity, i.e. the degree to which democratic control is substantive rather than symbolic, informed rather than ignorant, and competently engaged. We actually added a fourth criterion (in line with Held's liberal concerns, and which we felt was critically important in our contemporary world): the self-binding of democracy, i.e. a democracy should not be allowed to destroy democratic practices and procedures of non-violent disagreement and conflict resolution; and a majority should not be allowed to destroy its own learning capacities or to deny others' voice and equal access to the decision-making positions (something that in retrospective seems prescient re the rise of populism in places like the US).

The first part of the book was about the possibility of transforming the existing institutions of global governance: the UN, the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and the World Bank), the WTO and international courts. The second part was about setting up new institutions, such as debt arbitration, global taxes and a world parliament. The third part outlined a strategy based on our evaluations.

Our conclusion was that a combination of strengthening of global civil society, financial reforms (a debt arbitration mechanism and a currency or financial transaction tax), and reform of the World Trade Organisation were key. The point was to transform power-relations generated by global finance and pluralise possibilities for economic policies in relation to trade. The establishment of the rule of law and principles of democracy on a global scale was meant to also serve the purpose of increasing the autonomy of states in terms of their economic and social policies. The strategy emerged from an analysis of real political possibilities and likely transformative effects of different initiatives in a world-historical context – using contemporary openings that seemed conducive to constructive change.

JM: There were, of course, numerous events and interests working against this…

HP: Things were not simple and all of this organising met resistance in one way or another. As readers are likely aware with the benefit of hindsight, there was a palpable neoconservative turn in world history. George W. Bush took office in January 2001 and 9-11 happened eight months later. At that time some courageous UN civil servants convened a 'social forum' at the UN headquarters in New York to discuss the kind of ideas we were interested in regarding constructive democratic and peaceful change. I was invited and travelled to New York from Porto Alegre at the turn of January-February 2002. By that time the US and British troops had already occupied most of Afghanistan. The critical momentum of the Asian crisis 1997-1998 was over and unfortunately, the 'War on Terror' (with all the oppressions, confusions and conflations that eventually entailed) had begun to change the mood – and New York was an alarming place around then. The UN-dissidents made it quite clear that a UN-based 'social forum' was unlikely to be organised for a second time – how right they were.

JM: So the momentum behind the conception of 'world politics' began to falter?

HP: Not immediately, in February 2003, the WSF coordinated massive demonstrations across the world against the Iraqi war, but obviously to no avail. Even under these circumstances, the WSF continued to grow. The 2004 WSF organised in Mumbai, India was a success (the idea of taking the WSF to India was conceived in a public sauna in Helsinki with people like Cândido Grzybowski and Vijay Pratap). But by 2005, it was increasingly clearly that the WSF process would fail and that none of the global reforms envisaged by us and others would be realised.

JM: Though clearly initiatives continued. Michael Hardt's and Antonio Negri's book *Empire* had been a major success in 2000-2002, with its call to reconceive class politics in terms of a more amorphous grouping of those with interests in change in the modern world and this was followed in 2004 by *Multitude* though that had rather less impact. I don't recall you being particularly pessimistic at the time. You, for example, organised a special

section of *Theory, Culture & Society,* in which I interviewed Michael Hardt regarding the scope of the WSF in 2005 and you discussed global democracy with the cosmopolitan theorist David Held…[28]

HP: Well, obviously I didn't stop work or give up hope that things could be otherwise. When I said that 'none of the global reforms envisaged by us and others would be realised' I meant only: at that world-historical moment.

Still, circumstances were difficult and it was not only events that mattered – funding for organising and receptivity for new ideas waned. Several key NGOs active in global civil society came from Western Europe and often they were at least partly dependent on funding from public and private sources. Neoliberalism began to affect this too: funding criteria became increasingly about standard metrics, value for money and establishing simple goals, often involving identifying what would be achieved before anything had really been done. Big charities such as the Ford Foundation followed suit adopting a short-term project-format, strict and laborious reporting, public-private 'partnerships', and the like. Many states downsized funding to civil society organisations.

Inevitably this affected us too in our small Northeast corner of Europe. The Helsinki-process was transferred from the NIGD to President Martti Ahtisaari's CMI (Conflict Management Initiative), which watered the idea down – they burnt through a lot of money organising fancy conferences and meetings without achieving anything. It was increasingly clear that new forms of world political agency would be needed and I and others started to develop the idea of a world political party. The last NIGD project that received significant funding (from the Ford Foundation) resulted in a book on that topic (Sehm-Patomäki and Ulvila 2007). It included contributions from people like Samir Amin, Chris Chase-Dunn, Stephen Gill, and Jan Aart Scholte, as well as from myself and Teivo (Patomäki and Teivainen 2007a, 2007b). These were the last pieces Teivo and I published together. In 2008, I served as a kind of 'rescue' chair for the NIGD. In 2009 the organisation ceased to exist as a legal entity.

JM: And it was in that context that you relocated to Helsinki in 2003 and started to develop futures scenarios exploring how the global political economy might change. This became *The Political Economy of Global Security* published late 2007 (Patomäki 2008a).

HP: Yes, that book finally came out around the time the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) was beginning…

JM: The momentous events of the GFC seems a convenient point to break off the first part of this interview. We can turn in Part 2 to how you came to write *The Political Economy of Global Security* and what difference a realist perspective made to this and your other work. Is there anything else you want to say at this point?

HP: One last thing, since this is an interview for JCR. In spite of my occasional frustration with the priorities of some critical realists, I have always valued the way critical realism fosters a belief that social sciences are necessarily critical and transformative. It is in the spirit of this that I have conducted most of my work, and while Roy and I were (are) very different, I had great respect for his commitment. While visiting Helsinki in 2005 Roy made a comment on philosophy and 'seriousness' which has stuck with me, 'to be serious, is to make one's theory consistent with one's practice, and if it is not, to modify one or the other or both, so that we can increase the rationality of our practices and the reflexivity of our thought alike' (Bhaskar and Patomäki 2006: 9). It's not the pithiest quote to end on, but it is perhaps apposite.

Notes on Contributors

[28] Note from Jamie: See Patomäki and Held (2006); Nielsen (2007); Morgan (2006, 2003).

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